

Rage

Poems by R. Salvador Reyes

Rage

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The Room Is So Quiet Now That You Can Hear Everything Ending

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Rage, Rage

The Room Is So
Quiet Now That
You Can Hear
Everything
Ending

To murder us.

Shh. It's here. There are & Silent. And ready
No words to hide Beneath now. Naked

**Corrupted By All The Hungers To Varying
Degrees Of Absurdity & Malice & Fahrenheit**

Maybe it was when
Paradise got cindered
To sticks. Or the ice

Shelfs abandoning
Their continents. They say, based
On the past, when oceans
Acidify, that's when
You wish you'd done

Avalanche

It all differently.

Places are beginning to end. There will be a lot
Of this. Ocracoke
Is trying to put a clock on
The island's permanent
Immersion. Last
Summer, just north of
That near-memory on the sliver
Of pre-sunken Hatteras, we watched
Old home movies from the 70s & reminded my parents
How that half century of mornings had
Gone so unbearably fast. In the coming
Weeks, Ocracoke would be nearly
Buried to death by hurricane
& Sea, and my mother would nearly
Succumb to a shower
Of blood clots while I slept 10 nights in the ICU and watched
How things end in every
Fashion of the most matter-
Of-factly & all-hollowing ways. But each
Of our reprieves will not outlive
This century & its unrepentant
Truth. Now it happens. Is
Happening. All the burning & drowning
Is coming home.

Ocracoke

Here begin
The childhoods growing
Into less than. They're all full
Of tomorrows minus
This. Less
Bees, less fruit, less
Fish in the rising seas.
Less freedom from
The machine that ate
Everything in the service of the myth
Of profit. Minus hope.
I do not exaggerate. The future
Has no purpose
For hyperbole. **Born**

If We Could Cleave The Disease From a Beating Heart

Every box you put the anger in doesn't fit. It all
Falls out the holes & you have it again in your
Hands & your brain melts. There were so many
Ways for this not to happen & they all died en
Route. Bludgeoned by the greed in the ditch: come
Hither and let him smash your mind out your eyes. You want
To go back in time and strangle every Myron Ebell
With the taut flesh of their own bowel. But it would
Not be enough. Nothing was. And so we'll shove our
Offspring into the canals where the corpses pile. The future
Will feed on the bodies we give them to devour.

You Can Wear The Disguise For As Long As You Want But It's Not Your Face

False gods, false gods, false
Gods. Dear fucking lord, all
Their false
Gods.

Topple, topple, topple. Either
We didn't realize or completely

Forgot this was

Entirely & consequentially an act

Of construction. A tower
Extraordinaire cum fatale.

Things on things
On things on

Things on all

The most fragile intricacies

Of dependence on every

Part that stayed

Invisible until the part below

It caved and adjacence
Brought parallel &

Vertical catastrophe.

It all fell down.

We Were A Skyscraper

You can measure carbon in pounds.
You can think of it in death. Each ton

Will kill something else. Then it will

Really get going. Everything that's killed

Will starve something that eats it. Everything
That starves will die. Starfish will die here & humans

Will starve there. Fish will starve & drift

To the bottom of the dying sea. Stars

Will steady themselves with the stories
Of how many times this happened everywhere. None
Of the starving humans will find solace
In this when they drop

To the dirt. And the starfish on the coast
Are already mostly gone, or emaciated.

Of all the things these webs
Of soft tissue cannot bear.

The Weight Of Carbon

Art In The Time Of Virus & Ignorance

All The Screens Shine With The Pre-
Recorded Stories Told Of Somewhere More
Real Than Here. Here Asks—Is That An Esophageal
Flare? Did I Touch Too Many
Tomatoes Yesterday At The Store? Were There
Lingering Droplets In The Empty
Bread Aisle? How Long Should We Stay
Alone? None Of The Stories Are
About This Yet—They Are Still Kind Lies Of Righteous Vengeance.
Out Here The Indignities Of Suffering & Servitude
Remain Unanswered. They Said He Was A Reality Star, But He Made
Our Lives Pretend.

How To Die From Vanity

Lie. Obfuscate. Cover Your Ass. Tell Us
You're Great. He Was A Tiny Man Yanking
On All The Huge Levers. The Machine Spattered
Gunk & Drooled Bile; It Shuddered & Excreted
Another Batch Of Dead. The Tiny Man Recedes In A Bitter
Glass Trinket, Hollering All The Things That Say
The Same Thing: I Am So Afraid. In Brooklyn, Her Young Husband
Crumbled Beside Her Bed, In Their
Driveway, The EMT Crumbled In His Truck, In The Rear View
Mirror, His Face Is All Disassembled Tears, No Mask.

