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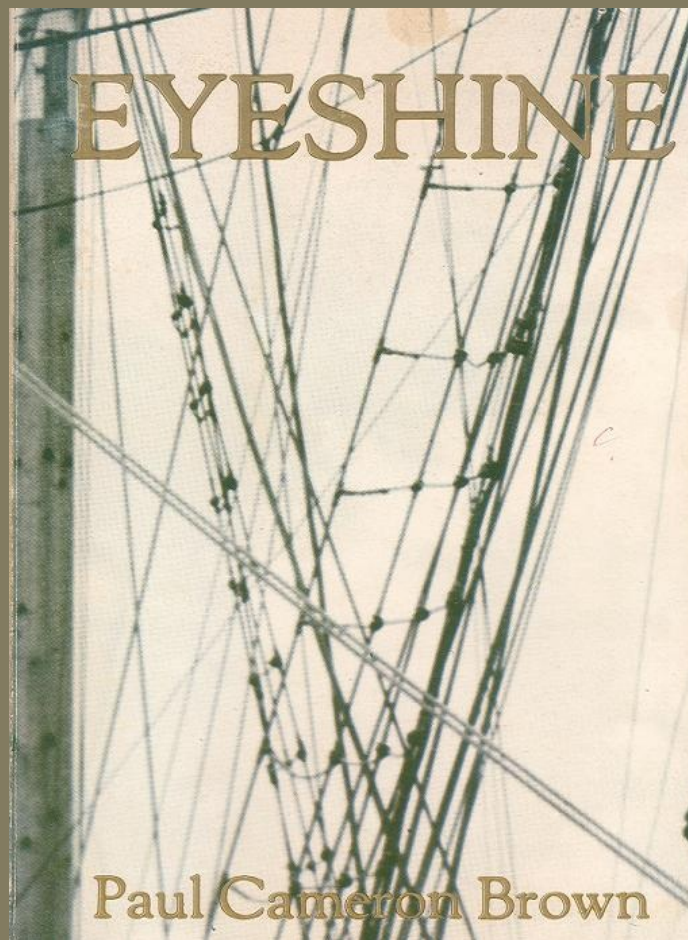
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EYESHINE

By

Paul Cameron Brown



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STILLNESS

Invitingly, the sea shines her stars,
 captive flames within an impatient heart
 as darkness loads the pleasant isles with coarseness,
 slow sparks rise over a roaring fire.

And strolling beaches near dawn
 when the sand fleas & crabs are seen to flee,
 one catches upon the imperfect stillness
 a song of one - wind with sea
 drawing near
 inward, such stars turn
 as bonds at last
 worked free.

[\[7\]](#)

HEWANORRA

The moon, at most a shudder or two away.
 The sky, bivouaked and cloudy, is within twin sloops of a bay.
 The lagoon opens, spars with the greater ocean
 by island hopping, green azure blue, as
 the wind steps before an open sea.

The great ridge of the mountain
 lies obscured by rain;
 jasmine, frequent colour
 and plantations
 with cocoa, soursop, and cinnamon.

Arawaks, Pelee,
Carriacoi, Anegada,
Josephine of the Creoles,
let Admiral Rodney atone Lord Byng.

And my Patois beauty,
breath laced Oleander sweet -
take the hemming from your dress
then come sit down with me.

[8]

THE INTRUDER

The colouring of spacious flowers rove delicious to the eye.
The road above the harbour fickle, carousing in its tendency
to pull too gray by sky enamelled water.

The tropical foliage, still and languorous, to my touch.
Each particle of sunlight dangling as if hoisted from
a perfumed ledge.

Newly mown grass in streaks, browns serpent-like across
the path.

Low erogenous puffs of dust are swathed by passing feet.
Near by, bushes wear the foliage of streaked mud as a mantle
might cottonwool at Christmas.

Life in such climes is built on connotations rather than pure
innuendoes of purpose.

The southern sky, the heat above the sea allude to this.
This triumphant trilogy embossed upon volcanic slate, more
crumpled paper than firm land.

Gravesides lying in twilight nakedness.

The scion moon in her damaged vestry between acolyte
clouds.

