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Excerpt, *The Nonverbal Dictionary* (unpublished poetry collection)

AGNOSIA

I worry more than a little bit about equestrian settings
I am more than a little bit mediocre
most days are disappointing in that they chip and crack around the rims
this is how I know they're cheap and have been used before
and improperly run through the dishwasher.
Think of the finest leaking thing you've ever seen

and don't ask me
to take comfort in half-measures
I know when something has been
irrevocably damaged.

AKINESIA

What's more, some of us will be slapped
with fishes, while others will do the slapping.

Special gloves, laced with transparent rubber
grips, for holding your fish by the tail
while its front end delivers wrath
to the faces of your enemies.

AMYGDALA

There can be no doubt as to the
trustworthiness of Mrs. R. F. G.
She is a dog like the rest of us.
I can see that you're not satisfied.
You feel ugly. You feel miserable
right now it might never change.
This way to the entrance. We hypothesize
that many states may coexist. This is
the front of the building, here is the door
a habit, a pattern, of which you
were previously unaware. You feel
undifferentiated. That's ok. We are all
a community of habit. We are all
guessing. What's more, there may be damage.
Someone on the other side is drowning.
The rush of the sea, hairdrier, mousse,
a variety of creams. She wanted
critique, and she got it. She was acting like an
old lady, and we said so. This is no way
to treat a customer.

ANGER

Expert appraisers were baffled by the senselessness.
Subtle hostility dogged them on the route to work
or on weekends at the laundromat. The idea of value
entirely in the mind; the dumb profundity of animal life;
the loyalty clause bundled into their contract with the immaterial.

AQUATIC BRAIN & SPINAL CORD

Next month

I will devour turf and arcade game
joysticks. We were
trekking across the parking lot to some
obscure destination. An obscure day in spring
or fall that passed quietly, it will be
vaguely missed.
I would like to make it to the customer service desk.
That greed is an apple is the wrong interpretation
and I would like to exchange it for the correct one
please [a polite expression of vestigial powerlessness].
A lot of things are difficult. Right now
is a misnomer, we've been here before
for quite some time.
But how to call it then? How to politely decline
to be present to eternity, which was a stupid idea
to schedule that to begin with.

CONFERENCE TABLE

If you are really looking
for control, spread your legs and let it
place its notebooks, pens, manuals
and anything else it brought along
inside your *territory*
a horizontal flatland
in which
a great
battle
of messages
cuffs bracelets wristwatches cut-off hairstyles
neckwear

your mission-sub-mission
hesitation, disfluencies

colleagues
securely masked below the tabletop
secretly in the *territory*
a smooth flat

express

slop

or, palm-slap

to the shared surface

where we shit status and power

up your *territory*

palm-down

close-quarters interaction

shoulder expanse

across the *territory*, shoulder-to-

shoulder, advance

a stature over your supine

defenses

To assert in military

affairs, with listeners

fluttering, sleeping, eating

the *territory*,

to burst

their territorial bubble

the gentlest

needling

prick draws the puss

cascading fluid dominance cues.

DISGUST

More things than ever are extremely

palatable, Mr. Yuck sighs. Boundary violations,

inappropriate sex, poor hygiene. The more time

passes, the more he desires. Something stuck

in his teeth, Mr. Y probing with a fingernail

now is the time to look away. Even death,

he remarks, flicking a bit of salad.