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Andrew Morris

Prisoners

All afternoon in the wash,
my adolescent feet in the mud,
I watched a mouse scurry along the dry,
hard edge of the bank, in and out
of the Indian rice grass and chamisa,
well adapted to its limits, doing mousy things.

In a split second, a change of direction,
an escape from the confining shapes,
it darted toward me
across the sea of sticky mud, chancing
the out-of-reach, the wild line.

It floundered midway, snagged by the slip.
Stuck there, its body jerked forward and backward.

In that dark moment
the world's beauty was still intact,
the light still lavish and exhausting.

The long ash fell from my smoke. I curved closer,
startled to the point of giddiness, maybe heartbreak.

I moved to meet the tiny casualty.
I did nothing.

Doom jumped out from its hiding place.
I lingered and watched, brooding,
relearning the world
as the mouse struggled on and on.

I left it there
at the beginning of its new trajectory,

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afraid to pick it up by its tail and toss it back
into its old life.

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Dream #16 -- Lorca & the Fascists

The world is full of bewildered men
loose-necked caricatures
forcing their way to the trough
or hiding out like foxes...

Lorca walks up the trail, undaunted, wearing a black suit,
the moon dripping from his mouth. The fascists parade
a step behind singing folk songs for the twilight,
their rifles left with their mothers.

They're traveling to a courtyard rimmed with olive trees.
There's no talk of war, only laughter and gossip.
Wine slides down their throats.
They bear hug each other.
They do not touch Lorca's poem-filled body.

Lorca leads them to a field of boulders.
They notice, for the first time, Lorca's dark eyes –
how they toil like a pair of hands,
how they grow sweet, like dark fruit, as the night deepens.

The fascists stare off into the distance.
They seem lost among the parables of stone.
They hold back coughs. Their thick shadows
seem to reel and stagger...

The poet looks each fascist in the face. They see only the moon

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Light

Shuffling out of an aeonian dream,
Both eyes blindsided by a bullish light –
That ruined hour – that eye-aching gleam
Bursting into the throne of god to upright
Sleep's gatekeeper. Its snarled condemnation
Of my idleness – a knife through the thalamus,
A quick death for the dark's delegation.
Light with its buckling brawn, its callousness –
How it cages us in the peculiar
Time of memory and regret. Let there
Be no light. Fog that feral intruder.
Birthed into its blaze and moral campaigns,
We shoulder it with no amount of doubt
Until our kindled bodies tucker out.

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Status

Wanting to become unholy, heave ho
the Facebook profile and contemplate
the goodness of having no common interests.

See with my hands: a river, stone, flower –
a day with no delusions; my body done
in by streambeds or a sore, sleepless head.

Tell all of my friends that I am dead –
stretched out in an overgrown pasture –
in a crux of odor, in the center

of spring. Tell those facsimiles that I am
shoeless and unafraid of the uproar
in the grass and that I will need to pass

on their requests for nails and frosted glass,
that I can't be their neighbor in Farmville
or survey their land to help them expand.

Tell those posturing pixels I prefer
their vulgar versions – the hardness of their
shoulders, the stiffening scabs on their hands,

the actual color of their faces
darkening and dancing, their bones arrayed
in that familiar flesh, their words undressed.