Hamlets resembling clotted blood, nicks across an earmarked
horizon.

The poor, wavering to transfixed in their hotly owned sun;
the one commodity they rightly possess.

The outpouring sea, loosing herself in bridged inlets,
countless points that nudge the land in acknowledged
supremacy.

The irrelevance of time, inbreeding of pale intruder.

[9]

DINNER AT EIGHT

At times, I thought of swizzling white rum
in the tropics (not as a vocation),
dropping into the club
for a round of tennis
before dinner at eight
or a quiet set of darts
before retiring.

I had grown accustomed to my new routine
(at least vicariously).

In the best Somerset Maugham tradition
I would dress for dinner,
decline to be patronizing,
avoid the potential slur
if crisp linen did not appear
regularly on my bed or table.
I still found time to stop
for breakfast coffee,
take a moment from regimen
to fondle fresh, wet flowers,
look over the balcony at the
blueness of the bay.

The metaphysical qualities that come
into play erode such morning somnambulations.

The heat depreciated any vainglorious
attempts to lionize the native Caribbean rum.
Tennis and darts become ho-hum,
more of a task than a pleasant diversion.

The little yellowed board seemed
to symbolize not convivial cordiality
but crabbed provincialism.

The tie & collar were intolerable
against the saline tropic night and
seemed rigid in a place and time
the locals could not possibly share.
In short, such things celebrated my apartness.

Linen rarely, if ever, appeared
and to resort to complaints
resulted in only furthering
the distance between one and his hosts.
Even the coffee tasted bitter and seemed
unsuited to the needs of an interloper.
Neither was fruit juice the promised manna.
And one can take only so much nostalgic flower warbling.
The hummingbirds and oleander came to grow
as commonplace and exhausting as the rain.

I began ruminating thoughts back to my previous existence.
Surprised at my illogical shift in allegiances,
I began stealing thoughts more and more surreptitiously
about the naturalness of working a full day,
donning the apparel of a civilized man,
dropping the white man's burden.
Disgust filled me with my former Rousseauian yearnings.
With trepidation, one's dreams
can erect barriers more effective
than the most ill-sponsored illusions.

[110]

THE BAY OF CORTES

The sea is a requisitioned article in my possession.
Above, in fat circles of conformity, glide
turkey vultures, their combs
a rich obscenely red.

The guano rocks are isles and stepping stones
of bird waste.

They lie thick and bedeviled with fish fur,
a dull lavender cached hard to the sun
seems to shine a metallic harvest white
as desert rocklets scattered to the breeze.

A speck of a fisherman dots the horizon.
His craft a barque in loneliness across the sea.
Dolphins inveigh the richness of the depths,
persuade latitudes to drift about their wake.
Pelicans sour the parabola distances between light and sound,
become chancy over this distant breath of song.

Above the cliffs and the inner roads that follow
the desert into geometric squares, stand abodes.
The thin supremacy of shadows at dusk disparage the
traveller here.

Burros strayed lie dead by the highway's edge.
The liquid depth of the mountains reinforces vulnerability.
The night air is alive with the torment of insects, asplash
with sound.

Lights carry an eerie message dotted about the hills.
Feeling alone is a delicacy to be savoured by the standards
of the tropic sun.

[121]

ORACABESSA

An iron wrought gate of turpentine force conveys little pigment,
almost black parchment letters mindful of
hands, arched and stroked from the very stone, until an
elephantine water runs nettle sand to their granite perch.
The broiling heat in this part of the Indies one knows must,
posthaste, carry to the humus and flies any modicum of
human remains.

And, over distant dispatch of time, the elongated sprawl of
waves dashing up straight to the shallow's grave, makes
memory drawn, any record of the little parish's dead flimsy
in the topsy context of soil and undulant peat.

A greened isle stares past the feckless scene, past again an
aged church noticeboard that scrapes out traces of news
worthy of import to the wormy road.

Whitewash, the colour of the shackled crypts, casts upon
the church a pallor of distraught gray.

A goat is seen foraging between such marker stones.

The day seems to cut into the marble white detachment
of the sarcophagi with abrupt candor.