How To Die From Cowardice

The Collected Pleas & Gasps Come Out
As Numbers. Dominance & Terror
Arrive By Quantities. Infected, Intubated,
Indigent, Ignored, Dead, Masks, Weeks, Vendettas,
Ventilators, Beds & Containers For
The Corpse Piles. The Bludgeoned Truth
Of America Unveils Its Grotesqueness, Torn
Down Naked & Siphoned. The Monster
Of Stupid & Lust Finally Let From Its Cage To Eat
What Fed It. Hedge Fund, Shareholder, Merger, Leverage,
Privitize, Outsource, Offshore, Downsize, Maximize
Margins, Infiltrate & Pillage. The First Century Of The Future
Shall Swallow Its Tongue.

How To Die From Greed

These Nights We Wait—Nested In
Our Catapults, Wondering How
Far. And What Will It Look Like Where
We Land? Which Of Us
Will Be Lost Traversing
The Arc? Is There A Category
For The Nightmares That Might Find You
In The Air? Your Heart Is In Your Throat And You
Won't Know If You Can Breathe.

How To Die From Hope

The Strangeness Came So Fast. Just
Before, We Were Riding On A Field
Trip To The Mission In Sonoma. We Were
Buying Tickets For Wilco At Fox Theater. Now
We Listen To The Tweedys Live In Isolation, He Plucks
Strings In Chicago Across The Glass And You
Want To Know It's A Salve. You Want To Compare This
To Something, You Don't Want To Let It
Get Too Dark. At The Mission, Our Guide Asked
The Students—Standing Rows Clustered In The Chapel Where
New Settlers Brought God & Disease To The Natives—“And Why
Were They Dying?”

How To Die From Suddenness

It's So David & Goliath, Or Trojan Horse, Pick
Your Myth. Its Conquering Smallness
& Absence Of Self Asserted
On Leviathans That Know They
Live, Until They Don't, And The Smallness
Moves On In Its Multiplicitousness. For No
Reason, This Speck From A Speck Will
Stop You From Being. You Seek
Transcendence And It Desires
Nothing; The Hands Of A Bodiless
Locksmith Solving The Code Of Your Existence. You Are
New Here, But The Conscription
Is Older Than Everything.

How To Die From Evolution

There's Lots Of Chanting
From The Idiots These Days. Vive La
Dumbocracy! Give Me Liberty And
Give Me Death! Let Us Eat Cake! Don't Tread
On Meat! Dopey Ducklings Waddling, A Parade
Of Floppy Feet Trailing The Tiny Man, Trying
To Catch Tongue To Testicle, To Taste
The Swank Sweat Of Their Little Lord. Foment
Ignorance, Bathe In The Vacuity, Rinse
With Hubris, Repeat. Meanwhile, It
Lurks, Hungry
For New Flesh. Our Hunter Knows
Its Feast Awaits In The Street.

How To Die From A Clown Show

You Want To Stop
Talking About The Tiny
Man, But Every Day Another
Flabbergast Of Unfettered
Foolishness. The Destiny of Metastasized
Disaster Left To Spill From The Little Hands
Of The Grand Imbecile, The Archetype
Chump. Of All The
Ways That Consequence Could Fester
Into A Wound Immeasurable, This
Is The Mother of Dark
Fates & Tragic Causal Intersections. The Bad Page
In The *Choose Your Own Adventure*—Your Quantum
Childhood Nightmare Found
Real Here In Our Incessant
Now. What-If-Cum-What-Is. This
Is The Wrong
Timeline. Why Must It
Feel So Easy To Imagine The Other
Place Of The Undoomed?

How To Die From A Temporal Anomaly

That Scene In *Jaws* Where
All The People Hungry
For Summer Clamber
To The Beaches Because
The Mayor Pretended With
All His Heart That
There Were No More Sharks. But The Truth
Is: The People
Didn't Really Give
A Shit Either Way. It's In
The Script. That's Just
A Movie, You
Say. True
Enough. In Reality
Tonight: Happenstanced Across
More Tweedy In Front Of His Gidget Polka
Dot Curtains Playing Gorgeous
Melancholy With Remote
Wilco On Colbert. Fate Or Fairy
Tale? It's Getting
Harder To Tell.

