

Northern Soul

Also by Ron Silliman

Poetry

Revelator (*being degree 1 of Universe*)

The Alphabet

The Age of Huts (*complete*)

Tjanting

Memoirs & Collaborations

The Grand Piano

Under Albany

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Criticism

The New Sentence

(editor)

In the American Tree

Ron Silliman

Northern Soul

being degree 10 of Universe

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Northern Soul

For Barney

Up Quay St
to Deansgate
then over
to Victoria Station,
Northern Rail
West to Liverpool
grey clouds
pillowing the sky
No height
in these fields yet
whatever they're growing
Hedge row as fencing
An older station
at Newton-le-Willows
brick office padlocked
but the chairs on the platform
bright yellow vinyl
then the backsides
of row housing
with thin slivers of yards
School fields
without baseball diamonds
Magpies mistaken
for mockingbirds
Blood pudding
salad
full of rocket
planespotter
in an antiaircraft

unit, learning
first to drive a tank
over the Egyptian desert
then determining
never to leave England again
Sharp shadow over the page
writing into the dark
Notice is hereby given
that it is proposed
to change
the name of Sparrow Park
to Gallipoli Garden
Bury in Bloom
reads the jeep tipped
in aforementioned garden
Fly all the way from London
& what's on the screen
but *Cash Cab*
Squiggles in white paint
at each intersection
mean *Don't park here*
I'm not listening to their conversation
but rather to the language
which I decide must be Greek
understanding not a word
The tall woman is wearing a giant box
plaintively calling your name
The little dog pirouettes
just to see me

The market's a national treasure
but it's just off-brand tack
in vast quantity
United puts away the Arsenal
to reach the final
canals everywhere
Ten percent of the people
own 90% of the land
ergo 90% of the people
live on just ten percent of the land
The streets thus are crowded in the South
Locals discern a course tongue
Wystan Curnow & Barry Schwabsky
in the very same room
Asparagus ravioli
Fleet Street being shorter
than I'd imagined
Cutting short Artie Gold
vomiting between sets
as the turntablist samples
Willie the Shake
photo shoot by the Roman fort
speed at which
towns blur by
feeling blurby – Simon
mit Garfunkel, always
with the cooked tomato
My kingdom for a floss
Trees shimmer perfectly still

but upside down
mirrored by the river
no more than a stream
peat bog in the pine barrens
dogwood's blossoms all but gone
Birds won't fly
in a straight line
The tea, being hot
steamed his glasses
which then cleared slowly
The argument over bitters
turned bitter – "POETRY
HAS BEEN BURY, BURY
GOOD TO ME"
who has proven
but a meager steward
In the dark but
with the window open
attempting to sort
the symphony of birds
Conch shell mounted
atop a copper spike
Where I come from
fog never foretells rain
but here it is
difficult to discern
where one ends, the other
congeals into drops
First crow at dawn

Maketh one to yawn
The small fort stood
nearly 2,000 years
until amid
the hurly burly of
rapid industrial expansion
it was knocked down
without a second thought
Four trill bird song
or perhaps a female
green-backed heron
The thrill of
the first signature's
binding, white thread
at the margin
is what I first wrote
Wind on the back
of my neck
Soften the
break in the
line, not
as you hear
it, rhetorical
but throated
caught in the
business of
breathing
A kiss that
momentarily

proved a bit
too intense
takes one's –
the choice is in
fact accurate –
breath away
so that it is
oxygen or
the absence thereof
that flushes
the rush of
adrenalin
illuminating the night
Dickens lives
but a block away
Mallard of wood
impaled on a stand
Southernmost tip
of New Jersey
Dear Jimmy,
it's 7:45 AM
in the Woitasek's
beach rental
swans on Lake Lilly
Without much
wind the rain
won't reach me
here below
the balcony

Life understood
as the gradual
expanse of regret
Field guide to
warblers left
on some counter
the day before
Hydrant painted
yellow with
a bright orange top
on an otherwise
county road
Little junco's
big song
mixed with the
tree rodent's bark
Not a squirrel
but a crow
has glided in
to the dead tree
Rain audible
only from tires
rolling over
the river Ex
the river Irwell
all these
nameless canals
The center
of town has

shifted, following
the big hotels
A slow job, bottle
of water in
his right hand
Rain mottles the lake
His biggest failing
is an excess
of earnestness, that
he wants too much
to be liked, not
knowing how
precisely
to ascertain
what is fluid,
instantaneous, flickering
& thus to others
comes across
both as anxious
& eager. The rain
slows, so
you notice the wind
just as vowels
in a diphthong
elongate
until the consonants
that bracket them
begin to hum
A Lhasa Apso

sniffs my calf,
face I see
atop Tibetan demon
portrayals, architect's
model turned into
a doll house, no
right angles
after 354 years,
flowers lean away
from morning wind,
sparrows at the hedge,
heron in flight
renders the invention of arrows
inevitable

 candles

on the glass alas,
sparrows at the hedge
in great quantity,
what I'm after
here is a tone
that is not
the vibration of phonemes
set into motion
but an emotion
at the base of my spine
I will recognize
by virtue of
having once upon a time
been ten years old

so far from this pasture
Tom calls
his septic field
causing Beth to laugh,
Schuyler to turn his head
tho Lulu
shows no reaction
but continues
to chew this
plastic replica
of a clay pot
Thus I spun loose
from any sense of anchor
nor rancor at
the economy of departure
that so propelled
even my ancestors
over oceans
(binocs
buy an ox
bind an
oxymoron)
humid at
ocean's edge
Thunder & lightning
give depth to the sky
Kayaker soup
West End Ave
is in fact

to the East
at least here
in southernmost Delaware
just north
of Fenwick Island
Sweet sad
to awaken
just when the dream's
taken an erotic turn
your friend, without warning,
after all these years
to have opened her robe,
the dress falling
just as you startle awake
The residue of rain
everywhere evident
but the crickets
pulsing in synch
Some conversation
just out of hearing
I can tell gender & tone
but only that
words indistinguishable
but for the act of themselves
Lone sparrow
makes a kissing sound
The traffic
a continual shush
The wind, 11 stories up