

d.n. simmers

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**Young surfers in the frothy shallow beach**

*After Gary Snyder*

Gary, that could have been me, surfing  
in the early days  
of the sixties  
on the beaches in California.

Long hair that would not bleach  
and surfer knots on the side of the feet  
and on the legs  
while the sun stood  
stiff against the waves coming in  
long and thick in the chop.

After the big waves broke for the first time.

You would have been  
talking to beats.

Jack and Ginsberg would be working on  
his Sultra poems  
and Howl would have  
a fight with the censures.

I would be out there at first light  
with a borrowed board  
pushing up against the waves.

There would be a big grin  
on my face  
as it washed  
against the curling rise of  
water.

**He walks steady up the slope**

*After Gary Snyder*

This is my brother  
on his island working  
his shoes up from the beach.

Walking in the morning after a stiff rain.

It is summer  
and he was finished teaching school.

So the rock is what  
he would have been splitting,  
to fill in the enclosure  
under his porch.

Like shale  
in slivers with a little cement  
as if white powder  
and some grit  
could be another form  
of chewing gum.

Dead now ten years.

But when we went  
to look at his  
half finished cabin  
that hung on a huge rock,  
his jacket was still there.

Ready to go down to  
the sea  
and smash up and  
at the large shore boulders.

**When poets are by too much force betrayed**

*After John Dryden*

John you talked  
of another John's death.

Comparing the poet,  
John Oldham's death,  
too young,  
to Aeneid's  
Nissus and Marcellus  
both who died too soon.

Life is travelled by a faster route  
for those that come and go with  
the speed of light.

Instead of the shadow of many days.

Can we count each morning's breath  
or dance through each afternoon's memories?

Some just get up and coffee and go.

Others paint and wonder and  
check the size of lies and truths.

While others put on the cloth of  
their offices to judge and decide.

All are spokes of the wheel that  
carries us along through  
the centuries yoked  
or free us to see the sky.

**Green trees that in the forest grew**

*After Andrew Marvell*

There was a special on fields in northwest  
Washington state.

A training ground for the army.

Yet inside the sound of large artillery  
there are little birds nesting in the long grasses.

This is the last place for these birds.

All the wild open fields  
have gone to houses.

So what is the point?

Let us shift as if this were a sonnet  
to the answer.

Even in a training ground  
of destruction  
there is a place for small things  
to be born and grow.

Even in the death fields of firing cannons  
there is a hope.

That by deterring life  
this planet  
will carry on,  
with new flights into the  
first light  
of each and every  
new morning.

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## **Til they tore down the building**

*After Sinclair Ross*

Sinclair was talking about  
an old Chinese restaurant.

Many have come and gone in my life.

Watched a large cockroach  
on the outside of on Fourth Avenue  
near the car dealership that had a neon sign  
that flashed on  
and off and caught  
the side of my bedroom window.

We would go to sleep by it.

Other buildings where restaurants used to be  
float back from the years of looking after  
claims.

Just the charred side walls are alive,  
still hot from fire and ash.

Kitchens that cooks for hungry hundreds,  
twisted metal with the paint off the sides.  
Already rusting from the firemen's hoses  
that dosed the flames.

They all have their own memories  
and the demons and the dreams  
were let out with the ghosts  
that haunted us  
as they closed their old doors.

Out of the ashes came the fast food outlets  
and the new clothing stores.

**d. n. simmers** is a special online editor with *Fine Lines*. He is in current issues of *Edify Fiction*, *Conceit Magazine*, *Clark Street Review*, and *Nerve Cowboy*. He was in the *Fredericksburg Literary & Arts Review*, *Common Ground Review* and *Poetry Salzburg Review*. He is in a new chapbook just launched, *How To Live* and was in the international anthology *Van Gogh's Ear*, Paris, France.