

THE CENTRE (An Improvisation for Marian)

*all around the poorly loved
their lives follow life back
into stone and they dream
a sweeter consonance at the centre*

— ROBIN BLASER

in the centre,

I work the files, records, scores find
the rules a gift, could you be sure
the value of the rule

★

the sun is human, lights the rock
pile outside, breeze moves

the dying plant

★

it is horrible, what happens: history, and to think

★

bits of paper: a pile, a basket — paper
a paragraph where she sees a farm, a river — the awkward
sentence I mark, find fault with — this trouble with my own
(the task:

to make visible the farm, the heart, the centre

★

sun out. the shadow line across the rocks.
still a tension — the voices light gasping

(yet,

the centre makes us

human

— a laughter, a boredom, a joke to know
who we are — what we do

★

I watch from the centre desk —
the disk whirs, a beep,

— *his* machine, he slouches toward,

Cat Hat

low to his ears

★

time, as place made flesh; less faith and you
require these wires: overhead the message flashed, a constant
are your lights on. outside, a fog. you can't see
movement, gone too quick, a brief passage of the silk-like
dress — her lovely mouth and manner

★

neither privilege, nor care. but how we want a surety, when all
seems ending — or has ended (to find yourself here — sent to the
centre:

it could be an obscure paradise — no experience
necessary — and what

we want, found:

human talk — sex and grammar, a happy lovely
world, an invention, a psycho/pathology — someone's been
and been dreaming

and when you wake, the centre is there

★

in the centre, know. they think this a last or beginning
chance — and what you learn: the labyrinth of the dream — work,
as in the old days — never seeming ending. the dutiful will miss
it. those who don't, take a chance, make themselves an edge:

the grammar machine unto itself. only humans
in trouble: it is all human — (what we cover up
when the centre falls apart

★

moments you invent and dread — when you think you want a long
stretched and clear landscape of trees and rocks — and a sense
of *you* as singular and empty. some wind blows against you, you,
in this grayness feel thin, alive, (fear disappears. here
again — anticipations, the psycho logical where they look
for you (and what appears to steal you away, is *you*, the thing
itself

★

no system for chaos. they take your life away with pleasure

★

abandon the scraps, the words. I haven't checked my plant
for days, the changing mutability of the rock pile (blasted
chunks.

early, I saw the bird crack the seed, the ingenious
bird. rose bush scrapes
the window. I've come to love
the wind

(and in the blurred eye catch
the funeral the bearers wait for in laughter

★

some stayed out, in the hall, to smoke.
the test will place them — a diagnosis, a hopelessness — the
defeat they already know. why write or speak

★

staple. include, submit, use: commands to make me, *they*.

be quiet

(I'd like to be of
some large silence of a shadow, of a place — this
anxious self, dulled, wants it out, wants to tell the
accordion player, go away in your leather shorts

★

gray sky. gray wind. what state of weather, or self be
described, found and signified. the centre is fluid — a flux
closes, opens — *is* a state — fluorescent, fluid — the soft and
hard.

when you're sick you see it, sick —

★

no complaints, amidst the deep babble . . . barely a move
against the cruelty of the mind with its single moving parts,
as cruel as that which yields and bends
for false belief. take us out to the rocks. stake us in the
cold — clear and unnamed.

look up from your scraps

★

no music without silence . . . the fall leaves on the willow appear
as fish in a stream (strong, south wind — silver bellies, or
last night, from the porch — an old moon lights the cherry leaves,
stars, I thought . . . these slight occupations, as experts poke
at phones, recommend the proper tests, tape their clapper bells

★

a centre to hold to when the
mind goes out of the heart, heart out of the mind

★

today, the centre smells — an old school: paper, ink, eraser bits —
pencil wood, when you expect electric smoke, nylon
gas. there is a point where authority must cheat its rules, get
you through. I've seen meadows, space, and the point
between the comma and the word, as a point, an entrance,
a meadow

★

sense my own failure, when I see in others some success. John
at the desk, can talk — intelligent to admit
confusions, the arbitrary — smile, glint and send them on.
real lessons are elsewhere of your own finding. a rock
a tree — the way the light just went to gray again
yet we want the words, what is taught

★

turn around
half face
the centre, the axis — a kind of reversal
where the centre moves fast, as a circumference spun,
yet doesn't move at all

image: the poor fat guy, days
on the spelling arcade
and those who sit around
useless without him

★

the sentence beginning, "The Hindu faithful . . .

