

Four Poems

Casey Fuller

On the Spread of the Elegy Through the 21st Century

Some see it now as a field of vision so wide it encompasses everything we see. A few argue it is a map that matches the exact size of the American landscape

and stretches out over the top of the Earth like a super sensitive skin. Some say they can feel it softly, a light weight in their arms, like the first time they held

a blue-eyed kitten when they were very young. Some sense its slight electric sting as a low-level static hovering in the charged particles of dust, like voltage;

others, in violins. Some choose to ignore it and are accordingly filled with a canyon-like lack. Some hear it as the quiet murmur of a crowd coalescing

into a singular chorus. Some say nothing and are filled with nothing and they sweat and toil under a big banner of paying something invisible back

to a presence they'll never fully know. One poet says it's in the wood whirl of the table she writes on and she's going down to the trees in the valley

to make them explain. One painter could create its audible hum but only by daubing lines of light color across a grid of light ephemeral pencil but she couldn't make the vibration stay. Some say it can best be seen in the kid on the corner dancing with an arrow pointing at a tremendous sale for furniture—in the circles he spins around his body, in the flips thrown then caught over his head. Others point to mother's hands: the patience there, the presence,

the silence around them as the world turns her sons into unworthy men.

Through Spare

parts through broke cars through the double scent
of cigarettes mixed with Hamm's beer through the gas

in cans and tanks and the pink shop rags soaked through
used to scrub what would never come clean through

the vice I'd crush pennies in attached to my dad's rickety
workbench through those crushed pennies buried in

the backyard through the wood poles for fishing
through the wood rackets for tennis through the wood

wicker basket for fish we'd never catch throughout all
the garage through the objects from a world before

I was born that he my dad could never get back to
through the exhaust the gray-blue bands disappearing

into what I always remember as rain through the garage
door with two rusty springs on the sides that sounded like

I now know Tibetan monks humming several notes
at once as the door slammed into that thudding echo our dog

returns to me in a dream chained to a tree
close to where I'd buried the real and bent pennies inside

the circle of dirt she wore into the ground through the dream
I come to her our dog my dad's dog so poorly named

I won't name her here and bring her bowls of food and water
and unlatch her collar because I love her and want her to run free

Fuller | *Floodwall*

before I wake
entirely present

so I see her
instantaneous

running in grass
trying to convince myself

still asleep

decades later

still dreaming

it is not a dream

Hologram Tupac 2012

Snoop Dogg must be careful
to walk around but not into
the invisible layer of light
Pac is being projected on

but Snoop must also walk
close enough to the layer
that the life-size image
backlit by blue light

seems like a miracle
to the hundreds of thousands
who like a last rite
have come to Coachella

to see a resurrection
beyond some small
mushroom-derived
hallucinations where

for one second
because of the buzz
belief is suspended
holy ghosts appear possible

and your dead dad
who recently passed
in a quick bout
of cancer in both lungs

can perhaps rejoin you
in your second of doubt
the rules appear rewritten
at this gateway

Pac seems some bright
new harbinger of.

This Pencil

sparked the industrial revolution. This pencil was chewed on by a stray cat that saved your super-lost life. This pencil can work as a slide bolt between all your doors. This pencil was retrieved by your snot-nosed cousin Doug inside the cage where they keep the brown bears. Karl Marx used this pencil to scratch an itch on his proletarian ass. This pencil once held a haphazard bun in Sylvia Plath's dark and golden hair. A handle of sock strips wrapped around the eraser end once helped you escape prison by using this pencil as a shiv. Behind Nixon's ear this pencil once sat smelling like bitter infections. Twirling in the back of class this pencil once flashed in the hand of some slack-ass kid, some student named, what was it, Bingo, Jhango, Rango? This pencil kept the box score for Nolan Ryan's sixth no-hitter that your grandpa won't stop talking about. The idea for bifocals came to Franklin with this lone pencil. Automatically, without thinking, as if it were just another task in his agrarian world, each year Jefferson casually inventoried all his property at Monticello with this pencil. Also, no lie, this pencil is made from the cherry tree Washington hatcheted down when he was six. Thousands of angels can fit on this pencil, thirty-one saints, all gods. Napalmed jungles couldn't burn this pencil down, nor Oppenheimer's bombs (although its penumbra is tattooed forever on a half-melted wall). The rumor of its greatness compared to the sword is exaggerated, however. It must be sharpened, wielded correctly, and found by the right hands. And those hands, those hands, those vulnerable hands—they must reach out into each variety of the fire, and pull it out again and again, again and again.

Casey Fuller is still a regular old PhD student at the University of North Dakota.