Yet, while the cove pokes like a walking stick, the sun &
earth conspire to reclaim this space as their rightful bread.

A huge vegetative urge to growth is witness to abundant
further life - life in whorls of bamboo shoot, naseberry
thatches & canebreak all garnished a short stride across the barrier gate.

[13]

PROSPECTUS

In salt flats,
idle pools
bunching off the ocean,
multi-legged crabs, worsted stalks -
sea crimson weed
weigh the panoply
to heighten my deepening fervour.

In the bedrock shanks
of spread tidal basins
clothed in spools of enveloping
brackish water,
a plethora teeming with aqua towns
and untold gadgetry exists -
replete with mimicry
including primeval
flotilla tanks
and broadsheets for spreading
their way of life.

[14]

GLADIATORS

No broken visor, emptied glove
abandoned cudgel, opened net
- only gathering spots on spreading sand.

Clang of cymbals
wrench of flesh,
death is a morsel
delectably met.

[15]

OCEAN SEA

All that is eternal is circular.
- Aristotle

Cueta and Tetuan are outposts within the Arab psyche,
frail islets jutting their Islamic consciousness
into the infidel mind.

A mere eight miles separates the tip of North Africa
from Iberia's reclining form.

An Arab dhow sits off the port of Tangier
where the unsuspecting can lose more than priapic curiosity.

Arabia, from Ormuz to Sofala,
an empire of sabulous plenitude -

shiekdoms, oil rich fiefs, and
luxurious enervation.

Da Gama rounds the Bight of Africa, needles the Saracen eye.

Tutankhamen rests dolefully within the dunes
away from bone merchants until 1923 draws nigh.

Ptolemy errs and extends Africa to the Poles.

The noblest failure in antiquity rests in Zama
while Jesus toiled for our betterment at Galilee.

Richard dies besieging Acre.

Carnage occurred at Lepanto with attendant demise of the Turk.

Marco Polo ignores the Levant for the riches of a Khan.

The memory of El Alamein burnt away any vestige of Tobruk.

The Casbah is my twain that confirms East & West shall never meet.

The False Prophet is in abundance, notwithstanding
Western civilization's fierce resistance to his ideas.

Minarets, prayer rugs face Mecca five times daily while
opium on a mother's breast induces premature death in
unwanted infant girls.

The purdah is an eerie monologue between the feminine
form and purloined courage.

Mysticism juxtaposes carnal delight in the halls of the
Saladein's concubines.

Harems & the seraglios are the coveted date wine.

In Cape Bojador, there lurks a primeval instinct,
a nagging supposition all is not right with Araby.

The bath, the cloying sweetness of duplicity,
stirs amidst trenchant eyes.

Marmelukes are more than adventure book fiction
in the silent quarters.

The swirling dust, the prohibition of alcoholic drink,
are dervishes in the hadji's brain.

Everywhere, the ragged people cluster,
almsgiving becomes a prayer in the saline night.

Any but the Moslem faith caught in the pilgrimmage
to Mecca meet swift death.

The shopfronts with their bronzed clatter,
decantered gold, near haggling that becomes
the economics of plea bargaining, wits
desire against pressing need.

Debarking from Algeciras, facing the sublime North African
desert as her colours coil, pitch forward amongst the hills,
squares this continent's personality against the Occident.

Europe found other continents soft butter to her trenchant blade.

Here, she must consider herself matched with the heady dictates of survival.

[16]

COLD PASSION

Some dead undid undid their bushy jaws,
and bags of blood let out their flies...
Dylan Thomas

The land is barren
wears straw wisps
as an unkempt man
might razor stubble.

The land is dry, a faded yellow
in its barrenness.
A sky broods from afar,
a stalactite sun accounts merely a jot
above that thin road into despair.

Grass lies everywhere dead,
faded tongues above an
earth afflicted with scleroderma,
deadliest of skin disturbances,
forerunner of deeper pestilence.

An erasing wind whips the fields
further into bereavement;
turns tiny bits of chaff to pursue themselves
in a mad St. Vitus dance
of cold passion.

Starry night. With halos
about the moon, pale and languid, big as crimson,
far as wind driven flax.

