

The Cultural Revolution and the Great Wall

by John R. Brown

I have grown old at this close-in Southeast bus stop
on the border between ritzy and slummy.
Around the corner was Water Bob's Garlic Gulch Saloon
shot of whiskey eighty-five cents,
now a tattoo parlour and hair salon.
Down the street a convenience store
run by a Chinese family.
Mom and the kids hustled like hell,
while Pop sat behind the deli case
reading Mandarin newspapers,
plotting his return to the mainland,
easily winning the Chairman Mao look-a-like contest.
Now that building houses a New-Age coffee shop.
The grange hall is now a grunge bar
and the doughnut house is a Lebanese bakery.
But straight before my grateful eyes,
painted on a gray cinder-block wall,
a gigantic, panoramic banana,
sixteen yellow feet long, with a legend,
"Art fills the void."
Oh, here comes my bus.

Homeless Honor Code

by Ron Sanford

True it's not what you do; it's how you do it
I have become a homeless engineer,
On the cutting edge with 24/7 technical support

I know where to get things that I need
I know when to show up for my meals
A rugged individual still

I don't beg for things that I really don't need
Lusting most of the day for cigarettes

I am homeless but have my dignity
I pray and fast-focus on good tidings

I have rights, but don't demand them
I know what is a privilege
I don't feel that I am entitled
Nor do I feel that I am a victim

Latenight Freewrite

by Avendor

It's 2 a.m.,
So why not throw on some Billy Joel
So I do, and that's that.
There's no Old Testament prophets to hang out with
Just me and my frog, and she appears to be sleeping.
I can hear the rain outside of my window.
My couch is falling apart, but it will do for now.
I'm hungry,
but I want to save my leftovers for tomorrow.
I probably won't get a haircut — tomorrow
But I'm sure to check up on the status of my dreams
Maybe I'll try to communicate with God,
God knows I have a lot of frayed edges in my life.
I went shopping today and bought a tin of Irish oatmeal,
along with sugar, raisins and milk.
That's a healthy and economical choice in my opinion.
I checked out "Waiting for Superman" from the library today,
and just might watch it this week.
As for myself, I haven't felt like Superman in a long time,
I'm mostly just chipping away at things.
So, to all you readers of this poem,
I hope you have a blessed week.
You know a lot of people think this world isn't doing so great
But I'm still hopeful.
I think if we collectively manage our time and resources well,
we can (in the words of Bob Marley)
"Flower in this generation, triumphantly."
So here's to the future,
Cheerio mates!



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