

Five Poems

Allan Justo Pastrana

thus, travel; this per square-inch

1

of moving past the climate, one
after the other. "I am about to,"
he says. And it's the attempt, maybe
which sees it through. "Carry forth
thy teaching, etc." That, too.
"What if there's a way to reach you,"
and from the cavalier, from that height
to keep at bay the right
lament. "What else then"—vegetation
and some loose wires, the compost
bed, manure, the one red
eye of the blipping comm tower. "And,
there you are," he says
with much conviction, in good stead
and probably for keeps. "I am,"
soon he will be, and for what?
The bus window is a gamble, rigged
vantage: "And to lead you here," the hour
is key, is an open switch, meaning to say
"It's difficult to talk now." But from the ridge, there
is that trestle, the lingering line, there too, the horizon—

2

Where the old seamstress cuts
it wields the shadow, catches
up, and about the bridge

to fall, upper left-hand corner
where there's no way any eclipse
could have hovered so, folded

into a deeper sleep still, to mount
the poles right, north of
something. Else

the time briefly tells
of supper first: rice, oil
fish maybe and the soiled

top shelf that needs dusting,
and well, how to tend to
the shade in its faintest. Ask

the woman, the vane's sharp
point notwithstanding. Is here,
all rubble, rustle in the end

to will what the bent road
gives, and what gives?
Whittle the boards

and the tinsel, speak
now as if no door slides
shut behind you.

If to measure the brief length of the plane

is what you meant by keeping still—I am
because, it is
the tabs we keep on the dead—end, it will
for sure, and always to mark: this way
upstream—and where
from post
to post the direction, here is
one for where they grow the brightest
of pits, and there
the blank chambers, the lichen blooms
eternal, and rest
is yet to haul us in—seven by three
by two and six-feet true
but now, the new
plan to keep off the plains
is, perchance, the road wide
and long it takes to cross
the arms and worlds to meet, and name
such and such, no more than
what a beam requires, or a cot
when all we have past the aqueducts
the networks, to lead again
and then to this—higher ground
tundra mirabilis, limit's crest
tempo spatium and ever
the winding route the room
leaves in its wake, for better
or otherwise, when one foot gets close enough
to the hole that clips it.

A colony

is about breed for bounty, custom-
bound to trace back tail to trail and node
is often what to pin with tack

and remember. Of course they do
for every tread, boot, shoe
mildew track—give or take

the width to break the span
from here on in is string, inch
by inch another year and harvest.

Beneath the underbrush, stones
shall bear the patchwork grid and stretch
for miles—hypha, stem, the bent

axon swings, neurons lit
like stars the growth that startles
barb wire sting—from fence

to fence. Such an artist limns
lichen patterns across regions, chrome
palettes, leaks, stains on paper

and you wander deep
below the forest cover and carefully
not to point the finger—straight

ahead, no ripple nor quick turn
and the rudder poised between the first
body, and the next thereafter.

A stone's throw indicates a state

so let me go by the second, no mile
is ever useful in this context. For instance
the choo-choo's distance was nearer five
past four, and well at that age
when it first came through. What stands
between you and the eavesdrip
is a stride, between your ear pressed
to the ground and the news, no farther
than to recall the last war—food, scarce
and the sudden provision, a wagonful
of molasses tipped over down south
two hours off center and mussels washed
ashore from here to Ba-i. In any case
by evening also to test the length
within eyeshot, to scale peripheries
with no small amount of courage
with yet another road cutting across ridges
and loci, and that treeless sweep, random
and three lakes short, is a terrible leap
of faith. The silt is bed for now
then years to come, when cleave
is both twice apart and once—the wildest,
off course, somewhere in the mind's
brief history, one day at a time.