The orange pallor, pale
with liquid swoon and ability
to churn itself about the
night sky or flood in endless
beams our poorer spectacle below.

[19]

FOR TOM THOMSON

I have thrust my fists
up to ice in the
galactic mire of lake,
lured my minnow wriggler
eyes as bait to ensnare
inroads, lake bed wreaths,
across the windchill spine of
brooding heart.

I am on the essence of the North
where latitudes of cold spontaneity
remind me the nameless lakes
part not easily with their secrets.

A man's bones go easily to rot
in the frigid perspiration
called primeval ooze,
precambrian sweat,
the tertiary stage syphilitic crawl
of advancing ice.

All those terms your detractors, analyzers,
devotees coin to define you: the Boreal,
taiga, subarctic steppes, white hell,
recoil under the onslaught, the lustrate message straining
up alkaline clear.

Water is your blood.
A vast hoarding, most of this
planet's fresh drink
is flushed through your
bowels, with kidneys
separating the renic
qualities as snow and
sleet, the night side of
your character.

Tom, son of Thomson fame,
his little canoe immeshed
as scrubbed floorboards now,
a giant winnowing such scattered
firewood over a slow crop of
putrefying muck; perhaps
I see your eyes
as sturdy bubbles
popping from legions
of green liquid
to carouse with your
firm memory.

[21]

THE WOODSMAN

Barely annoying the woods,
his cabin like our woodpile
home now for chipmunks and birds,
isolated by the lily pads -
he eschewed all comfort.

The view barely cognizant,
the prospect of the Massasauga rattler
and an occasional broken tin
sharp at the edges
was like water's drift
audible, not yet seen.

Toying with the cove,
past island jetties
& blueberry groves
inside little giant's tomb;
this man became ingratiated with lake treasure,
his clearing a triumphant blast.
He affixed his mark -
blazoning human habitation
on a lonely spot.

[23]

EAST OF OSWEGOE

Ticonderoga to Lake George,
the classic invasion route
up the Richelieu valley
past Plattsburg,
Verdun,
à Montréal
across the North Shore
reroute again

to savour Albany;
last of the trading posts east of Oswego
before New York
protective sanctuary
lodgings,
free from the scalping knife
barrens and
the horrors Fenimore Cooper described.

Apple crisp, fall damp the air
with an unbroken stretch of forest
and Adirondack mountains,
there, delicate slip
of fair womanhood
bliss, she lies, gentle as the finger lakes
clothed in autumn crimson.

[24]

PRESENCE OF MIND

Spring heralds the summer with lilacs perched from that door.

In snows, a swarm of bushes lie black and apparently
rootless as the town's iron-gate bridge collapses under the
centre part of the main road.

Little enclaves of activity pass as stores,
mere centrefolds across busy highway arteries this time
of year.

I am a grey fleck in my dark wool coat near the perimeter
of a winding fence.

The casual observer gives me half a chance to be seen in
the deathless white, opaque coloured moonstone so still
against the field's shores.

A plaster river, her sides inserted with isle-dotted chunks,
hands across a winter solstice tribal dance.

Ostensibly, I poke the land from stylized limbo,
a chalky substance disturbed with every movement's cough.

And if I were to fall, lie down, and cry,
the agonized winter's frantic sun
would bury me with shadows,
give forth dark branches to my freedom.
In the growing dark, I ponder white and infinity.
The hectic pace of the distant highway absorbs
less and less my hope.
In private cold, my face burns a tallow white,
toes flake in frostbite or erode every sensation.

Stars in the dark canopy above are cryptic mourners and
people frigid sorrow.

Black is my colour as I ebb steadily toward their heights.

By morning, when the first wisp of straw or dry leaf
catches light near this stringent fence, an occasional
passerby with the presence of mind shall comment how
lifeless fields are in the clutch of brittle snow.

[\[25\]](#)

FISHING NETS

The polar stars drip in blood . . .
Orion's mythical crystal white
with clarity of forest and
low expanse of sky;
wooden barques, incandescent,
row peals of silver light
sowing each slough of wave,
spider hues drip upon wetness
forlorn with tug and rein.

