

The Existentialist Cookbook

Poems

Shawnte Orion

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Beyond Translation

There was no blue
in ancient Greece
Homer's skies were iron
and bronze and they hung
above a wine-dark sea

Likewise *chloros*
seemed to be the word for green
but in literature of the time
honey was chloros
dew was chloros
even tears and blood

As if the blood's red hue
was less important than whether
it was fresh as morning dew
moist as honeyed tears
or still as an afternoon

Avoiding Aphids

Surrounded myself with silk plants
because I hate funerals
even for azaleas.

My failures camouflaged
by synthetic foliage that requires
no water, photosynthesizes nothing.
Never bends toward the sun.

Left in the corner of the room
to decorate my imitation of life
also rooted in Styrofoam soil.
My fake plastic world that never
needs to be re-potted
into a larger existence.

Unable to Surface for Air During Shark Week

Drowning in the Discovery Channel's wake,
from the comfort of my couch. Anchor
dragging through commercials.

Survivors recount sinking ships. Long nights
clinging to floating debris. Drifting four days
before spotted by rescue planes, but found
after only several hours, by swarms of whitetip
and tiger sharks. Others who panicked
were pulled beneath the tide by leg or foot.
Staining waves crimson.

Television turned off, I dive into bed.
Thankful that I would never know such fear.
Deep blue sheets up to my neck. Head floating
on a seafoam pillow. Swimming into sleep.
Dreams splashing in my ears. Until the kitten

notices my toes. Dangling like fins
over the edge of the bed.
Luring feline predators of the deep
to feet fragrant of catnip chum.
Poised to pounce as ankles twist
rolling blankets into waves. Row of claws
sharp as great white teeth
carve nightmares into my dreams.
Too far from shore
to be rescued before dawn.

Eight-Proof Path to Enlightenment

Poem Yet To Be Written By Dogo Barry Graham

Bringing light to a dark
corner of the bar
The Buddha sits patiently
waiting for the waitress to bring
another pitcher of beer.

All around him patrons are drinking
to their health, to their sorrows
drinking to their worldly attachments.

Exchanging miseries and failures
they can only express
when intoxicated.

But The Buddha is aware
that he is already drunk
he has always been drunk
and doesn't need
any alcohol to prove it.