David P. Miller

Left hand

It hurts to write.
Left hand pushes the letters forward.
Right hand would draw them after
   with grace and clarity
But right hand has to stop
   and think
   each stroke.

Left hand doesn’t pause to consider.
He forces the letters ahead
claims the territory
conquers the page
advances west to east
(as Pilgrim forefathers tamed the inhospitable California shore
   laid the railroads
   confined the Indians
   sent out wagon trains
   at last to claim Massachusetts
   while Heaven smiled
   far above the fabled Atlantic).

The right hand would view the places it’s been
in contemplative retrospection
   leaving traces as it withdraws
   up the hill backwards.
But can’t, it lacks technique.

The Onward Christian Soldiers left hand
tightens, cramps again.
Left hand must often release the pen
   spread itself wide
   shake out the pain
   so as to set to the work afresh.
But though it hurts to write, write it will by God
its belligerent markings a private language
damn near illegible.

And look at this cardboard covered souvenir pen
Its casing split just now
where squeezed for dear life
        By the left hand
Vernal Swarm

each leaf seen knife-edged
every instant another leaf
unforgiving proliferation
multiplying just beyond
peripheral view
where I am rooted in a place
that is no absolute
but hypervision
factorial vision

this edge disturbance that feels like sight
but is only tug at phantom optic nerves
no place is in relation
there is no reference point
what happens only happens
at the blind spot
thickened felt unseen
dream gaze locked in a vernal swarm
shimmered sunlit veined
varietally green skinned
no zoom out no pan away no refocus

and the cicadas crickets
antiphonal insect myriads
grasshopper calling answered
with scrape-scrape
    rasp-rasp
twinned isolate sounds
carapace cries shift relation
while my gaze is locked
paired voicings wrapped then
by crickets’ pierced pulse
these next engulfed by
looped locust whine
then another layer
single calls of teeeeee
    teeeeee
at intervals extended
or vanished

as leaves saturate
further saturate
at the blind spot
March

Pine tree
near stripped
of branches
all on
one side –

ghosting
its
vanished
neighbor

Subway car door
two panes
of glass:
blue/grey
clear/amber –

everything slides past
left-right
cool-warm

The father
the child
night silhouettes
in the
parking lot
Between rain curtains
window dust fills
horizon hills
profile –
disappears
into muffled sky

Pull chain
swings from
ceiling lamp

pendulum
ticks exactly
  on the
second

With nothing to hear
hearing myself think