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The Chieftain

Once in Tongue my Grandfather
found a lucky fishbone that contained
the secret of his genealogy

It whispered in his ear something
that must have been profound
for his complexion changed like a blueberry eating brat

He looked at me with his tall Viking smile
and said the knowledge is hidden in the highlands,
sending me on a quest for the tree.

In the middle of my Grandfather’s epiphany, we were
soaked with water from two laughing boys who were
riding on a loch ness monster.

Just as quickly as we were so rudely deluged with water by this lake
the trio disappeared abruptly underwater.
Perhaps those boys were truly Merfolk.

Nearby, a redneck tourist was infuriated by what he saw,
and threw a stick of dynamite into the water.
The spray from the depth charge surged into the sky.

The particles of aquamarine shimmered in the air,
pausing long enough to stain my eyes,
taking the form of a thatched home atop the hillock.
A Monstrous Mischance

King Kong rages through the jungle
With a “kiss me” attitude

And swishes down a silent existence
With the push of a button

Ganga growing guerillas with machine guns
Dump fertilizer and plastic piping on the hillside

While the lofty dove breathes
Roving for peace

Sandals and stained shirt from a day hiker
Lie in a heap at the edge of a ravine.

A striped toucan calmly soars above the canopy
With a sprig of basil in its beak

Lurking far below, a face of Nature
Hides under a thick entangling mass

Volcano scars seep their way to the surface
Like blood stains on a topographical map

Unknown ancient beasts, from alpha to omega
Grip their domain with the greed of survival

Even the birds of paradise
Find little solace in the sky
Distraction

Distraction is a virtue.
Daydreams become reality.
I am climbing a tall mountain.
The flag on the top is a pub.

Daydreams become reality,
And a maze of trails lead up.
The flag on the top is a pub
roaring on the summit.

A maze of trails lead up.
I ponder the paths, then don my wing boots.
Roaring up the summit,
Flying over obstacles to a medieval reunion.

I ponder the paths, and don my wing boots
While holding the cure to this ethereal fountain.
Flying to meet the obstacle at this medieval reunion
The Mckay clan greets me like a Viking prince.

While holding the cure to this ethereal fountain.
Joyous hardy roisterers drink ale and eat haggis
The chieftains greet me with somber faces while
dyed faces tell me that freedom is earned.

Joyous hardy roisterers have had their fill of food and drink
The poisoned well has been cleansed
I must part from this state, for now
Distraction is a virtue.
De Puta Madre

Once in Valladolid, my host father took me to the sotabanco, where we were served copazos larger than a Tuna’s ribcage. I had danced, mingled and rocked out till bones became numb. Eyes burning and gasping for clean air, I had forced my way outside.

Deep breaths of cool A.M oxygen focus my vision and grant me confidence with khaki pants and azure collared shirt, I realize there is plenty of madrugada left. As I turn back inside with a fresh second wind, I am buzzed by two laughing boys screaming down the narrow street on a two-stroke Aprilia.

I hear the legal bac limit is .15, and I momentarily worry about those two boys, but I am interested in returning to this lovely Alba, who answers my Spanish with English, and vice versa. If talking has ever been more enjoyable, I could not recall when or where. If dancing has ever been sexier, it would probably involve a religious ceremony in Brazil.

Running full speed on a diet of carbs and natural energy… Like the late sunset that has long fallen below the valley, I too must retire Three days until my preordained ticket steals me away from this strange place where the embraced peace of mandatory nap time clashes with old logic

My adventure having ended, I am left with photos, memories, and regret I have absorbed a mountain of fresh picked catnip in these short months, yet I never made it to the summit of the Mulhacen Peak. Only in my dreams do I survive this unquenched fire.
Clairvoyance

Gravitas is a green dot dancing in my vision
I am chilled by epiphany, sitting on the floor
Listening to the voices of neighbors and distant friends
A vortex of voices spiral between my eyes.

