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Prescriptive Assignment

The maintenance crew

- does not find a corrective action plan.
- does not know what to do about moral dilemmas and forgiveness.
- could not agree on a contract.

The maintenance crew

- wears matching short sleeve shirts.
- are given no prescriptive assignments.
- could not agree to come home from college.

The man with the power sits at a student desk eating McDonald's French fries.

He tells the maintenance crew:

“When I came up it was a lot more Jesusey.”

The man with the power

- hurries toward the overgrown athletic fields
- to stop the motivated army
- to save the land from developers.

A huge box of stuff which once decorated his waterfront home is destined for the trash.

Inside is an American flag of the finest silk.

I decide to rescue it

- to give it a proper disposal.
- to give it an ancient Catholic catechism.
- to give it to Brent in the History department

As I try to fold it properly it grows and billows into a parachute that lifts me away from the picnic table outside the college offices, away from the loitering maintenance crew, and I notice stuck to my cardigan the 3x5” index card that had been taped to the huge box of stuff which says, “Free”

“Dreams can only prophesy the most mundane things.”

– Anthony Burgess

Man on the wanted poster is your lover. You have just brought him to Christmas dinner and everyone loved him. You are about to get on the train to leave and see the poster of him there. Criminal.

Institutionalized. Sky white as a piece of paper. From beach to beach they close down the strips too late and a tarantula wakes whirlpools in the sand. Turtle has no shell and licks away at fish food.

You have two bats - pipes. But you think they are whistles - flutes. You finally realize they are bird calls. The cardinal and the mourning dove wake us from sleep.

Nights of HBO: California cops canyons country sides: thinks of work vs. school, family vs. alone and a prospect of romance: each the substitute for the other as it stands.

There's the ditch and there's the water you want the latter, dressed in grey underwear. Surrogate danger in dormant clothes.

Add dresses.

Creeley said, “...for bad Italian and twisted bridges...”

In one reality you read only the introductions to books. That is all you need to know. In one reality you are a lean dancer, in another you are a fat dancer, in another you are no dancer at all - a watcher. It is not about politics: it is literature. So choose.

In the last days of the empire

we will go back to our old school:
they have lost accreditation, finally.

In the last days of the empire
Jack will sleep with Linda the famous singer.
She cries about her thighs but sings
in pleasing symmetry
any song you request.

We will reveal ourselves from under hoodies.
Miriam! Brian!
Others, even the dead arrive.
The half dead, too, upsetting statues,
reaching inside.

I ask Sam Hamill where to find binder clips.
“The teachers’ white cabinet!” he says.
I see them deep in the back
behind cans of Goya beans.
I look for books to stand upon.

Jack agrees.
He will leave with Linda on the last plane out.
“This is not a place for you to stay...”
“But I don’t care about LA...”
We all knew it was an end of the empire thing.

Our two favorite teachers
left the doors to the refrigerator
open
side by side like the old days.
I see the lights on and the lettuce.

Before it ends we must have music.
Cecil has gone to work in the PAC.
I see the lights off and the dancers.
My pirouette lasts a very long time,
so another.

A guy from the old days recognizes me.
“Lisa!”
But I don’t recognize him.
“Were we in the play? together?” he asks.
“Shoes Full of Teas’?
The one where we wore
Imelda Marcos’ glass slippers?”