How To Die From Ignoring Roy Scheider

Not Very Long Ago
I Found The Random
Spates Of Open-Air
Tom-Tom Beats From Our
Hippie Drummer Lockdown Neighbor
On The Other Ridge
Consoling, Communal Feels Across
The Canyon. Last Week, Still Cloistered,
I Hollered Back Cowardly
Agitated & Anonymous From My Hidden Yard:
You're Deciding For All
Of Us! These Nights Riots
Fill Streets. Gung-ho Shield-
Wielder Thuggery Against
The Angry Weary. Everything
Is Kindling
Now—Knees On Necks, Unmasked
Throngs, Storefronts & Cop Cars, Cannisters,
The Tiny Man's Wicked
Words. Songs
Of Fury Unleashed
In A Time Of Dirges.

How To Die From Unmooring America

The Tiny Man Is Poison
Now. A Venomous Ignorance Shot Straight
Into The Vein. Flatulence As Suffocant. The Dimmer
Of Hope, A Shadow
Bullying The Light. Darker
Is All He Knows, And He
Knows Almost Nothing.
It's July, The Dead
Pile Again.

How To Die From Choking On The Stupidity Of The President

It's Falling
Apart Now. Whatever Spider's
Threads Were Keeping
Together An Idea
Of The Future, That Trap
Of Communal
Ambition—It's Going Ghost On Its Way
To Gone. You Can't Even
Believe Anymore
That It Ever Held. How Did We
Keep The Madness
Strung? It's Clear The Lunacy
Was Woven Deeply
In America's Blood. They Feathered
With Ink *All Men Are Created*
Equal, Then Went Home And Fed Their Slaves
After Filling The Pig Troughs. We Slaughtered All The Buffalo
For More Freedom, Piled Their Carcasses
Into Mountains Of Ancient
Fur & Flesh. Drug Our Boots Across
A Glorious Continent
In Balance, Murdered
Its Shepherds, And Tipped
Over The Table To Suck Every Hidden
Dick In The Dirt. Then Ford Or Oppenheimer Whispered: *This*
Is How We'll End The World. Sure, Our Boys Burned
Some Japs & Beat Down The Nazis, But Their Sons Still Crowned
A Sympathizer 3 Score & 11 Years After. And When
The Future's Virus Finally
Came To Roam
Our White-Washed
Lands Just Before All The Ice
Melted, We Said "Cloth?!"
On My Face?! I'd Rather
We Died!" And So We Did.

Remembering How To Die

It Is Time
For The Fires Again, They Come
Every Year Now. Today
The Light Was Tinted & My Daughters
Pointed To The Billows
Of Smoke On The Far Horizon, Piling
Air Like New Mountains
Curdled In Heat. A Plague Still Skitters
Below, Undulating Until Some
Tangent Of The Future
Brings It To Pale. But These
Flames Will Only
Ascend. We're Driving Through
A Firestorm On Our Way
To The Apocalypse, You Can Smell The Tires Melt.
This Is Art In The Time Of Virus & Ignorance.
This Is Us Imbibing What's To Be.

Gardens Of Pompeii

I Do Not Even Know Why We Are This Way

I will tell you

The truth, which should be

Easier than it is. Tonight

I am by the ocean, on a cliff of history, at a place that is soon

To disappear—in both

Ways the geological

Sense. Rodanthe is nothing

In all this water. But by the time

Everything crumbles,

Now assured, I will

Not exist. I am

Terrified by two horrors I

Will never know. But remain

Consumed by them. I

Do not know even

Why this is a poem.

Burritos from the taqueria on B Street
Warmed Camellia's lap in the passenger

Seat under sunset with impossibly radiant guitar

Ring in our air. Out the corner
Of my eye at the kitchen table later
I saw Joe Manchin ending the world on my tablet. The monstrous
Walk among us on their yachts. I dream of murdering
Him cold, after limbing his torso
Like a tree. Why should anyone judge

Me? The future will want these fantasies

For themselves. I did not tell the girls, instead

Said "I need to write." Soon we'll finish
The new "Chip 'n Dale"—we all fell
Asleep watching on my parents' couch after
The long last leg of our drive

Back to Chicago from the far coast, from the islands

That are drowning. Now returned
Out West in the drought, we have animated

Dead Reckoning, Summer 2022

Chipmunks whose plots are yet

All the way played. The air is concise & cool
In the late light of tonight. Last night July's buck moon

Was pink & flat against

The limitless lightening sky. Two of us pointed

To it at the same time.

