Cultural Daily

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# Billy Burgos: Those Small Boxes of Infatuation

Billy Burgos · Tuesday, October 22nd, 2013

Billy Burgos is an active member of The Anansi Writer's Workshop and a mainstay in the local L.A. poetry scene. He has been published in numerous journals both in print and online. Billy is the co-editor of the poetry Broadsheet Sic 3 and has served as poetry facilitator of The Beyond Baroque poetry workshop as well as the host of The First Sunday Reading a monthly reading at Beyond Baroque Literary Centre in Venice Ca. In 2009 Billy was chosen as newer poet to watch by the L.A. Poetry Festival. His first collection of poetry titled *Eulogy to an Unknown Tree* was published by Writ Large Press in January 2013.
*Cultural Weekly is proud to premier these poems by Billy Burgos.*
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## Matter

Today on the radio while driving
a scientist gives me a round number
that is the supposed age of the universe.
He tells me how Matter only makes
up a small portion of its expanse.
.
He tells me of a glowing light
in some corner of space that is
emitting a heat signature from
an explosion that started life billions
of years before we were ever particles.
.
Somehow the busy street now appears
smaller. I am a simple man. I can only
see the universe as a black box with
dark angles that never meet. I picture
myself as a speck of dust floating aimlessly.
.
Then this feeling collecting in the fist
of my heart. What should I make of it now,
this worthless bit of emotion and quark?
.
There are only a few things I know for sure:

I care too much about my eventual outcome,
I forgive others sparingly and dole out love
in a similar way, the California sky today is
the bluest I have ever seen.
.
The scientist continues to speak but by
then I am somewhere else. Transfixed by all
the different back sides of cars flashing
red brake lights. Cars in the distance as far
.
as the eye can see. And I am repeating
to myself the words of some horribly
made-up tune, as inconsequential
as a speck of dust blowing about,
.
“*my matter matters today,*
*but only for today*
*does my matter matter*.”
***

## The Figurative Heart

We blame the heart so often.
We ask it to bear our guilt like
a wet bag of sand, then to hold
those small boxes of infatuation.
We ask the heart to lie to us
right behind the request to keep
the tune of our spirit playing on.
Yet when it lies, we blame that muscle
for each remembered deception.
At this red hour, with the darkening
city unrolling slowly like a dirty rug,
there is no figurative heart. There is
only this-and-now, the entire machine.
Even the threading of streetlights that
appear to lead off into nothingness eventually
end and come back. The night always brings back.
And maybe another -the heart only
speaks through the juried soul,
that invisible conduit that can bear nothing.
Like faith it is only an assured expectation,
something not-yet-beheld. We cannot
call it a liar, we can only call it god.
***

## Mid(dle) Life Crisis

We grow up thinking of our

bodies as the vehicle that carries us.
These little ignorant engines, whirring
along some meager passageway
.
knowing nothing of the “how”
or the “why” but singing loudly
nonetheless. Then at some improbable
point, somewhere past the center of
.
our lives we find ourselves in a quiet field
with a small wind smoothing back all the
tall bushes. And we can see clearly
how many times sadness has punched us raw,
.
clearly how many times we have
lit the light of some greater love.
Only then do we realize that emotion is
the vehicle, the true soul-without-sight.
.
Our grown body, merely a windblown sail
that has driven us without direction. But
so what if this is so? What truly matters then
is not the epiphany but what it has become,
.
some pliable mass, like a handful of putty
squeezed so tight that all its color has blended
into one beige tone. There is no precipice or prize.
There is only us holding-the-gold in this silent field
.
and the tall figure of a man in the distance
waving us in to what we believe to be home.

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