

Ryan Scott Nance

Hollywood Institute of Poetics
presents
the Bluebird Reading series
featuring:

Chiwan |
Choi

Ryan |
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| Brendan
Constantine

| Mandy
Kahn

Sunday March 10, 2013 | 2PM
@
Avenue 50 Studio

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Garden-throat's Tale

He dreamt first he was met
on a snow-blown block at night
by a slasher who scalped a trough
from his chin to the tip of his sternum
and pulled his esophagus out.
He lay, breathing more openly in
the wintry air until a nurse
in burgundy found him and
fit him with a length of green
garden hose, and stapled him shut.
Next he dreamt the slasher had
been the one to fit him
with the garden pipe, whispering
his benedictions of growth & growing,
and rechristening him Garden-throat.
He received the blade, its handle riveted
in steel. It was called Throater, and he
carried it on with him on his travels.
That is Garden-throat's story.

Saying It

Leaves flap through the dark windows
like stiff-veined flags. Wind stirs
much of the street. An uncut lime

is small and fits in the palm's hollow,
near the wrist. It turns like a key:
the apartment door and the neighbors'

door, the front door to the sidewalk
beneath the tree of urgent flags,
and the windows which seem so much

like passages—— should be looked through,
but not stepped through. Inside the refrigerator,
the light blinks out again,

again the calm of cold puts off expiration
a little longer. The smell of the wind
before its charge through the window,

the odor of gas announces the maniacal blue flame,
rising smoke wraith and the sweet forgiving smell,
the long dedication of the tea whistle, the tea's

wheaty steam. On the teacup's lip, very nearly
saying it. There is no detail. No turn to make.
Only the heat before, the heat after.

Wicked Samurai in Cartoon Disguises

Out of the corner will
Surely spring the sword-wielding
Kind hearted ender of each
Of us. The kitten faced
The laughably ineffectual

The well fortified city, Senlis
In France for example, or Toledo's
Rocky approaches, can withstand
With measured grit and Roman
Pipes a great siege, the Hoarde,
The army Intent on blood and
Fatherhood of your children's children. But what walls,

Tall and stony, can't keep
Out, or won't keep out, is
The clowns, the ridiculous,
The harmlessly looney. A parade
Of them, grinning and grimey
Prostrating themselves before
The proud queen combing her
Hair in the moonlight on Saturday
Evenings high in her iron-braced
Tower.

Today, just today, a wicked
Samurai, masterfully trained
To let human life drain onto
A kitchen's meticulous floor,
Arrived at your door in a
Cartoon disguise. An afternoon
Bright with imagined future

Remembrance darkened quickly
With a silent honed knife.

And that was it. You bled
Out on your private battlefield.
You failed to defend your life.

The mugger you frightened off years
Ago, the teetering semi truck you
Swerved around, the unceremoniously poisoned kebabs
You didnt buy from the jibbering
Street vendor, all were not
Your doom.

In the last few brain cycles your
Blood's quickly fleeing oxygen affords
You should really wonder who
Sent your well loved killer.
And why. You won't know either,
Ever. You really ever only know
Your own heart, and that only
If you are brave and open.

[backup]

The Fire

The fire ashes him. The wafer-
esque moonlight pools upon
the underscape of his eyes of
night. His is not a story, but
the shuffle of aspen one morning;
the spill of cinders glowing some many
years in the campground of dark
remembrance. Burning by fire is
the radical injection of air, to an equal
degree, to all parts, a mob of molecules
and air, a transformation through
divvying-up. He is his reinstating.
He is his again giving a cadaver
to the concept it orphaned. He is
his watching the flights of smokes.
He is his walking storeward for coffee
and churros in his grey coastal morning.
He is his burning. The fire is its
ashing him. He is his piling *like* together
in a list. He is his listing.

Yellow

If I may compare great things with small,
A lemon is a funny canary.
Like a Eucharist wafer, a shallow
Gold dish called patina carries the sun,

A Dutch gilder, a soft pile of arsenic.
In the cool humid lands to the North,
The soil is leached of its bases in
Increase of acid, bile, gall, yellow-green,

Melancholy. From the Danube in the
West, the Melanchlaei, the Black Cloaks,
Melanoma, the black growth, cut with
A knife as thin as a postage stamp and

Tapped into a clean glass dish colored
Like a spark, the Androphagi lived further
North beyond where lay uninhabited
Desert. The winter sun, an ash covered

Gleed in the gloaming a few notches off
The horizon. The falling excrement
Of wild honeybees contaminated
By a fungal toxin, yellowdog,

Yellowsheet felon, felonious Old
World daisy. In yellow rain, the ember
Glowing with breath shall glint. Tawny Krishna!
Tawny Krishna, my gleg exception

At your gleefully jaundiced gloat, young
As you are, avatar, will blaze
On the hide of the First Cow in the sky-
Less world of ice, probably yellow

Metals, bright materials, made piled-up.

On the blown bough of the tree man was made
From, a yellowhammer, yellow-shafted
Flicker, glistens less bird and more flame,

Coal made yellow through age & use.
The gold dish grace is brought forward on,
Gilt favor, as genuine as the
yellow-jacket irises of a

half-Manx grey-striped house tiger. Her glib
smile half-slid off the sill. As honest
as gold, as purchasable as what may
be bought with gold. Mercenary. Turntail.

Cad. An antibiotic administered
Against ringworm of the heart, the courage
Blue-grey, mottled, dappled in the dusk's
Yellow glass, gloss, image made on light-

Sensitive silver-coated metallic plates.
Impervious reportage, yellowing.
Tinctorially heroic & hallowed.