(that which begs me give it
meaning and clarity — the pencil scrawl correction
they cannot read, nor rightly care to: here,
you want out of the sentence — the long sentence — be
of the Hindu faithful who bathe along the river

★

it is not a matter. what is sense, but a connection
where self disappears or becomes the instrument and
the head is large with what it discovers — as a line that
drifts on, out to the yard long and continuous, past
the rocks, parking lots, malls and centres . . .

★

they let you go — far enough, you don't know

there will be a time and location of the natural. no
computer beeps in the deep forest —

(too many hours, unmarked, to get there

★

— want in a dark hour, a rosy spirit —
to appear, and that when we laugh, it is of
laughter itself

★

laugh anyway — that that taken as serious is just a scratch.
the real centre, is intact — is of
a beauty . . . a strength of unwavering, of a solid
solitude — and of the horror, — its release

★

I'm years back — and feel driven to let the
swirl . . . what shape, give it?

some stay calm with higher faith, some are drunk —
on knees confess their misery

★

drive to go on. shifts and changes as today on
the porch felt a sense of spring (rain smell,
released dirt —

November
wet
grass and leaves

★

no centre to teach, but becomes excuse that unbelievably
yields a value: the soft, human — the voices, a
result of that which contains them — a mask, a body, the centre —
a centre of the arbitrary unknown

★

I'm lost in the centre, as the plant (dormant with no expression
for its own condition, but that what we see and say it to be.
I'm outside to see — walk past my own office — look close to the
rocks I describe and want the air, sense of my own body
moving up through the lot to the truck. grin the loss of
time I don't think

★

the days we stink in this work

★

it's a trick to stay quiet, not to show lack of interest. slight
marvel at my system — to make time go, avoid work: a walk, the
glance at texts — the chat, the conscious joke, note
the unknowns with faked concern —
note these clouds (never before

— sun on the portables

★

no criticism or praise — barely, what is given, a
condition in this moving state: circuits of mind
and skin's divisions — the tough girl smiles. muscled
boys held in thought, equations, yield to parse
and paraphrase

★

higher up, baboons

★

the more the centre is lauded — the more we sleep. and old talk
about the spirit, gone in a lie. and that to come awake — when
you want this sleep, means no epic, for the centre, nor cure.
if it were only a matter of grammar

a list of numbers

a measure for the

emptiness

★

the drill's lesson — drill

★

snow

— the light ground

the white rocks

★

it begins to seem normal like talk of death for the dying —
the paraplegic curse's energy gone to acceptance of
the twisted limbs —

(in this hobble across the centre floor,

we learn

—good humour in these assigned tasks

sort the

twisted math and grammar

could we shove it/were it ours

★

I do nothing. slight
chuckle at the girl's
rat's nest hair

get

beyond the rule for

“more better”

★

were it in my heart to know, no other road
possible

★

what is missing, that drives me. not circles,
or schemes but a happy dream as a thin wisp
out of the angst. the ones who know, cheer me on
as if in this stupidity I could cheer them.

we are of the rocks, the tree, the speaking
animals —

to wait

/

to measure

our lives

against the infinite

(so be it

our senseless laughter

without desire

but this view of the centre's

edge

gasping

air

★

to be unwavering,

I go askew — the top's wobble when
the centre disappears

★

a thin sleep: drunk beyond sense. tests of disembodiment/
or how we cling to the foolish chance of a kiss. no formula
for the path when the needle pin centre warps

★

to want the freezing bird's view of the seed/
to know the extent of the gift — a letter to . . . some
words, time, to ask forgiveness — I'm the fool to make
measures of the empty love —

★

one love. many hairy creatures
in big boots. I blew up and used the test to punish,
became the centre,
myself

★

almost
wept at the thought, and in my talk, of all that's inhuman
here

★

out on a flat sea, a centre-
each pleasure and happiness as if cheated. so
over the sea/centre edge. (just another surface — a long oblong
circle.

the universe you return to,
a journey
without calculation

★

no force to find or do. but who I am or was I
yet . . .

★

some so behind you wonder
why they're here.

(warmth, to talk, to be
the centre,
when most have left

★

the hapless dream shadows into stone, peripheries and paradise

★

I return to the scrawls
files,
scores,
and bits of speech —