

Finalist, Poetry

Seduction of a Moment

by Brian Scott

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The indifference you have to the questions.

How long have you had it? How did it start?
How did you find out you had it?

The passivity of acceptance to your aching stiffness.

Echo chamber temple of missed communication.
Language of beeps, tones, pounding.
Hollowed sacrament: You see your spine. See your brain.
All that you are in shades of blue.
Circle *one*.
Circle *two*.
Tell him what he's won folks:

The answer you didn't seek.

Judgment in two letters. It has a name. It must be real.
Vague recollection of crutches with arm cuffs.
Yes, that's the one.
You still have to write it down.
The nomenclature of sickness. Somehow that is important.

The routine that everyone seems to know but you.

Your new life comes in pamphlet form.
Medication in tote bags, free pens, corporate logos.
Free gift. Thank you for choosing oblivion.

The casual professionalism of the person who arrives with the needles.

Simple machine, load and shoot, not quite Star Trek.
Sometimes pain, sometimes not.
Flu symptoms, site reactions, scar tissue unseen below.
At some point it becomes normal.
People say this.
This actually *becomes* normal.

The dispassion time brings to things.

The nights of passion that didn't happen.
Holidays, Anniversary s, Dinner Plans, Family Plans, Work Plans.
Sick Days.
Apologetic days.

Failures in sleep, failures in timing, failures to cope.
Failures in hope.

Frustrations that fail to manifest and be counted.
Failures to explain.
Pain in pantomime.
Screams in silence.
The Breakdown that wasn't.

The first time house guest's expression: Discovery of needles.

Shock, revelation, assumption.
Excitement at the answers addiction can offer to explain everything away.
Disappointment at inspection: Medical use.
You are expected to explain, not a word asked yet, it expected.
Everyone's light dims as the room wishes the assumption was correct.

The disdain behind the malice.

Overheard conversations.
Casual assumptions. Venomous condemnations. Everyday discussions.
Payments made late.
Phrases like 'personal responsibility' linger just before you enter.
Resume on exit.
As if all costs were choices.
Food, Rent or Medication?
Pre-existing conditional Irresponsibility of disease.
You don't fit the plan. You don't understand.
Medical bills, life in the red.
Plan dictated by those in green.

The invitations you didn't realize were formalities.

Terms dropped like one would famous contacts.
Free floating disdain for introduction.
Formerly known as whatever, you are now known as the person *with*.
Unreliable label gained.
Personal Identity retained.

The Lethargic humor of unification.

First convention three stories up.
One Elevator.
Jokes about crutches as gallows, necktie nooses, chair wheel axes.
Ice Broken.
Guest speaker: Talk-show Host.
Paid a prostitute with a check? No! No the other one.
This one's had it for years.
Momentary expectation of white-trash drama despite this.
Isolation disrupted, opportunity presented.

The disquiet ride home.

Something said.

Something not said.

Same not vacuumed house, half-done dishes, clothes, complaints.

Occupant altered.

Fish out of water, gasping.

Silent normality broken, uneasy calm, fear.

Fear.

Moment on the brink of madness.

Passes.

The resistance you had built to yourself realized.

Discovery of the before.

Desperation filling your lungs, first air in years.

Choice provided. Hope emergent. Self retained.

Decisions available. Options available. Choice returns.

A ***Voice*** found.

Boiler lit. Pressure building.

Suspect awoken. Connection established. Moment pending.

That moment.

Your moment is pending.