

The Boy With Failing Calves

The boy with failing calves sits and walks like an insect because his upper half is strapping and true while his lower half is unbalanced. His flesh is white and his veins are blue and they bulge against the skin in a system we all understand. And when he strides he can be seen as though he shouldn't; taut flesh tarped across a thin body and when he strides, and he does stride, he tends to stride, striding over walking, because the shift of weight that he feels with the rise of each footstep is too insecure, with his unbalanced body he must stride, lurch. So when he finishes writing in the night he will stride across his hardwood floor to his sleeping bag and like a dog he circles around and like a folding chair he folds and mechanically he collapses in. His head hangs now though, above his desk, above his thin German lips and above the architecture of protruding cheekbones, above the periorbital puff collecting; his eyes are far away. They are there but they are looking at something else. They are hearing something else. They assemble with stoic expression and transcribe with a mixture of logic and intuition, a child of androgyny, a holy build of tissues rising in layers from the floor up; he's composing a set of psalms for his congregation tomorrow.

This boy bloomed from a family of God, a triune subset; Father, Mother, Son. He has been separated though because they cannot nurture what they follow. They believe the boy to be self-sustaining and sometimes they forget to feed him so he goes unfed, and sometimes they forget to love him so he goes unloved. They abstain from sex now because the boy is pure and they fear his judgment. Sleeping in separate rooms they will never give him a brother or a sister and he's too quiet already. A distance has grown between this family and neighbors stare while the three are still tethered together, stretching away into corners of the house. He is quiet but not withdrawn. He holds service on Sundays that he plans throughout the week and he speaks only when necessary but some say his voice is piping, sweet.

The boy with failing calves manages lush strokes that Ravel had demanded half a century before, spills of God blotching paperwork in varying arrangements of black ink that he allows to pool upon the crests of particular letters and he understands with a sobriety the perfection he gives to us tomorrow. His writing has always been fine and it had developed quickly. He feels angels behind him when he writes and they stare and keep quiet while pulling and nagging at each other's gowns in order to stay in constant motion because they're excited and it's leaking from them constantly. Their lips are white and their gowns are white and their skin is white and the boy with failing calves may believe that the moonlight that comes through the window to actually be their white light. He makes no mistakes as he works, extracting from a higher level and dividing it upon us in what we can safely consume. And he manages his fountain pen upon the page with tremendous precision while he sits in the light of angels.

He finishes a set and neatly stacks it to the side and crosses the room like he would, piles himself upon the sleeping bag like he should, and for a moment he admires the porcelain dancers on the windowsill; his only unnecessary possessions. Each arranged carefully, manipulated by our boy to manipulate the viewer: the boy manipulates himself, because he placed each dancer so their eyes point towards another dancer and following the action of their gaze, like a master's painting, you follow the flow they set for you,

ending with the final figure, the twelfth, who stares in holy remembrance upon the middle of the room, at our boy who is already fast asleep.

The boy with failing calves is dying from a growth of yellow sponge cake, like an inflated pale tube meant for swimming it circles around at the hip. The exercises at the public pool are attended bi-weekly to reverse the dystrophic muscles but his instructors are only lifeguards, they are only kids, and are unaware of the importance of an agricultural growth upon the flesh. *This child is dying not from deterioration but from growth.* He sits in the shallow end kicking thin legs beneath the water and resting in intervals, the drone of the caged lights overhead and pumping water below lies beneath the sparse explosions of splashing and whistles, and the gasps of swimmers suffocating themselves momentarily beneath the surface.

The chlorine rises just an inch from below his nose-holes and he can feel the rough cement against his spine and shoulder blades, rubbing at the itch that trails in splotches up the small of his back now. He remains still and meditative, feeling the drone sift through the water and around him, pulling the peach hairs of his skin, centering his attention inwards, dividing the itch from himself, the true factor, engaging the initial point of light, a white light, the source of creativity, and from it stems a display of ripples spanning out forever, with each wrinkle separating farther from it's neighboring wrinkle, fading endlessly away into everything else, our boy can scope these territories picking and choosing, then molding and shaping, and then to give to us, he grabs from the deep subconscious, a pure form he will give us.

Denn alles Fleisch, es ist wie Gras
und alle Herrlichkeit des Menschen
wie des Grases Biskuitgebaecken.
Das Gras ist verdorret
und das Biskuitgebaeck abgefallen.

He has been aware that he has been dying from the moment the itch began to collect. He has never scratched. He has never complained. He has never told another. He understands he cannot remain here forever but he realizes what he can give and how he can give it. When he lies down at night upon it he can feel it squeeze and the pungent pool water draining out, dampening his sleeping bag. When he stands up in the morning it will be dried and crusted over slightly, tinged white. And like the wrinkles upon the pool water and like the ripples endlessly falling away from the point of light from where he collects ideas, he will fade into death with complete awareness, entering each stage mutually with death as a guide and his own acceptance within, and in this way he will never end the way that we will, remaining aware he will be spread thin, but engrained.

But for now he is a child curled upon the floor in his bag, with dry skin, chlorine stained. His thin strands of hair are reshaping themselves for the morning. His fingernails are growing longer and his baby teeth are still loosening, preparing to drop. His dreams lack the vocabulary of his psalms, and his dreams differ from his visions from the day.