[\[27\]](#)

rites of intensification

Did time on the Hegelian
spirit, Freudian id,
the totemic response to
the unknowable
where each phenomenon of nature
became dream time itself,
the electric crackle
of God's Voice-
movement from shadowy spectre to
tight-lipped showmanship
the learned empathy
of tires careening around
their throttled load.

[\[28\]](#)

JAGGED WIRE

A rail fence is more than that on a country dawn
moving by lots over hill & stone;
it barely pauses in the small of the field's lap,
then is caught in grey positioning as
light unfurls the sky.

All is a matter of perfect blistering -
dauber wasps are seen to heave the moistened wood
in chunks to mossy furrows, benign

in their firm embrace upon alabaster trees.
There, crusts of heavy nails, marked
like fortresses, droop in their rusty mail.
Mostly ants, in open canter, move
in as upon an urn & lance far more
than jagged wire the breath of stillest air.

[291]

EYESHINE

I remember the world like a picture.
The habitat of trees and sense impressions,
the cover of leaves as fall spurred its way
thru corridors of plasma forest & sarsen stone.

Most of all, I saw illuminated clearly
the brash self poke of logic that came
massively when sunlight stirred, lilted
its early head erasing the world thru
sand crusts of colour.

The cabin floor, a cold dawn infinity,
was a chilblain on frosty morning shadows -
the old cupboards staring like flowers
through a break in the leaves
watched till the latches & hinges were worlds
in frozen power, dark rust as thoughts
meandering like age.

The stamped down clay, the well worn earthen crust
that met the door on opening showed
the erring calender all its interminable
days that waited, like madmen, to remind one of oceanic
time.

And, on wakening, the careless passage
of life across speckled windows saw a terrain of light -
tiny works in agility, the forest
looming bright as meridians
off ladders bristling with homuncular forms.
Door of caring, the gentle trail
left as a universe to announce
the brittle thrust and restive eves
of daytime shadow.

[301]

SWEET WATER

The leaves lie hidden as spades about their home.
Brief movement of a kitten, then silence
till the car's engine drones.
Close by, a pioneer cemetery sits near a secondary wood.

Queer is the effect of sun on a tinted roof;
bluebells with poppies,
cowslip and tiny brook
back of
fields redden and
given to wheat.

A house is a machine
processing the water of living
a replenished cistern,
birds paying a call, a minor animal
brushing past
an ivy-railed fence.

[321]

PRIMAVERA

A poem is perishable and,
like it,

so much of life is spent
in intervals -
the jarring second
regaining consciousness,
a post-mortem flick
of the lank equestrian eyelid
that signals morning's first crepuscular move.

... a little salad consciousness
about the tumescent room
with the sentient purr of a cat;
her musky oils
a green verdure
lapping primordial scent
to engross a little readiness
as the day progresses
to its Oedipal stage
and arrested development.

[33]

THE ENCOUNTER

Today surprised me
like a red fox blurting
out of an October thicket -
empty, dry, the burst of its
energy camouflaged much as
that fox, solemn and cold,
biding his time
till he thought I
passed.

[34]

MAGPIE TONGUES

Trillium breath, an ounce
of feathered growth unravels
in the cloves of the silent forest.
The rain is heavy with the stamp
of perfumed trees realizing
slight restraint on bursting seed.

Cloaked in fragrance, tufts
of mossy step kiss the opening earth,
a basement horizon presumes
the darling test of flower
across dale & rustling nook,
then undresses moist greenery
with sumptuous eye.

The last is hardest -
cat crimson, a fire weed sunset lotion,
the rain erased away;
nobody special harangues the leaves
but birds steal in quietly with
tenderness clothed of verdure
to pinch a leafy oasis about
their forest haunt.

[35]

PLUMS & VINE

Plums and vine (as the Atlantic is green)
intone the heavy church wall
with errant sprigs, so Heaven sent
they are big with earthly passion
racing for the sky.

Madonna Poverta in her midst
with the pulpit clutching Light -
so gnarled, like bush, that each crevice
reeks with stone

all stooped under such worldly avarice.

