

APOCALYPSEPHYXIA

or

**LAST POEM WRITTEN BY SANITY
AFTER EATING BANQUET POT PIES
& WATCHING FOX 2 NEWS
TOO MANY NIGHTS IN A ROW**

I'm starting to better understand
the faulty wire-cross that inspired
my brother to pull a hunting rifle
(of all things) in a parking lot fight
outside a downtown nightclub.

Same blood slang that blames Pastor Winans'
carjacking more on his choice
of 'hood & gas station than the 8 fists
that relieved him of his luxury sedan.

On average I eat one and a half times a day,
just enough to maintain this bird-chest
equilibrium. Some days the T-Bird gets
the lion's share of the last 10 dollars
because I stomach the car's empty worse
than my own. Some days I just miss, altogether,
a lame-leg drag of a body that aches triple
in winter like sharp metal searching
for a warmer climate in flesh.

Have you named your shrapnel yet?

That shrill dig that torques on that
100th week of unemployment or
60th hour of minimum wage this week.
I call mines *broke*.

My *broke* comes with flu-like symptoms
& rocks the same one pair of khakis
to every job interview & church function
this side of of 25. Carlos' *broke* was
gripping the safe end of a steak knife
like a key a month ago, and I could tell
by the way his tongue pushed against
his closed mouth that he seriously
contemplated unlocking a man's muscle
with it in the name of repair.

This bully is a shapeshifter,
is a thief of fire,
is broken compass in a swallowing forest
is a crowbar against the lockbox
and will take everything you own.

Maybe this bottoming out
is the Zombie Apocalypse & we've
already ran out of bullets, maybe
this kind of empty turns us on,
& we're all a bit auto-erotic
when it comes to our own asphyxiation,
I mean, it would explain alot:

why there's never a coke mirror big enough
for us to fit our extinction on; why
we forecast The Rapture like an album release;
why on the grey days my city looks like an empty
pocket, starving for the heads of presidents; why
the rifle my brother shouldered that night
was my grandpa's, and why it was already
loaded before he snuck it out that closet,
unfired since deer season of '84,
as if Papa was awaiting some bawled reckoning
to drag itself blood-dirty to his doorstep
any day now,
& why I scare myself more & more
whenever my hands grip something
sharp.