Chilled by epiphany, sitting on the floor…
*Have you seen the way he runs across the dunes?*
A vortex of voices spin truths and lies.
*Did you see the way he kept his eyes on you?*

Did they spy me racing across the sand dunes?
Telekinesis funnels in radio wave voices
Did I really keep my eyes on her?
*Don’t take it personally, he only meant to thank you!*

radio wave voices hum like static electricity
*Well there you have it, nice guys finish last.*
I only meant to thank her.
The clearing of my mind makes this dimensional rift crumble

Who says nice guys finish last?
Is this a world were jerks are anchored atop a pink totem pole?
Justice and truth are funneled within.
Gravitas is a green dot dancing in my vision.
Taming of the Dragon Tail

An angry steed is coaxed out of the stables while knight errant prepares for battle.

Donning helm, plate and gauntlets, to protect from that grinding bite.

His foe with slithering tail is covered with sparkling black spikes.

Mounting his bucking and braying steed, pulse quickens and vision narrows.

Prepared for a grueling bout, he steadies his life marrow.

Sir knight goes into battle headlong, knowing too well of the danger.

Spurring the beast with a twist of the wrist, and the skill of an Army Ranger.

The serpent’s tail whistles through the air, whipping closer to his being.

What dangers behind the bend ahead cause adrenaline to sing.

Swishing forces paint a picture of doom. Is there valor and honor in seeking your death?

This world has no shortage of monsters to tame, and sir knight will seek them out until he breathes his last breath.
Zeebo

Chanting and Screaming in the dead of night
we ran through the woods with youthful delight

Young men will tell tales and vie for the crown
but we egged the home of Zeebo the clown

The smoky dank mansion at the end of the clearing
gave way to stupidity; a full lack of fearing

Four brave knights with nothing better to do
well armed with a dozen, lined up and threw

Briskly racing through the entangled wood
yet still so far from our own neighborhood

An engine started roaring sending hearts to frantic soaring
perspiration pouring and a wish for safe and boring!

A myth is not pretend when it’s created by your mind
nor pretend the sounds ghastly, a tittering from behind.

He jumped from his car to catch us on foot
His shadowy form was darker than soot

Our exit disappeared in this unfamiliar place
the woods became evil and joined in the chase

A mystical power with disposition sour
prays to the demons for his lunatic hour.

I don’t know how he caught us but he did with all his rage
and here I lie in darkness like a lion in a cage.
The Wolf of Wall Street

Flipping BAC on the lows of March
he envisions a sturdy 3 bedroom beach house,
2 car garage, 1 giant living room—
all his.

Shaking the dusty Magic 8 Ball
for CTIC, PIR, ICBT…
Then dreams of Pamplona, racing through the cobbled street,
yanking the tail of that disgruntled black bull—
no empathy for those drunk assholes, gored
till the bloodbath stains their white shirts
already marred with wine splotches.

His nightmare is the alarm at 6:20 a.m.
With goopy eyelids shielding
The pixilated glow of a digital goldmine…
The trader sees pennies spiking skyward
around his positions.

Hunting down bankrupt equities
in search of a bailout, the wolf
preys on forgotten scraps,
fangs rip apart Bill or Warren’s 401k
as if he may never eat again.
There is no wolf-pack in this jagged taiga.
They all howl up the snowy hill
with the caribou carcass on top.
Ready to eat their fill,
or stop short before sliding
into that icy creek.

The monitor is a red piece of pie
and dividends are dashed
by a lack of due diligence.
The panic selloff was followed by the
shredding of papers, the theft of potted trees,
and shuffling through the help wanted ads
of a newspaper.
Stretched out on the table with
the magnetic dish wrapped around
my head,
linking my mind with deep space.

exotic metal focuses the
third eye
into a cosmic beam
crafted of computronium.

While men in lab coats
tinker with the translucent
concave lens, garbled white sound
permeates the skull.

The voice broadcasts
through the vacuum and void
and the internal volume spikes
from the distance of Andromeda.

DR. BARKER! Pierces the depths
with the intonation
of OZ. My body no
longer exists.

Warped galaxies melt into
a singularity. The alien contact
hacks my brain like
a parasite.

Silver polygon peaks
with azure sheen jut
in all directions like
a crystal prison.

