Twenty Moments



That Changed The World Twenty
Moments
That
Changed
The
World

John C. Goodman

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Locofo Chaps is dedicated to publishing politically-oriented poetry.

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Some of these poems have previously appeared in Anti-Heroin Chic, Sprung Poems and VOX

there was an explosion
<everyone knows that>
it left traces in time
smoke and cinders
ache and absurdity

change is forgetting
there will never be a moment of different colour
lips that will not kiss
have touched the blueness of the sky
they are finding pieces of the past in the strangest places
in weddings
in poems

Grief
there is no other word for it
: Grief

the shrouds are white the tears are reflexive the anguish is profound

it is quiet here
except for the crickle of newspapers
as the cat walks over them

scratch of sunlight on the carpet

it is loud there with the crying and thunderous tears

the shrouds make a soft ploufing sound like fresh bedsheets on a summer morning

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3.
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today only!
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beside the photograph is an advertisement

the photograph shows a woman

barefoot

in the ruins of her home

<what was it? - tornadohurricanetsunamiearthquake>

she appears to be weeping

the advertisement is for shoes

50% off - hurry! today only! buy now!

it is impossible to buy shoes for the woman in the photograph

for her

there is no today only

eyes
follow the eyes
the eyes

follow

they are a prelude to a different pretense of looking

in the pupil

a reflection

a slow blues song

playing over an incandescent sorrow

behind another eye

following

with a look of disbelief

the color of a tree is varied
some are up and some are down

the convention of a tree is erasable
the memorial of a tree has no capacity
and no smell
it is bronze and copper and silver and aluminum
like a reflection of an objection
the touch of a tree is debatable
there are singular barks and leaves to be taken into account
one day a theory of a tree will form
from the veins of leaves on the forest floor
in which we can live our own lives
contrasting the existence
espaliered

for us

green

so green

the bayonets seem out of place and the rifles they are attached to and the soldiers holding the rifles

blue

so blue

the bodies beside the road
seem out of place
their positions
awkward unaffected unique

no one can smell the stench from here nor hear the silence of their breathing

there was blood a lot of blood storming from her nose mouth eyes

her father laid her gently on the ground

a crowd gathered taking pictures
some of the people in the crowd wore white shirts
some blue
some green
the colours were interlocked

some wore sandals, others leather shoes in black or brown some wore running shoes

(in some places running shoes are called sneakers in other places sneakers are called trainers)

no one knew where the bullet came from

the crowd took pictures as she died

some of the people got blood on their shoes

it is a common failing to mistake enthusiasm for vision impulses are magnetic

but these people are running for their lives their lives are multicolored and textured with sound

their clothes move with them accentuating the panic

they run together
united as fish in a school
the terror of their misdeeds
forgotten in a greater terror

what will become of us all and the regret for what we have done?

black

the road is black
except for a single yellow line
dividing

black

the sky is black
the clouds thick and uneven

black the lights are black the flashing red and blue black against black

black

the blood is black on the road on the windshield on the sky

black
death is black
except for a single yellow line
dividing

it seems they are always waiting
just there
just off to the left
the vultures

there is no escaping them like time they are always with us waiting

curved beaks shaping space
bending reality
with the gravity of oblivion

one day we will fall into their clutches if we haven't already unconscious

disappearance

is a function of loneliness

the loneliest lonelinessnames string together in a vibration

the innocent who bleed the most <look under your fingernails>
they resonate with isolation

a frozen moment ends a life

in this case it was the wind

<so they said>
in this case it was the ocean

<so they said>
in this case it was an act of terror

<so they said>
in this case it was an accident

<so they said>
in this case it was an absence of caring

<they wouldn't admit that>

the pattern is the same
coming and going
the outcome is quite different
depending on the notice of eviction
and the inconsequence
of amputations

they are laughing <before the revolution>

- there is death in their smiles
their berets are blue
their shirts are green
their belts are brown
their guns are black
their boots are covered in roses

the sky is an indeterminate colour the ground is grey

when they are dead someone will remove their uniforms and wash the futility from their bodies it's all been done before
the tanks in the square
the opposition to the transposition
the martyrs to the manifesto
yet we do it again
birds build new nests
every spring
the significance of a leaf to a tree
the leaning of river reeds

it is all gathered in a completion of its own making

an ending born in pressure

one wonders about the shape of her legs

- were they the cause?

and the water

- was there a diversion there?some things <people> belong insidesome things <people> belong outside

was there a thread or a string?
 sometimes wire is used due to its superior tensile strength
 but usually it is just ingratitude and condemnation
 the only clarity

is that no one understands
not even her <least of all her>
but the shape of her legs
cannot be denied
in spite of implications

right side up is no longer valid tangents to a circle are curved what was above is now beside and what was beside is now below tangential motion was never subject to inertia the seabed is not parallel to the surface if the bottom were level the surface would be inclined at 22 ½° sinking ships have a tendency of inclining emotion is curved

that sudden spring shower is not water

- it is concrete shattered by hammer blows the colours are not colours
- they are tones and tintsthe smiles are not smiles
 - they are indicators in a structure of intent

when the barriers fall
only the steel reinforcement bars are left
no less a prison
their jagged ends embedded
in systems of remaining

the past

is a shadow behind him
it grows shorter each year
the ghosts grow shorter
the anger becomes a friend
acrimony shifts from stilted to styled

some statues solidify before their time some deaths outlive their usefulness

there is a message in the shadows it speaks a language of alteration

it will never be intelligible <to some or the others>

is fear of everything
if only it were a matter of time
there is an instruction for everything
in the end, light is a figure of shadow
does everything have a cost or a value?

- a value or a worth?
- a worth or a meaning?

freedom is an instrument in $E\flat$ or $B\flat$ – never C Major the persecution of notes is inherent in transcription therefore, money is superfluous

for the poor

but essential to the affluent

you would never know she was a genius

- she looks so ordinary

except for the rings of Saturn

and the frozen seas of Europa and the eruptions of Io the notes form a sequence of becoming there is no end to them they are arranged in hope and shining what will become of her now? the intervals are rearranged to suit the mood there is a semblance of meaning

About the Author

John C. Goodman is a Canadian writer and Pushcart Prize nominee. He has published three collections of poetry, most recently *Dark Age* (Grey Borders), as well as a novel which was short-listed for an Arthur Ellis Award, and a novella, *The Duck Lake Chronicles* (Quattro Books). He also authored the non-fiction work *Poetry: Tools & Techniques* (Gneiss Press). John is the past editor of *ditch*, (www.ditchpoetry.com), an online magazine of experimental poetry.

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