

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Chris Davidson: Four Poems

Chris Davidson · Tuesday, March 3rd, 2015

Chris Davidson has been published in *Zyzzyva*, *Spoon River Poetry Review*, *The Rumpus*, *Spark & Echo Arts*, *Green Mountains Review*, and elsewhere. A chapbook, *Poems*, appeared in 2012, and he keeps an inconsistently updated blog at 52songs.blogspot.com. We are proud to premiere these poems in Cultural Weekly.

Maps, People

Maps take the land's variability and make it
divisible. We then say, This is Coney Island
or that is Huntington Beach or St. John, KS.
And then you can buy property there or there.
We don't say a land is a map, but we do say
it's mapped, and then it's no longer thought of
as something unfolding in/against the line
of horizon but something seen from above,
lined and marked and starred. I can get to X
via Y and buy Z: The map makes the land a thing
that pays. A person, then, what about her

(or him)? What makes a person pay?
I say it's their face, but my sister says
it's what they do. No, says Mom, it's what
their fathers do. My brother says,
Age and Beauty reckon the Wage Not
The Worth of Man. My father stays silent,
so I goad him some: Dad, can a finger pay?
If it presses the right button, he says.
What about a toe? No, he says. Well,
a woman's toe, he says, that can pay,
if groomed and painted cherry red
in an open-toed sandal beneath the edge
of a summer dress. Mom's clogs galumph.

Farewell

As time, or whatever, has moved
 In its unidirectional way, custom's
 Elided the thee from farewell.
 Yet goodbye of this kind—like the
 Goodbye of goodbye—still implies
 Intimacy, the ghosted thee akin
 To tú when used instead of usted—
 I know you and want you to fare well,
 Friend—while good contains within it
 God. In each parting there is a blessing.
 We don't know where we are going.

Perfect Drift

The perfect drift
 of your lower lip

sub-ducting beneath
 your upper is echo

to colliding continents
 in Asia, effecting

Himalayas. I'll make
 the shelf below your

neck base camp,
 and start my climb

after dark; tomorrow
 I hope to summit,

afternoon. No oxygen.
 These are no risk:

dehydration, frost bite,
 the swelling of the brain—

they avail to one
 the point, unveil it.

Too Late for Me

A pretty penny, I told my son,

who'd asked how much the gas we pumped

was costing us. And later,
driving past houses larger and more

exquisite than ours, I said,
To live here would cost you

a pretty penny. Too late for me,
but if it weren't I might meet and love

a girl named Penny, in skirts and flats
sensibly dressed and quick of mind,

my Pretty Penny, whom I'd call
when first fallen to the crux

of her open limbs, or at fault
explaining why I'd done what I did,

returning to my high-walled home
after years adrift, an easy mark for wills

stronger and subtler than me,
Penelope.

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