

What Catches Up With You Also Passes

by Robert Bové (Aug. 2006)

Rte. 4 dream

A large, screaming woman shoves open her car door, bursts out, coming on like an onrushing boar.

She reaches me, at her side a pin-stripe-suited man holding a briefcase.

He opens it, extracts a neck brace, and hands it to the woman, who keeps screaming even as she straps it on.

The sky rains paper.

Among the things I should have noticed at the time

They appear with their machines every Thursday to mow the lawn.
When they are done I give them ice-cold cans of lemon-lime soda,
for which they are grateful.

In the fall, they bring leaf blowers, a noisy plague upon cool, dry days.
I give them soda.

Each operation, cutting or blowing, takes ten minutes.

There were times, O-husband-whenever-you-are, when you and our boys
would take all afternoon to mow or rake. You were never much
reluctant to join them in their play, covering the ground so easily
between instruction and games, the two acts became one.

Funny, thinking about this for the first time, just now.

It

Yesterday, I forgot
why it is important that,
when it comes, it should

be here

in my yard, on my steps, in my
sleep.

Today, I remembered:

It is enough that it has
always been
important.

A soloist's choir

Sometimes, though, the ringing gives way
somewhat

And I hear voices singing,
chanting, actually—
steady.

I know, it's the rush of blood;
it's my pulse.

You think I want the operation
solely so I can still read
my "bad novels" or play
computer solitaire,
easing long afternoons,
sleepless nights.

And that's enough. More than enough.
To lose sight now, dear, when hearing has gone
off somewhere on its own—
well, just imagine.

I can't tell you

I awoke from a familiar dream
to a day that needed discerning.
The dream, really just animated memory,
A party of those who've...
who have gone before—
more bright eyed even than in life,
some of them.

When I caught your eye you had already
been smiling, but you really turned it on
for me.

And then I woke, in the same room, sat up
on the couch where I've been sleeping lately,
the one I'd always chased the kids off of
when they tried to take naps there.
Was their shoes more than anything.

It's been something, that's for sure.
I've heard voices as clear as birdsong,
a child calling, your laughter.
I've stumbled up the stairs,
surprised by empty rooms.

These are not bad things—
except, of course, for the stumbling.
It's just that I wish I could understand
this new order of things—
if there is one.

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