Infinitive

1. Be or not be the question is.

2. Whether nobler in the mind it is suffer
the sling of torture

or take arms against and torturer be

Our to go begins at our wanting go

animism he says

3. image of animus she says often
and again

the embedded stone, be not as
it may,

may to be rubbed over the knob in the stone's odd seventh quadrant
they jinx one another stop the other from talk

something rhetorical need be done to these houses. Drink
full well against possible resentment.

4. There's no vanilla, only grammar, excellent as
Mayan obsidian sacrifices.

And the deceased must have been about my size he says

5. It is a luminous evidence he may say it is a luminous rubbish
a luminous busking, it is a luminous panhandling, it is a luminous
pander

of a good morning on the cheek of every well meant
surprisingly seems a real answer to the clatter
of tinny appraisals

Jet Propulsion Laboratory

1.

What can I say for the hills
except they were nearly
green, scrub brush brown.
The sun in that clear,
pre-adamic sky was high,
glinted off the tallest
lab building's aluminum frame.

Sunday afternoon: open house
roiling early March heat,
superconductors, extra-system
geology, like the quiet
conversations between reticent
men, for now, no story:
A bald sky, sun, science.

2.

An expanse must be run.
The grooved freeway deck
need be drifted across.
Unroll the coiled matter
sprung up inside.

3.

The model communication
satellite wasn't built
for our atmosphere. While
solar winds blow, my moist
mouth. After a few minutes
of holding my breath, as close
to outer space as either of us
will likely get, dizzy, disoriented.

The floating pitch of magnets,
and visual acuity of big mirrors.

4.

But it's strange to mark against
my father what I may fear.

The danger is to aestheticize
that strangeness.

His one less-clouded eye
was only an eye. The satellites
overhead hummed noiselessly
noiselessly. Man and man, we
drove down to his lower valley.

[backup]

The Belief in Baleful Stars

As if the face were of a man

Thin stars with elongated tails: 3s
naturally imply a vertical axis—— a scaffolding
of degrees,

as in *top mid low*——
the three will not commingle,
skygrowth cannot upsurge a human.
Stonedrift, outcrop, stalactite,
snagstone. The cosmic triad tacks
man squarely between sky and rock.

This is me talking. Principles
of controlled movement, dryness & moisture,
appear to have answers——

A stunning kit of ways to describe
the predicament

Should such a man (fond of
study and fond of resolute
characters) chance upon any,
he will know the jade
from the shingle at a single
glance. How many words

do I have for *copy*? breaks, losses,
wormhole damage. There are five classics:
changes, odes, history, rites
and the comments on Spring & Autumn;

and five elements: consumption, stability,
growth, mutability and flexible
incorruptibility; 3 may imply
verticality, but 5 pins down
a broad horizontal vellum field——

the four quarters and the center——
wrist, neck, shame, foot, foot,
ankle, tooth. The five sacred
peaks, all of an interchangeable
basic function, on a single level.

Dumb Incantation

In December the valley was covered
with clouds the color of ink-soaked
cotton. Early in January, the lid

was off and a fierce silver sun
rocked across the sky. The detention center
halls were not unearthly green. The pale

blue-grey walls, cream-colored
metal grates, the men shifting around
a hive of orange suits, yellow suits,

a few chalk-blue ones. Something
I would ask about when it was my turn.
But when my brother handed the grey phone

to me and I took it, and set my eyes
on my father's face, and he set his two eyes,
the good one going bad and the black one,

and he sent them to the wall behind me,
I said nothing. He began talking
about the TV on Sundays, the food,

his cellmates, the hour for exercise.
The slate of his face, the pepper-black
stubble, the black of his eye that

would bleach out to vein-blue
before he was released, I said okay.
Good. Great. School's fine. And

I felt then, later though I thought
I was wrong, that not even the glass, or

the suit, the eye, the age, the crime,

or this dread would ever separate us,
I would follow him there in my time through
the routine of risk & failure. The phone

was cut. Time was up. He had not reached what
he was working up to. He made the I Love You
sign with his hand, straining to hold

his ring finger down, and slapped it against
the layers of glass and plastics, pounding out
some dumb incantation, saying something I couldn't hear.

Samarkand

Jules the maddening ruler began by stating that now is the time
when the fishermen no longer fish
when the osprey circles without diving
when the cold mountain no longer pikes
up in the sky because diamond air no longer wraps it around
when the businessman is still at his desk
when kings serve other kings
when I serve the king of england
when the cat no longer mouses
when the sleepers no longer rest
when houses on the street are bathed in electric fire
when good people are no longer good
when good people are no longer people
when kilns fire nothing
when a graveyard dog digs up his dead master
when potshard emulates briefly
when we are kith and kin
when gods become intimate and private
when ivory figurines no longer suffice
when our savior hangs himself on an elm
when our fathers recount their trips to the supermarket
when gold is gold no more
when all that we have done will be undone
when opossums bear live young upon the hay pallet
when the farmer polishes his scyth and sickle
when the hammer hammers a nailhead
when stopping for coffee no longer means anything
when the radio talks
when the scholars give up
when goldfish grow up to be koi
when the old apartment lined and
labyrinthed with scrolls
books and apothecary cabinets is
torn down and rebuilt up, shinier only
when words point only to other words
when there is no thing in this world
when buttons are no longer tendered
when we stop being mercantile with our souls

when contractors market their work without warning
when seaside villages rule the seas
when grasshoppers no longer rule the grass
when the mortgage broker listens quietly
when old day laborers apply for visas
when languages are not themselves
when the knife shapener is coming
when people here are like people there
when the fern will grow in direct sunlight
when the rabbit shank is defurred and hung for sale
when the small numbers we carry around with us are inverse
when flak is flak
when the crested night warbler is filagreed and fine
when pans are deglazed with filtered water
when the airwaves are silent and the cold dark
burst of the night is transmitted down the
powerlines into every home and the ruled will take note