



Dennis Daly – Five Poems

Gas Station In Bandit Country

Pell-mell diving down the dirt-rutted road
Left behind the snow-tufted high country
Of murderous peaks poised, bent in posture.
We blow out a tire, slam, break through pot hole.

Hobble into a desert gas station,
Midday children gaping, their fear cornered
Behind plastic containers, stacked, yellow.
Their father responds with enemy eyes

To our bundled money. A brusque distance
Away we imagine a whirlwind whip
Up the wizards of war machinery
As new rim shaped, the cracked spare safely stowed.

Get in! Get in! Conviction censures us
Forward into the billowing swelter,
The borderland between home and neighbor,
Divined by dateless thirst, by bloody sword.

Outside the British Fort

Armored vehicles, bones now
Repel the Afghan sun, complain
Till time completes its blunt wash.
I scuff, stomp the ground, the sand-
Bagged walkway presses fear
Curls hope inward, leans
Allotted dirt roughly, threatens
Graveness to come. And it will come.
Fiery cheekbones of a teenage soldier
His weapon pointed down, aims
At my empty heart, timing a question.
His forebears knew the answer. They fought
For their lives above this place and lost,
Every last one of them.

Guardians

When young they sleep on our socked feet
Follow our rhythm, each timed cough,
Each hesitation of life's stream.
They unravel us, thunder shot

Reverberating through heaven,
The white plume, the luminous quills
Knitted about, dearly given—
Quantum protector, seven-fold

Bronze shield, asteroid barrier.
Whispered warnings erupt, appear
To fill our voids, their tokens found
Before morning's cup of callow light.

Siberian Tiger

A universe of predatory mouths
Feeding on the tastier and the smaller,
Blood instinct breeds over millennia,
Tiger fangs genetically stropped to tear.

I scare the audience outside the cage
By offering myself here in their stead,
Hug the massive head, thinking it well-drugged.
This lush colored carpet espies a fool,

An amusement tool of my fellow kind.
Held from behind by an enormous chain,
Telling in menace, shows risk in tautness.
Those uncompassionate, artisan eyes

Widen as they must, the clawed air, the roll
Of muscle, magnificently brutal,
Detonated toward me, appetite aroused
By stir of sudden scent, a locking on.

The steel linkage holds a vital moment.
Abruptly the show ends baffling the beast,
Its face marked for battle. Its heart bursting
Against the vileness of self-reference.

Vision

Tempest-tilted I sit on lordly bench
At path's pebbled end and in fever rave
The early hours past pelt and drench of rain.
What electric sights cleave this plane of crows!

Gloom me soon. Spin into heaven's sparkle.
Open to vaults, to battering siegework,
To Uzziah's ballista fire that arced
Toward mud towers with sacerdotal rage.

Let come the exact, the imprisoned form,
Dormant in marble, mused over, ardent.
Let these hands fashion providential lines,
Conquer the known and hardened projections

Before dawn's masked aspect. Leviathans
Be damned. Winds temper. My words insurrect.

Dennis Daly's first full length book of poetry, *The Custom House*, was published by Ibbetson Street Press in June, 2012. His second book, a verse translation of Sophocles' *Ajax*, was published by Wilderness House Press in August, 2012. A third book entitled *Night Walking with Nathaniel* was released by Dos Madres Press in April 2014. Daly writes reviews regularly for the *Boston Small Press and Poetry Scene*. He lives in Salem Massachusetts and his blog site address is dennisfdaly.blogspot.com .