The burning of my last
memory fuels
the ion emitting craft
to the next dimension.
Space Camp

Knees aimed at ninety degrees,  
secured in the cockpit  
of the rumbling washing machine—  
propelling back skyward, hands  
grip the air yolk control.

The homeschooled space walker  
with shuttle wallpaper  
frequents the local library,  
absorbing Saturn V rockets,  
multi stage Lunar Lander,  
tergalactic warp drive time bender.

A rushed lesson in English  
precedes the story of a mission specialist,  
selected for his scientific mind  
and his fight for the dream.

A brochure came in the mail  
with pictures of age group youths  
testing their mental aptitude in high-G  
simulators, human gyroscopes and  
tours of the real Space Shuttle.

He went door to door that summer,  
mowed the neighbor’s lawn,  
took out their trash,  
dollars accumulate his mini safe.

When the family went on a Florida  
vacation, they detoured the Kennedy  
space center, where he was an outsider,  
imagining he had the right stuff.

The end of summer suggested a way  
for dirtbikes and comic books  
to devise new outlets for the mind.  
Just ask him who he wants to be,  
when he grows up.
Piano lessons on Wednesdays

Once a week my mother would drive me
to the upscale neighborhood of
redbrick homes and dense old trees.

I scribble through the theory book
in thirty minutes time,
naming notes and dots and ties
and staccato bumps in the road.

My mind houses the music I translate—
8-bit Nintendo tunes on my old brown
upright. Her den houses the black baby grand.

Two handed scales in G minor
morph into Inspector Snoops, who wishes
he were Inspector Gadget, or Sherlock Holmes.
Fingers strengthen with repeated measure.

Mother sits on the couch with
a pleased look on her face
and a Nora Roberts novel in hand.

Edvard Grieg dispatches an angry mob
with pitchforks and lanterns, marching
up the spiral mountaintop
to the hall of the bear king.

The prickling sensation from the back of my head
through my neck electrifies left and right brain,
a shameless advertisement from my teacher,
demoing what I would learn and become;
what I was meant to be.

Four and half years after that first lesson
I am at home, looking through old books;
my parents accepted my decision to quit.
That last recital in the old church with the girl
in the next room playing my song
hammered flat my unique, talented
sense of...me.
Volkswagen Man

The southeast appreciates the 1970’s when a cream colored Westy burbles down a back country road of cornfields and dogwoods, windows down and a clean-cut hippie kid grinning to the Doobie Brothers.

We had spent weeks rebuilding, sandblasting, painting, and restoring. I was still wearing my cap and gown when my father gifted me the keys.

Pull out bed, pop top, propane stove, brown fabric curtains, complete with a girl who asks me if I “wanna get down”.

When I got lost trying to find the airport, doing loops in the ghetto of Charlotte, a crazed duet of cranker bitches rammed their Nissan into her ass end. Smoke billowing from the engine bay.

A semester at CPCC passed and the specialist finally got around to making her look good as 1978. The engine bay was oddly dusty… The muffler fell off on the way home.

Driving cross country, I was toting a half full case of oil and my intellectual atheist cousin, chain smoking Al Capones, “Hell is an invention of mankind.”

She was beaten and abused, hot black blood streaming onto the cement of every gas stop. We didn’t complain, we drove through the plateaus, salt flats, and redwoods, One day she will live again.
Smileyfest

Every smack of the doumbek sends acoustic triangles tramping through my ribcage.

This elemental chasm creaks and leaks the waters that sunk Atlantis,

yet I will run through this wooden sky; dance among psychedelic fortresses

of neon translucent prisms that exist on a plain more real than our own.

Women with glowing teeth and multicolored armlets glide in and out,

pulling streamers around an erect maypole.

I offer a girl my socks and leap from our campsite,

returning from the forest with an armload of dried firewood.

Our warmth attracts Barefoot Manner, who come to share in our ecstasy

and offer their wisdom. Their voyage will lead them to a packed earth coliseum

of ukuleles, banjos, stamping feet, flailing arms, bong hits, and overheated bodies. Some

folks migrate to the tent of an eager lover, while others land in a bus at the edge of the field

with steel bars, and deputies phishing for the man with dreadlocks and pockets full of fungi.

