

from THE TRUE KEEPS CALM BIDDING ITS STORY by Rusty Morrison

our finitude as human beings

is encompassed by the infinity of language

—Hans-Georg Gadamer

The border makes up the homeland. It prohibits and

gives passage in the same stroke.

—Helene Cixous

please advise stop

pale fingers of inheritance do not disintegrate until they touch us stop

meaning collapses on the inhale please

gestures too quick to catch are the guarantors of the given stop

the true keeps calm bidding its story stop

the arsonist's perspiration stains the sky black please

the gray-and-white patched cat licks her paw till value becomes again incalculable stop

I wasn't traveling westward only into the power of its place-names stop

the water puddle sways like an earthbound kite stop

the stickiness of this instance seals within it every expression of its menace please advise

from THE IRON FEEDS CTRM BLDING
112 210th St
Plymouth Michigan

please advise stop

my pleasures inventoried like cutlery stop
no histrionics just two brass lamps a stack of old newspaper from Paris tied in twine stop

the glamour is in asking first *Are you happy?* stop

I'm elongating the upward curve of my handwritten "r" please
years of growth sanded away to make this beautifully varnished myth please

the stories so often describe the homecoming as some kind of relief stop

the flower stems will always seem to break at the water line stop

locked in the grandly tapestried room while upstairs the phone rings stop

touch the velvet gone stiff from fingers' sweat please advise

5

please advise stop

the hill's grasses are lavender in conversation with evening light stop
how to narrate my lateral glance without fastening stop
a balancing of emotions would require fewer objects free-floating please

slip my hand in to earth neither tearing nor imploring but touring at the speed of loamy
roots stop

balancing could be cross-blending without overlapping please
when I'm attentive as if to a lecture how little will green have revealed stop

in my sympathies a prickly contagion stop
how to touch sky with fingers cool as windowpanes stop

this desire for cohesion of ends to beginnings so guileful an enemy please advise

6

please advise stop

I was dragging a ladder slowly over stones stop

it was only from out of my thoughts that I could climb stop

not from the room please

my father's dying offered an indelicate washing of my perception stop

the way the centers of some syllables scrub away all other sound stop

his corpse merely preparing to speak its new name at the speed of nightfalling please

each loss grows from a previously unremarkable vestigial organ stop

will I act now as if with a new limb stop

a phantom limb of the familial please advise

11

please advise stop

with practice a memory like a voice can be thrown into any unsuspecting object stop

each thought is a cone that depends on its opening at both ends stop

I need a few ants to appreciate the sugar-white of bed sheets stop

unfolding the paper crane won't undo its allegiance to sequence stop

the features emanating from clouds are more fierce through an open window stop

each breath's devotion to transparency fails to convert my flesh stop

I mark my room with all five of my senses but soon it is strange again stop

the intoxicating smugness of a black felt hat's softness stop

pinholes pressed through paper fill immediately with shadow please advise

19

please advise stop

my stammering mind isn't quick enough at its wardrobe changes stop

the tendon in silence drawn tight through every room of the house stop

turned on the heater then off again then on please

a single oak beam at the apex of the peaked ceiling directs time's flow stop

in the dark follow any smoothness clean as straw stop

on my nightstand an empty glass is not self-canceling stop

all the furniture of observation needing to be stacked away like folding chairs stop

I practice opening my cursive circles to let through more sunlight stop

guilt is still my first form of fastening please advise

23

please advise stop

breadcrumbs were really the ones swallowing birds stop

opened the door but not the depth of attention that my entry demanded stop

pressed spiders between a book's pages cure holiness stop

traveled the circumference I could learn from it the center stop

a stain spreads under table linen and avoids being caught stop

not the idea but behind it a patron saint with green eyes please

the blind priest's eyes were wide as a countertop and white as washed parsnips please

the stone in my pocket need only be called a globe stop

stripped of its leaves and branches the sky is all the more hidden please advise

29

please advise stop

how to hold what remains but not refine it stop

the door will only open if the structure begins to lean stop

a dark blue satin scrap rubbed between two fingers prizing and vexing stop

let me mortalize and not try to appease the skin when it is cold or still please

afterwards is achievement if it subsumes all apologies stop

a room only seems blind because of the speed with which all its surfaces see me stop

in the humid concentrate of backyard soil feel bodies in their orbits stop

observing my hands as they disappear stop

scent of eucalyptus impassable road in even the mildest winters please advise

70

please advise stop

today a ringing-in-the-ears quality in breathing stop

landscape gave a brief account of itself then went on falling behind my back stop

clouds in the sky motionless as ironed scarves please

recognizing my desire to have things look back at me please

I stare until I consider the scene truly acknowledged stop

a largely gracious gesture but its skin lightly greased for ease of change stop

dry air tonight feathered occasionally with shine stop

I wanted the damp fertile smell even though mold would soon follow stop

a kind of retention that isn't reducible to memory please advise

72