[36]

PERHAPS

Perhaps the sky once was shadows,
the moon lisped 'mongst April's song.
Now, those warm lips ease
departing sorrow
like pressed flowers
emptied from hallowed ground.

[37]

APPROACHING THIRTY (Lauds and Matins)

Laconic tears or Botticelli's Venus
holding the years
like tresses
in a wistful pose.

Tenebrous youth accosted
by callow Time
bleeds the heart
with spring aloes.
No comfortable shibboleths
to restrain the wriggling polyps
in the skin or nestling hair.

Gerundive in movement,
each particled whimper
of the clock surrounds
a cloistered second
poised about the bearded target.
As far as you know, nothing unusual.

A total of eight hundred months
but grammar school sums,
spiel & mileage
to drift across a lifetime.
At thirty, the best half of the potage
is gruel hand drawn from
the sabulous pot.

[38]

PASSAGEWAYS

Greet the days -
greet the moon,
gather the stars...

Man is not at one with himself -
collars the infidel ways of his
race under pressure domes of widening silence.

I scan the horizon barely cognizant
of the metallic bits that pierce
the night's crown - no
jewelled orb stabs this queen's spectre.
I am running and lost. . . ever slow
to breach this reasoning.

Honeysuckle mist with armfuls
of orange lilies with scent stronger
than the carriage needed in their gathering.

Place the constellations upon their heads,
the colour so transcends.

And then there are the bludgeoned
stars fallen into the eyes of
my farmhouse scene.
The sphinx moth that darns the night

with her acrobatics escapes the wreath
of troubled moon that places about
her proboscised head.

Let her stone the night in peace,
feel palpitations on her ocean breast.

The darting of stone cracks in fissures
along the causeway to the stonehouse
is certain and sure.

A definite mood projects
the starling tunnels,
forlorn now with limpid darkness,
crushed lavender from the pews
of thoughtful night.

There are armfuls of crushed bats
in the passageway to my heart,
each reeking with squeals
to alarm the most frightened princess.
Only one has stained the pass key
and I must find her.

A toad abides the thoughtful recess
broken under the wall.
He is a good toad and mourns
the night creaking from the river bed.
A monster dragon to the insects
making a living near the light -
a source of amused contempt to lepidoptrists
squeezing the eye's circle,
pressing her to release her giddy charms.

At morning, skeletal remains
shall stain the blighted chain (mood collector, toad, moth)
but, for now, only the night buzzes with alarm,
cracking her secrets with each tiny monster
hurled at light's intrusion into dark.

Perchance I shall narrow
down the divide, position alarms,
remind myself I am inured to the
mood & scent that mans this cosmic bandwagon.
I hold up flowers to remind me
light escapes through jelly
and that rare LUMINESCENCE exists only
in lost bat chambers
buried deep near the recesses
of the snake.

The cry of havoc,
all those armfuls of collapsed lilies
breaking under the toil of enforced handshakes
leaves me like a broken lamp.
I have no more shades to patch
the plinths or barricade my heart.
I have left my love on bended knee
in a land I choose to forget.

[39]

KINDLING

As a matter of fact,
ovens do carry a glazed stare,
fireplaces are wont to parry
thoughts to kindling
before their stoop and
on breathless summer nights
one is hard pressed
to recall cinder and
blackened barleys any more
vegetatively than upon
these harridan pots.

[42]

THE GLOWWORM

In slow sutures of pale white -
dabbed in growing spume & mud dried earth,
a glowworm is obliterated by warm, soft light
coming up to elbow particles of near dappled clay
that plants dissect, warm as feasts, aloft a muscat lawn.

Pale, segmented tortoise -
trite in area and jellied purpose,
the glowworm oozes headlong
through an aroused dark
necking furiously with fungus turds
and truffles rooted from the
pig ground by mice sized swine
holidaying on scents and mildew salvaged
thru pores & nestling bowels
of their planet sized turf.

[43]

BETWEEN TWO STONES

They poured hot water into people's cups
in which green tea leaves were floating
like algae,
or into red-painted spittoons
placed on the floor
which the travellers made frequent use of...
It was strangely quiet.