Sunlight comes quickly and we say our goodbyes and become a throng of walkers

with packed tents and telescopes on backs.

My VW bus rolls over the grass, dodging budding shoots.
Myrtle Beach

High School graduation and the muggy stickiness of May…
Reason enough for a foursome hour trip to Myrtle Beach.
That bean-pole figure and straight dyed blond hair…
South Carolina with its Bojangles sweet tea flavor
saturates the mind with a poisonous lust.

We check in together. I avoid suggestive glances.
I force conversation about the fun times ahead, or the wallpaper.
You unpack your bikinis and short shorts.
That one provocative line still glued behind my tongue
won’t come naturally.

A wall of cascading resorts formed a railroad tract along the wide groomed sand,
the beach becoming a mixed up mass of families and cat callers.
Our group excursion led us down through the salty boardwalk.
We toured the haunted house on the strip. I held your hand
in the warm darkness, halfway pretending to be scared.

Fuzzy morning vacation and we relish the vitamin-D sauna
and rolling bathtub water of the Atlantic.
Friends, beer, wind-up radio, Marlboro Lights,
Tales from the foam pit of the Freaky Tiki.
I milked the pity card when nearly drowned by that kid
He looked so tranquil with a small hand politely asking for help,
Throttling my neck as I tried to pull him in from that invisible rip.
I told you how I had to kick him away to save myself.

Alone in the Jacuzzi, your foot touches mine
for a moment, but the contact electrocutes me
like misaligned jumper cables.
my leg jumps back from the spark.
Repeatedly.

Leaning in for a kiss, you tell me
You think you’re in love,
with Daniel,
my best friend.
La locura del encierro

The small blue backpack stuffed with rations, cheap muffins, beer, train ticket escape from the towering prison formed of antique stone walls.

The drunk and disheveled city—a slosh-pot of Europeans, Basque, broken glass filling the cracks with the stench of one hundred years tradition.

Megaphones held by amateurs prayed to San Fermín with the volume blaring. A sea of red and white drowns my rational brain.

Crawling under the thick wooden fence “¡ tienes cojones así!” taunts me from a dark haired punk perched safely on top. having crossed under, the mass blocked retreat.

Cameras on booms, spectators on porches looming like vultures overhead. “This is better than chasing a bloody wheel of cheese down a hill!” pummels through the sweaty murmur of the crowd.

A nearby rocket popped bodies to attention. An invisible wave of energy washed the weight from my legs and swept the pink mass into a bait ball.

Six hundred kilos of abused meat stormed through the narrow runway, seeking its chance for immortality even as it races toward its own death.

I ran with the crowd a short ways Until I found a crack in the wall to hide in Reds, whites, and blacks blur past me as I watch, Stunned.
Night Sailing

We slide down the property to the water’s edge, sharing sails, batons, preservers, and oars. Down to the kelp covered beach and the puffer boat, lines dinging against the mast as it laps in the bay.

We spin the rusty combo lock and release the fiberglass hull, sliding our feet on sandy bottom, granting her freedom to ferry us to the other side.

A strong desultory breeze heels the boat on a course southwest, a starry sail to devils hill.

Sounds of a trickling creek permeate through the gap in the centerboard. Our speech drifts from silence, to the meteorite that cratered the snowy tundra of Siberia.

The sandy silhouette on the bow pulls us toward its graphite mounds, the quarter-moon casting a tractor beam, finally stopping us with a skid.

We could be Indian explorers as we climb and descend rolling dunes, the final tribe heeding the call of white blooming sound.

The swell with intermittent crashes crescendos with a tide rising rhythm—an orchestra for the heavens, that twinkle warning messages.

Heavy feet plow to the summit of devils hill. The vista reveals a new map that slants directly into the blackened water. The sailboat drifted from sight,
The coastal town of Brookings, Oregon, with deep green mountains engulfing the Chetco River and your new chandlery, a small blue building on open gravel land, adjacent the south jetty at the mouth.

