

Upon A Time

by Darryl Price

What we did was walk in on an amazing starfish
convention, everyone lazing about, softly frozen against the
timeless drooling currents like strange

looking wind socks washing up and down with the sun. I am
empty, hear me roar in blubbery
bluster and a fake English accent. We thought to our waking

selves, boy, they don't even realize how strangely beautiful their
own amazing
arms are, waving, spinning about the coral encrusted waves like
floating, lopsided

lighthouses. It's a crying shame because all they have to really
do is bump around the room really, but that's so hard to

do when you're always staring up only at the same fish stinky
sky night after night, fearful of the larger shadows to come into
the ever changing picture, but I

say keep this in mind—you've been here a long, long
time already among those giant shadows, star boys, and you're
still

there now. Do the mathematical dance on the head of
a pin, my funny frond endowed elbow friends of the

sand castle coves built just below the waiting storm, lord knows
you've got enough fingers to
plug a few holes in all the floating garbage this

world has to offer. Join together. Some of them might

even have lifted a lumpy leg or two out of sheer desperation,
frustration or just plain old lazy time to keep, and of course lust,
but most just
flattened their tummies and refused to look around even into
their favorite patch of clear sky where their eyes wandered like
highly balancing flashlights on wavering bamboo stilts. We are
fixed,
they cried over and over. Don't make so much loud
fun of our mighty, mighty flying gods, lest they smite
you and us. What they could have seen at any given moment
is each other, real people behind the distorted balloon tubes that
strangled them,
glistening in the new day breezes like something out of
the best dreams ever had by anybody anywhere. Instead they
sacrificed
themselves to the cliffs of indifference like so many spats
of bird-shit. I called to the others, let's get out
of here, c'mon then. This place's bringing the whole universe
down. I
don't want to be even a small part of it. We put
our best overflowing hats on and danced around the corpses
until we were well out of town and on our merry
way once more alone. That night we smoked around the campfire
and gave verse to the scene we'd left so far far behind us, sad but
with some glee for having survived.

Bonus poem:

Nothing I Say Is Going

by Darryl Price

to stop you from reloading your guns and aiming them at your
poor unawares neighbor. Bullets to you are an extra set of
sharpened teeth.

I want you to know not everyone who hurts believes in hatred
as the best way to go about this life. If you get
anything by stealing, it actually doesn't belong to you alone. And
never

will. I know you're okay as rain with that. That saddens
everything there is

with an indifferent stench of cold cruelty. We all intrude upon
each other's

lives without even knowing it sometimes. Some of us try to be
quiet and kindly watch where we are stepping. Others can't quite
contain

a merriment of spirit in their hearts. To those we say thank
you, thank you for the noises of laughter and music and the
very real charm of the communal fountain of youth. Nothing I say

now is going to get you to stop murdering all self aware
creatures for your own black pleasures. You're immune to the
storms of

tears you've caused for centuries, you've slowly turned to stone,
standing in

the hollow histories of your hijacked moralities like wild dogs with
foaming

mouths full of flesh. Nothing I say is going to ring in
your ears with a new note for common goodwill because you've
made

up your minds to continue the warped war horn beeping forever.
You're good little

soldiers, one and all. You'll build every railroad track no matter
where

it leads. You'll deliver every enemy to their grisly fate no matter
how much they cry and scream for mercy. You'll shove God
Himself

into the unforgiving hell of the ovens if that's what you are
told to do because only blood matters. Nothing I say is going

to reverse your indoctrination into the legion of hate where you
are

bullied out of love, beaten out of respect, and tortured by so
many whipped-up nightmares, but I say to you here that you are
not just their forgotten puppet. You are not so far gone that
you cannot remember how it feels to matter. Connect the dots.

See

the many faces of the big picture. Be the hero. You were

meant to think. Let yourself feel everything everywhere inside
again. You will

not lose focus. You will gain perspective. This is an invitation, not
a warning, not a finger, not a bomb. It is only words
until you take it up and see for yourself where it is
to be planted. That's all we're asking. Nothing more. It's a song,
that's all. We'd very much like you to sing along with us.

