

## Five Poems

Dean Anthony Brink  
National Chiao Tung University, Taiwan  
interpoetics@gmail.com



### PASTORAL CITY

Waves collapse – coral batten down.  
Clouds appear on the cliffs by noon.

Driving to a diner – hearsay lowers  
clearings in the stands of silence

facing off – unfaltering  
news a never-ending ladder –

a chameleon turns to stone – a cat hisses –  
ants deliver – roaches devour.

Rivers return storms flown inland –  
waters rise – towns swept away.

Banyan trees dangle receding roots  
thickening as they touch down

stirring mud – roadside, the sun circling.  
A little boy stalking the grass says

“I won’t hurt you pretty kitty.”

### JUST ANOTHER NAY-SAYER

In my day they stood by the idea of setting food out  
despite what neighbor said of neighbors  
letting cats fend for themselves in fields gone to seed.

Elsewhere, chickens hung themselves,  
packed in parks, another tourist attraction.

It was downright Oedipal, the way today is  
divvied into edible and gluten-free

so the body digests the world more gently  
you could say, given the old bachelor routine  
all seemed more in order than before.

You just don't *want* to get it  
is the thing I'm partial to, and it's hard  
to play catch-up in between.

Imitation is one thing, but once a hair out of place  
or those shoes, whose sad shoes, pointing  
halfway—whose big idea? It's about time,

but caught in it doesn't mean leaving  
your ruler on the library shelf forever.

Hey you, winner. What on earth  
did you marry into we'd ask ourselves at coffee.

No one I know escapes slipping through.  
Your only recourse ran away,

leaving yourself washing your hands  
until all the towels reek and you do another load.

I didn't want to bring up anything off color,  
it just comes out wrong. I am wrong, though like you,

I only did beer. Yet filth comes out of the lost,  
dusting the world in spangled colors.  
At least the talkers feel better about it.

#### **AT THE ANTHROPOCENE COLLECTION**

Simmer down, I tell myself. It's only a game  
of lampposts and leashes.

The big firms  
can't hold their end, too slick  
and so we're moving out

in circles, or why bother the soil?  
Hand me that trowel.

Taters under burlap, sprouts cut in furrows.  
Where'd that calf go?

Husbandry no longer ties us to turning the plot  
and how we manage seed sets

spread in the dark to work first  
under the loft,  
                    if not cutting corners  
on branding, leaving beaks and tails,

dumping leftovers in troughs  
before hitting the hay early.

Sympathy guiding us  
                    overseeing the land  
closer to the animal.

Mornings pick up twigs into piles for bonfires  
before heat sets hazards and fines.

## **HUSBANDRY**

state animals climb  
rotting pine planks  
planting the gate

after dusk  
whistles dictate perimeters

sad protocol assemblies against the past  
happy the riots on ice

sad the hesitation  
for more happy a prototype

sad a fly hemmed in by spiders  
happy the rainbow braiding a pole

nasty the dentist with bell  
happy corn in decay

sad the blood pact  
happy the analogy and break  
or nested monarch

a measured sector  
happy enables sad takes back

sad the continuum happy the arc  
happy turns in unawares

under the wren  
happy is a handful

sad in waves is boiling  
happy antique

sad a concerto of footnotes  
vermilions fudging physics

happy the faith through bedrooms  
sad a brass experiment star incognito

happy the actor presumed prose  
happy southernly

sad struggles syndicated  
acquired pulse

### **EDENIC CUL-DE-SAC**

Felt need gave way to firewalls,  
the sweep of radar  
taking many a pulpit  
and wallflower neither of us had time for.

While the open garden makes open rebellion futile,  
for every maiden lost there's a boy who's nubile.

As chains went, not a bad start.

Given the overhead  
we didn't deserve it, I mean a precarious fleet  
blessed with undersea undertakings  
joked censors.

While half up river  
salmon jump the perimeter  
islands lost to global warming gave way  
to airstrips and more Starbucks foaming  
while we say  
*what we've done to our earth is shoddy*  
and go on sewing echoes to empty bodies.