

Todd Swift

Envoi Moderne

Send out the loveless children,
Those faceless ones, pansies,
Droops, suckers and ragamuffin
Losers, tooth-low, bedraggled,

Gaggled geeks, off-strumpets
And low-levels, send them out!
Let them prowl devil-streets, selling
Pock-skin, pencil shavings, eye-

Lashes and TB-dolls. Fix them;
Prop their drip-feed with Benzedrine.
Keep the comfort-zones clean.
Send these poppets, these tinsel-

Hansels and sappy-sonnets, these
Gretel-stanzas fetching nopes, into
The hands of craving-warts, stucco
Borders, palsy-gangs and semi-dopes.

The nasty-edit, the dopamine cabal,
Zoot-impaired, pleasure-pained, unused
To pretty things, flowers, a note kind.
Send my soul to the print-alley fiends.

L'importance du « regardeur »

il n'est en effet d'images que perçues
et Marcel Duchamp
apporta sa malicieuse contribution personnelle
à un tel phénomène en affirmant l'importance du « *regardeur* »
les créateurs d'icônes cherchèrent certes à y introduire des codes
une étape infantile
transposant brillamment les figures du réel grâce
aux outils de la rhétorique
avec Roland Barthes
où sont les images ? qu'est-ce qui *fait image* ?
quelles images ?

la photographie n'a pas aboli l'estampe
ni la télévision le cinéma
la distinction entre images mobiles et images fixes
est désormais communément admise
certains vecteurs, comme Internet
les vecteurs sont par définition des agents multiplicateurs
(photo, cinéma, télévision)
un négatif photographique n'est pas une photo

un cliché resté sur pellicule ou sur planche contact
une émission télévisée
non diffusée
un film non projeté
une plaque lithographique non imprimée
un manuscrit non publié
elles *déqualifient* les images
elles les rendent esclaves de leur accompagnement
l'analyse de l'image vaut-elle comme source de connaissance ?
certainement

des sources d'information indispensables
décrypter beaucoup de figurations
des images réside dans son potentiel narratif
son influence sur les créateurs
notre regard détermine de toute façon le champ et le hors champ
les articulations de l'univers visual
consommation et création
en seront bouleversées
Plotin s'interrogeait
« *Est-il donc possible qu'on soit dans le Beau sans le voir* »

(text corrupted from http://bbf.enssib.fr/bbf/html/2001_46_5/2001-5-p22-gervereau.xml.asp)

Foreign Body Ingestion

Not *pica*, although that too might work,
But some other compulsion to hand;
It starts with the heist of palmary sand,

That quirk of available, sifted lifting,
Graduates effortlessly to bobby pins.
Nothing ingested is foreign for long,

She says. The world exists to be taken in.
Objects attract. Penelope introduces
Pennies to her expanding digestive tract.

Winged Scapula

Paris found my heel in the long thoracic nerve.
Achilles is meant to be tragically reduced, luv.

Myth dovetails nicely here with vehicular logic.
It is the pain that kills, the thrills that'll unstick.

The scapula is winged, making me an Arch-angel.
Seeing my body from the back: *don't be appalled*.

It is the ghostly mycofacial pain you'll tend to feel.
Paris found the thoracic nerve in my fleet fine heel.

London Eye

Nature: an extinction rate.
Recall she was a girl
Speaking with a bullet in *Budavox*,

Shells on the sea blasting
On Frith Street, where, in 1914,
Imagism flicked on. Then,

There (!) the pseudo-Blitz
Of television began, 1929.
I wear the soft black cloth

Of the bathrobe you gave me, swan
On the foam of your rising.
No home for creatures with the sun

Dialling its metronome
Onto the cool ridge's melted dome,
To kiss and caress, honey, by-gone.

Crest

(After Tortoise)

The arm that rises descends
And the slow accumulation
Gathers pace. The other node

Forms a connexion. Place
Ends and reforms. A motion
Gains attention. The trigger

Folds into a platform, erodes
A lathe of ice, then crawls
Forward, a micron at a time.

Lime burns and spins; a code
Encircles the piston, swarms
A core complex, then, cold,

Releases a gaseous state, bends
Four levels and eighteen layers.
A circular notch of teeth mould

Constant functions, beautiful
And old. A fir tree in the snow
Implodes, is remerged using

Digital spanners, a manifold.
The suction is a genetic nucleus,
There is a wire, a mechanism,

A crystal and some gum. Fire
Enters on a conveyor. It burns
Up the entire landscape, a force

For good, automated, portends
The mediation of godhead, acts
Of generation; a spasm releases

Wastes into a system of fluid
Brakes and consideration. Red
Blood compacts with beams

That extend at right-angles to
The sun which melts the chrome.
This is the world. This is home.

Ministry for Emergency Situations

After an emergency situation
All wedding rings must be removed
And citizens will be asked to undress
In the streets. The Minister herself
Will bathe those affected with disinfectant
Foam. They must ensure their eyes
Are shut. Those who refuse to take off

Their jewelry, tokens of affection, clothes,
Will be shot. The fully naked will dance
In the medical shower, then be x-rayed
And scanned by robot magnets small as
Mites. The dead will rot where they fall.
The Minister's minions will run things
With the efficiency of rats in trenches,

Their Verdun feast mounting daily.
The toll will be unspeakable; in secret
Inspections will go on. The cleansed
Victims will be allowed to request
Compensation for their torn and burnt
Rags, their melted trinkets, their irradiated
Keepsakes. Like homeless gypsies,

Stateless vermin, they will be herded
Into emergency homes where, for hours,
The Ministry of Songs will form a choir,
And douse them in anthems on liberty,
And the need for retinal scans, and other
Plans. The war is volatile and important
Needs take precedent. Now smile.

Todd Swift has poems recently published or forthcoming in *The Drunken Boat*, *Gargoyle*, *Jacket*, *New American Writing*, *Poetry London*, *Retort*, and *Shampoo*. He is the author of two poetry books and the editor of four international poetry anthologies, such as *100 poets against the war*, from Salt, Cambridge. His reviews, stories, and articles have recently appeared in *Books in Canada*, *The Dubliner*, and *Prague Literary Review*. His third collection, *Rue du Regard*, is out summer 2004. He is poetry editor of www.nthposition.com and contributing editor of *Matrix* (Montreal). In 1997 he was the winner of the Young Quebecer of the Year Award, Arts & Education category. He lives in London with his wife.