[44]

THE WATERS OF THE BAY LIE BENEATH

An abandoned house -
dark salved to eclectic;
crinkly, black pigment of old pine boards
disparate to the elements.

The waters of the bay lie beneath.
A long slope trailing back of brush,
garbles stones hoarse
in the throat of a dust-flecked field
are made more barren
by the skunk cabbage weeds,
the ugly, flotsam cloaks
of horse hair to the neck -
a hair shirt, coddling abrupt the barren pain
tilled from empty soil.

The summer's heat.
Nameless insect waifs
wavering, adjusting tumult
to straighten the tight air
about the outward door frame.
Pinched in windows, glass in
refugee lots billowing about
urine paper;
nails a ruddy pick
dried to rusty blue,
some dim shiny in their cropped disrepair.
A road dry, rotating bare,
nameless zigzagged

only limestone in shelves
meanders in
throngs about stony debris,
sometimes up to this beaten house.

[45]

PASSING

I should be busy with words
but light distracts me
makes for me, in the sowing of its waves,

neutral observances, a chilled awareness
that the sublime is contained herein
the wonders of the commonplace.

[47]

KITH AND KIN

Once there was a giant
who lived in a kneecap,
a peculiar giant at that
who expelled all reality
as a pig might a poke.

Not concerned with the dilemma
of easing life's toothpaste form
into dental crustings or
oblivion's dark shadows
from lightless paths,
the giant assumed guardianship
over his fibro-tissual home.

The giant could be seen
ferrying dwarfed bones
over the inter causal dome
of flesh and blood.

At times, he substituted
a remarkable likeness
for his kith and kin
by dumping calloused cushions,
too long cousins
of the diaper rash effect
bunions, corns,
carbuncles
eager to roam
the padlocked sockets
between distant fibula
and tibia.

Poor femur, of course, was
outraged against carpals
and the growing phalanx
arrangement of
distant phalanges.
Even the metatarsals
were girdled in
righteous indignation
committed against their person
by a maverick masquerading
in pelvic insubordination.

Altogether the body contains 206 bones.
It is rumoured none contain
a giant of his capacity, notoriety, or effect.

[48]

TO SIT ARRAYED

To sit arrayed
and task consumed
by the edge of a window,
the world as fire
stepping free of winter's stain,
jutting fingers of light
to a basement ledge
then allowing their
foggy movement to
displace dust's circle
as it has come
to be known
over the last
five months,
is to come as
near as possible
to the brink
of private

sanity.

[50]

SILVER COINS

Seen the whores in doorsteps,
slack, crouched as packing crates
behind their quiet wardrobe lamps,
inset like a skeleton's crown
there to bend our will,
provide passageways to power and suggestion;
the winding entrance to rouged
light flickering with powdered flesh
yellow of gold,
then black to ivory
a frightful circus in a palace of turn
within the grate of execution.

[51]

SENTRY

In Edvard Munch's painting, The Scream, eyes
are grouped as discs, almost rotund arches,
much as suns breaking over an eclipsed wall.
Hollows, jittery the bridge a creamed escape
careening the soul madly backward
a pastel gathering sky -
water rivulets where two solitary, graven figures
seem indulging a flaccid, breaking stream.

[52]

THE POTATO EATERS

The potato eaters -
grim, weathered souls
wrenching a meal
from sandy waste.

The dark toil lined ridges
carried from their fields
to each human face,
dim, pale light
as shadowy as
lives eked out upon this stoney rash of soil.

Brows, a murky legend
of overwork -
deflected hope,
seasons up in the smoke
of a potato boil.

[53]

THE ASSIGNATION (PONS ASINORUM)

Many devils are in woods, in waters, in wilderness and in dark,
pooly places ready to hurt. . . people, some are also in thick,
black clouds. Martin Luther

. . . Masaccio to the Florentine Renaissance but a naught-
every man the same, St. Francis the same as a Jack the Ripper.
their rosy surfaces filled.

Like an Old Testament curse
he is loosed upon the earth.
Ecking out his pound of flesh
delivering misery in sordidness, he parboils the land.

