

# pome sequence from an early spring

*by strannikov*

## **Red Skies a' Morn**

Say say say say say say our I-I-I-me tunes:

“we will not follow close behind  
these hot hot hot hot heated days—  
our hot wheels burning pavements into tar,  
our ice cream melts won't cool them down again,  
no far-tosst lemonades are stirred today  
to quench our brows or wipe our dripping thirsts”  
say say say says our I-I-I-me tunes.

The driven drive drive drive-ins drive on through  
and over popcorn burgers' secret sauce  
slickly sweet our tongues shall lick no more:  
our carbonated throats won't crunch their shells,  
the palaces of gold now roast in piles,  
their melting melted plastics burn and stick,  
we cannot shake them loose nor more make ice  
to fill a lake or sun-drencht reservoir  
enough to beat the heat that bakes our brains—  
so sad we didn't hear this long ago

before our four-wheeled freedoms roared their smokes  
that four-legged horses never learned to breathe:  
our telescopes are aimed at distant flames  
while no one smells the burning cities' slopes—  
our cosmic consciousness dawned days too late  
to show what ravaged mornings now we face  
—if ever once, no more “the cosmic view”,

unless the cosmos sees itself inflamed.

**Confidentially told, confidentially kept**

Secrets whispered into hollow stone  
the nearby moon might hear and recognize  
but never whisper to another soul.

From mineral concavity mud-daubed  
(mud ample with sincerities of wet),  
a season's growth of green shoots freshly sprung—

the shoots themselves the secrets' fruit,  
those secrets whispered into hollow stone,  
those secrets never whispered by the moon.

**Distances of air**

The air at rest within that wooden flute  
soon would be expelled—  
another breath about to enter lungs  
soon to be exhaled.

Whence those patient airs?  
One flowed down mountain meadows after rains,  
birds awaited flight,  
the other blew across a balcony.

Upon my balcony we sat and smokt—  
took me twenty years  
to stand in mountain pastures after rain  
gulping decades' breaths.

Behind the balcony we'd heard that flute,  
but now I cannot hear your closest breath.

**Optick illusion**

Windows open onto walls  
shadows susurrantly crawl  
seams of mortar never dreamt  
equal bricks the spines of walls.

Temporary windows watch  
oscillating vigils stand  
aching legs of creaking piers  
bricks' velocities alert.

What turns eyes centripetal?  
Orbits do our eyes resist  
taut umbilicals yet snap  
navels yank us all life long.

Native curiosity  
makes me question if I see,  
if one more blink could waken me—  
what might my lidded eyes recall?

**From the eventful lives of cats**

Because the wall stands cool inside its shade,  
the cat naps soundly curled atop its wall.  
No hummingbird or wren disrupts its sleep,  
and blue jays fuss a yard or two away.  
No squirrel's close enough to interrupt,  
respectful cars don't even pass by close.  
The lightest breeze strokes light the feline fur,  
a lazy tail atwiltch in feline dreams.

Before the sun goes down the bleary cat  
slinks off its wall to stalk its neighborhood,  
its keen eyes dart its head from side to side,  
it twitches tail or not as it sees fit.  
It hisses warning to another cat—

their last encounter yesterday at noon  
left each one disappointed in its fur.

**Two haiku from a Japanese garden**

Duckling paddles calm—  
nandina rustles, cool breeze,  
turtle suns on stone.

Moss-scented water—  
koi leap, frolic, splash tails, leaves—  
wind sculpts shallow waves.

**The terrified boat**

“We are perishing!”  
We can no further go—  
alone at a table for four,  
I would say, “It's time to eat.”  
Crumbs of croissants into coffees raikt,  
breadcrumbs served in spoonfuls:  
another placemat oil has dripped upon,  
the tapenade was never thought immune to gravity.  
Commotions from the kitchen spill into the dining room,  
bass throbs thump from passing four-wheeled head-lit broadcast  
booths.  
Drinks served by the drought,  
floating grains have not yet sunk:  
interrogations brief upon the inlaid jade tiles here,  
additions to our calcic residues.  
Heat-injected afterthoughts,  
a style of pen that I would never use  
between the worlds that once had been and nevermore can be—  
listening, I heard:  
eclipses don't appear on calendars,  
yet mangled messages arrive on time (or late) by noon.  
Screech and twang mellifluous upon the ivory stairs,

falling flames drop hot debris from recent rocketry.  
Our pinball games have rung their lights,  
and we'll forget the growing up we watch.  
Two at a table for six,  
no further can we go—  
“Peace—be still.”

