Cultural Daily

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Jack Grapes: "The Man in Charge of Watering"

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Jack Grapes is an award-winning poet, playwright, actor, teacher, and the editor and publisher of ONTHEBUS, one of the top literary journals in the country. This poem is from Jack's new book, The Naked Eye. Signed copies may be ordered directly from the poet here.
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The Man in Charge of Watering

The summer sun, strong and bright,
sits down on the bricks in the front yard.
Cars which have nothing to do with bricks
go by on the street heading home.
It's Wednesday afternoon,
middle of the week,
when you can put everything you'd planned
on Monday
back on the back burner.
A lady goes by; I nod and smile and say hello.
She's carrying a bag of groceries.
I think she lives down the block.
I should go back inside,
the sun's hot on my face,
and I'm not wearing my hat.
Lori admonishes me
"Don't forget to wear your hat."
I came outside to fill the fountain
and forgot to wear my hat.
Now, I'm just standing here,
looking around, saying hello
to the neighbors as they pass by.
When we first bought this house
when Josh was two years old,
I used to go outside after the sun had gone down
and hose the grass on the front and side lawn.
Such a peaceful time, and the back spray from the hose
cooled everything down.

I was Mr. Homeowner watering his lawn.
There are flowers blooming here
that Lori knows the names of, but I can't
seem to remember their names.
Jasmine, Bougianvillea, true geraniums.
I can't keep track of them all.
I've tried, but the names elude me.
Even the grass has a name,
but I've forgotten that too.
This is what heaven will be like.
Anytime I want, I'll be able to water the lawn.
All my friends will walk by,
I'll nod, say hello, watch them pass along
going wherever people go in heaven.
I won't have to do anything but water the lawn.
And the water, you should see the water in heaven.
Crystal clear, light as a feather, so to speak,
diamonds of light.
The back spray will cool my face and head.
And the grass. You'd think grass
in heaven wouldn't need watering,
but you're in for quite a surprise.
Everything up here needs watering.
Even the bricks, the bricks that sit in the sun
getting hot.
Even God, who soaks up all our prayers.
Even God will need a spray or two
to cool down.
I'll be the waterer.
The man in charge of watering everything
and everyone,
the man spraying water in heaven.
That'll be my job.
When God comes by, asks how I'm doing,
I'll say, "Fine, just fine."
Then I'll turn and ask,
"Need a little watering?"
And God will nod,
say, "Sure, soak me down, just
don't wet the groceries."
And I'll give God a good spray.
That'll be my job —
the man in charge
of watering God.

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