A modern day Tantalus up to his throat
in burning lies,

his death is to live, in the contemporary sense,
the thousand cuts-
to bury the skies as a dread Caiaphas
into the contradiction, the snares of his being.

Measure for measure
his blond mane, pale scarf
are hallmarks of the doomed Dutchman searching out the
Coromandel;
like Cain stumbling upon existence,
he hearkens back to the original Murderer,
has sold his inheritance for a pittance
and by doing so has ridiculed the human condition
with his life charged obscenity;
his blond beast scowl curdled about respectability's neck,
his fang tussled face a menacing white cigarette,
the soul imprisoned jailer to his teeth, breath and brain.

[54]

HAUNTED CHILD

In the dark of wedlock
nightly sky,
the wither of hope
and estranged replies,
cause a white face to flicker
with transparent eye,
calumny of purpose
to slowly die.

[55]

TRIANGULAR TRADE

I would watch him lifting
another drink from the fridge,
joke about the connection
with a triangular trade -
bedroom to kitchen fridge,
then to the bathroom -
only to repeat the cycle
not knowing such comments
scratched his eyes
climbing through the window
for escape.

[56]

CASTING ROCKS

Merely on edge,
the wharf in bad light
clinging to water's ledge -
a loon from afar
the Woods
closing with each sound.

Casting rocks toward moon's glare
lapidations laughing back,
the treacle of warm night
coaxing fire's glowing might.

Sudden, oceanic wilderness
breathless in barked silence -
and camphor to keep the flies at distance,
the anchored boat like a prison ship
dallying on the waves,
brambles & underbrush
sunken wet sand,
abundant berries rasp in thickets -
the cottage like a jar
closing for the night.

[57]

BRUSHSTROKE

On rue Vincingetorix,
a Paris hovel
in a garret of cold -
Gauguin enchanted
serpentine colours, the medium of
a brushstroke from
a paltry primitivism.

Rue Vincingetorix,
cloudy haze
sun as billowing plaster,
neatly laps
scrapes clean
the bereavement
of a man's pain.

[58]

MAN

In the old air
by his rocker,
a silent trapeze of thought
suspends an aging man.

Each movement as of the katydid
droning -
a monologue with the past;
a buzz escaping across
still, warm air.
Elsewhere, cicadas whittle about the octogenarian heat.

Nestled quietly, a supine stare erodes both time & place
unto bearded grey -
nuances clasped
in a breathless chat with death.

[59]

LANDING SCHEMES

Omens are the cloth of dreams
scissors used to open sky -
the future riding birds
en route to ariel docking piles.

Leonardo was of the opinion creativity might be
enhanced a notch should aspiring artists nota bene
principalities, bile, their rhumes as tiles
then perceive them piecemeal as stratagem, not snuff or
random blotch, the heads of diseased pigs
but conjuror-sextants toward the stars.

[60]

MIRAGE

The intense focus of light
but pointillism,
into this juncture bits of light
surround rough, inverted sky -
dawn is their message
unfurled about
the alumni apparatus
of incensed eyes
and whispered sun.

The heavy mirage of dots,
landscape locked
Seurat, a frieze of summer heat
choking water lilies -

the sun as a crystal ship
adrift across
bedlam-sponsored
random dots.

[611]

STONE GUIDE

She was fading -
into the stone
into rifled shadows heavy
with fallen light,
rippled boughs
of splitting fruit &
droopy leaves
to a sallow body under clumsy years
that ripped the tunic of her coat
while bleating the dismal age
with each petal fall
of a stockinged foot.

[621]

RED ILLUSIONS UNDER GLASS

Life as green illusion -
the cool fronds of the fern
are deep set in firmest soil
and the grassy narrows
brook a silent, liquid play.

Red illusions under glass -
quietly picking strawberries
where a woman hums to
the buzz of flies
with the afternoon sun disappearing overhead.

Each grasp of the berry
a red stain, the darting of seeds,
crimson tendrils do confuse the eye
with a polka dot starling raucous
in glee above.

[631]

English born, Paul Cameron Brown has lived in or around the Toronto area for most of his thirty years.

His poems have appeared in periodicals across Canada and into the United States.

One previous book, *Whispers*, appeared in 1977.



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