I remember when you bought the place from that balding attorney with the silver ‘69 Stingray. He and his paid-for whore spent a week in your store… counting up his profit from the abundance of dead inventory.

The shop sat within walking distance to the dredged docks of the harbor. Easy access for a fisherman to pick up cordage, electronics, or XtraTuf boots. Mom learned the business too quickly.

One summer I came up to work, and saw how these men spent their time paying her visits with forceful slow-motion hugs and compliments that reeked of crab.

Jim frequented the store, although, I only saw him once. After reaching under the seat of his Dodge pickup for a swig of Jack, he walked past me like a rude customer to whisper hollow promises in her ear.

Sitting passenger seat, I glanced at your glazed eyes. I’m not sure why you offered to show me where he lives, but I silently counted the number of mailboxes on that mountain road.
Multisport

The horn rattles my joints. I scramble, 
fall into the bubbling lake, fight my way 
to a clear line, calmer water, avoiding 
the kicking, scratching hands and feet, 
stretch out, a black torpedo. I point 
toward the orange buoy, bobbing 
gently as my legs. Like that, I find my rhythm, 
human seals dropping behind me. 
Timed breaths reveal my mirror image. 
The fog sinks down to the surface. 

Hands gripped on aero-bars 
navigate the winding descent to 
the miles of flat pavement. 
Glycogen burning legs hammer 
away thoughts of phase three. 

Legs are gelatin bricks 
and the thermostat plateaus, 
the pace set by the old guys, 
experience guides their lungs 
through the cave. 

The mind hits a wall 
and I envision the end, 
but it retreats from the next bend, 
the factory in my body 
burns up its nutrients. 

The fire in my lungs 
forges iron, but is quenched 
by the final mile. Not another 
pair of legs will pass mine. 
I see the blue runway.
Elegiac Nostalgia

In an archaically vivid memory, I am sitting above your shoulders in a backpack. The quiet vibration of earth and the sounds of your voice ripple through my hands, resting on your baseball cap. I was a 2 year old witness of the undying redwood giants, My paternal vehicle driving my first memory. A few years later, hands braced between the handlebars of a throaty Husqvarna. I was a boonie bouncing towhead, wide eyes peering over the edges of cliffs as we flew along the crumbling edge of dirt hills in rural L.A.

There was no family conference before the migration. Only the failed promise to my mother Five years at the most Charlotte, North Carolina, First in Flight took responsibility for our altered destiny. I still bragged to friends How jumbo jets couldn’t fly till you signed them off. Humans in aluminum tubes relied on your skill.

Mother, relishing in her buzzed girl talk with new friends Bashed your carefree and privileged past, rattling off the toys purchased from the towable sailboat, to that compound bow in 1992.

Time spent in the bible belt converted you into the strict, frustrated father. What else could it be? you would scream at me for coming home after midnight, forcing me to sneak out, to explore the high-school party scene. You hated the powerful influence of my friends, sloshing, sinking, drowning, in a Miller Light wasteland.
Who am I?

_Tuwatha tuwatha, loktwar dalanora._

Willow’s incantation morphs the cursed witch
into a muskrat, a crow, an old woman form.

My own is more fortunate, for I am a human
that scuttles the past and flies without wings.

My imagination wants me dead, despises competition;
eyes flooded with tanned crisp lines, hands that sense softness,
feet that connect to the magnetic fields
while traversing the miles of hardpan desert.

I am an inventor of investing, and an investor of inventions.

I am called by the Paideia to pluck spiders,
trap their gossamer fibers, spin my own protective cap and cloak.

I am a pro dreamer, amateur lifer.

I am awed by my heritage, but respect the gift of mankind.

I am a man of destiny, but my purpose is known only by God.

My library, junkyard and vault are segregated, but attend the same school.

I am a scientist, my lab is my body and hypothesis awaits theory.

I am a Pisces, but the planets did not teach me to swim and surf,
the 12th moon does not force me to perceive or judge.

The shores of my island shrink with global warming
and expand with recollections of a nuclear family.

My heroes build and nourish the future generation,
trekking through history to give their DNA a chance.