

**Poems by Alan Britt**

**LIGHTING INCENSE**

The torso of the flame bumps the stick.

Fine ash falls upon the Berber carpet.

The bottom of my slipper receives its  
mercurial kiss vaporized at 11:33 AM.

## **BREAKFAST**

The chair weeps.

One cricket sounds like a star  
scraping its aluminum fins  
against stone darkness.

A man  
    nude  
    &  
    humid  
walks beneath a dead moon.

The chair continues weeping.

Smoke chases laughter from a nearby guestroom.

The poor moon is a wasp  
lying stunned in a dirty web  
slung between two white shingles.

The chair weeps because it's alive.

Three weeks from now I say let us  
meet for breakfast, you & I,  
in this dirty cold web.

## THE SUBDUED HOWL OF YOUR WEeping

The sun rides bareback through this neighborhood.

Ravens fly from the horse's nostrils!

*What?*

What do you mean, *what?*

*What are you saying?*

I'm describing music.

*Nonsense!*

I see.

*Why bother to write that?*

I enjoy it.

*I don't understand how you can enjoy such nonsense.*

*Nonsense . . .* perhaps to a linear alcoholic,  
to one who embellishes life with such plausible relevance.

What makes you think your third divorce carefully  
couched in Greek mythology is worth ruining a tree for?

Have a seat. Here comes an oboe; taste its apricot shoulder blade.  
Now the flutes . . . a flock of white-throated kisses, along  
with two cellos whose smooth torsos resemble Venus, &, finally,  
Debussy's piano sans eyelashes that imitate the subdued howl  
of your weeping.

## **RECOLLECTIONS OF INNOCENCE**

It isn't innocence  
I desire  
so much as the kisses  
that stained your neck  
that night.

Kisses with the weight  
of apricots.

## BILLBOARD FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

Classic Kettle Chips,  
can't beat 'em,  
might as well  
eat 'em.

Political rhetoric,  
can't beat it,  
might as well  
eat it but don't forget  
to spit out  
the fucking thorns,  
same thorns  
that created hanging chads,  
same thorns  
that sent airliners  
into two World Trades,  
PCB's for generations,  
obscuring the shift to new  
world order; spit those thorns  
lest you sleepwalk  
the Federal Reserve herding  
us like ants herding aphids,  
milking us & keeping a close antennae  
on our primal mythologies.

Spit out the god-forsaken thorns;  
pretend it's rock'n'roll or something more;  
pretend it's Jesus or one of his pseudonyms;  
pretend it's not what you thought it would be;  
pretend anything, so long as you  
spit out the thorns.

*But without thorns, how can we  
know "Enough or too much?" How can  
we transform our basement offices  
into glorious nests lined with birds  
of paradise art (some say junk),  
plus the usual native vines & leaves,  
woolen threads blown free by freak storms,  
a plastic rose missing half its petals,  
& the rest of this stuff, well, it's the best  
I could do, not an experienced bird  
of paradise myself?*