
Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Ronald Baatz: "Ten Small Poems" & "Don't Take Your Ankles"

Ronald Baatz · Wednesday, August 7th, 2013

Ronald Baatz lives with his wife Andrea in Troy, New York. His most recent book, *Devouring Birds*, was published by Blind Dog Press in Australia.

TEN SMALL POEMS

Cold mist on
beautiful red
lipless tomatoes

The smell of sunset
coming to the house-
like the smell of a
distant holy place
on fire

Human souls
fishing in
cold shadows

As though eager to cut itself
on the thin sharp moon-
mint growing wild

Between us
and the grave-
birds bathing

Opening a
tiny coffin
I find six
silver creatures
with no heads

Twisted linen-
other flesh

was here

Milk wiped from lips
water from eyes
wine from shirt

Only
enough head left
to shave-
enough poem
to be brief

Irises too old
for anything more
than drizzle

DON'T TAKE YOUR ANKLES

Don't take your ankles with you.
Leave them like a pair of slippers
at the side of the bed, so that when
you are gone I can drop my head
over the side and look at them and
remember how very beautiful you are.
What do you mean, that you cannot go
anywhere without them? You say this
because you are still angry with me,
because when we last parted I took my
arms with me, and I know this was wrong.
I know you do not mean it when you say
that now we have more serious matters
to attend to. I cannot understand these words
and I do not want to believe that you spoke them.
I see your lips smiling in the mirror. From where
I am lying I can see your lips and your ankles.
Now that I think of it, maybe you should also
leave your lips here, along with your ankles.
Those lips of such joys and disasters. Yes, please,
leave your lips, leave them in that small bowl
on my night table. Is that asking for too much?
When you are gone, I will throw my lips in
the same bowl. Here, take my toes with you.
Put them in your coat pocket. If you miss me,
all you need do is put your hand in your pocket
and you will find my toes eagerly waiting for
your fingertips. You must then take my toes
and you must caress them like dark worry beads.
You must rub and caress them gently and lovingly

and with tender thoughts, and you must remember me.
Sweetheart, baby, you must worry about your old lover
who, having gone mad, has been
tied by fear and ropes to his bed.

Cultural Weekly is proud to premiere these poems.

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