One of the only friends
I have left sent
A video of a man who wanted to believe this century
& its great melting are still
Untold. For a moment, I
Accidentally pretended, then

When We Still Called It A Drought

Recoiled. The only choice
Left is truth or hope, and our doomed live
On the unreachable coast. How foreign has become
The thought of them? My love & our girls & I
Watched meteors chase night above
The valley in Yosemite last
Weekend, played in its cold river that day.

Sometimes I think about the butterfly
Ballots in Palm Beach
County, Florida, that disaster
Of design, the flaw in some maker's
Thought that shivved

Unreturning Our species. If you don't know what
I mean, I can't
Tell you here, but Al tried
To warn us anyway. So maybe
That future was never
To be heard. Could it have been
That easy? A few names listed
In a column, and glaciers
Entrench themselves into the new
History. Sometimes I'd carry
Emily—my old black Maine Coon—with all four paws
In my palm. She was
The cat from the years
The girls barely remember. They loved
When I'd hold her with one
Hand, brush my teeth with
The other while the water ran—but Emily is
Gone now & their minds moved on &
I am the only
One who can picture it.

They carved the DNA

Out of the Greenland promontory. It windowed

An ancient comic abundance in vast
Proliferation at the top of the world. A taunt

To remind us the beginning
Of history was really the start
Of the story's end. This part

Is the quickening: false
Genius feasting on
The birds of its ego & gawking
At its piles, godful
Nihilists panting
With their guns, masses
Entranced by the morphing lights. No place
That knew so much had ever been
So dumb.

Telescoping, Winter 2022

Except for the parts

That get eaten, all things in

All stores are future garbage, even the shelves &
Their attachments. The earth will keep everything
But us, and in time

Crush it all into rock or oblivion or
Melt it at some non-standard
Rate in a compendium
Of ways. We approach

The era of disposal—its rows

Tilled, its intonement

Strides the aisles. Even that traffic

Light will succumb—the one that doesn't know it hangs

Above the ghosts of autumn

Acorns gathered to dry then haunt

The granary woven

From stems. We are

The parts that get eaten.

Boxes Of Talismans

Downwind From The Pyroclastic Flow

The ocean will fail
Us, but not itself. It
Once swaddled giant
Hundred-foot ichthyosaurs in its waters, the grandest
Of any entity
That fought for its life. Now the dolphins
Think beneath the blue, but maybe soon
They'll go too. And we will drown in it, watch
The die-offs, starve. The ocean will
Not care, just start again under
Different air. It's all
In the waves. We're all in
The waves. We were in the waves, diving
Under the crests, feeling
Its cold salt on our skin, in contact with
The beginning of the molecules
Spanning every inch of it, we
Are something in all this water.

Rage, Rage

O, collect me not
From the hours. So many have gone into
Their retreat. Even this morning so much
Birdsong leapt from **Full**
The quiet night into
Oblivion. Even late this Are not yet
Afternoon when the sun stopped falling Older. All the day's fabric
Into the canyon, our children Will snare. But there
Remains. Everything
Shed must be
Worn.

The forests are inside
You. The coast at its lowest
Tides before the starfish died. The docile
Way the mist relented to you in the woods, the trailing
Sounds of needles
Creased beneath. Fluttered

Transit

Through and perpetual. The paleontology of it
Exceeds excavation. We lived
In those bones. I find the direction of time
Increasingly opposed
To itself. The notion
Is falling off a leaf. The redwood silence. I remember
Her so small in pink leaning
Out from the giant trunk. It's beyond
The map. Your eyes
Are almost there now.

Your only life
Is happening. Each
Imperfect expectation cast
Into its surfaces, the holy
Trail of existence. There is just one
Way through here, no matter what
You were told. Eras live
Inside other eras, a cacaphony of parentheses. When
We used to stop by the tiny park after
Dropping off her sister, eating lunch at the tiny
Plastic table inside a little pretend train
Station. We couldn't stay

Furrow

There. You might think time
Is the furrow, but the stroke is ahead
Of the paint. A bridge manifesting
Into fog, and if you knew
Before how its towers were
So grand. And if you play the right music, for a moment
You can stab it in the heart.

Shoal

This location is one
For holding. How do you
Live through it?
The wind has the leaves on

The trees moving
Like water. This street
Is missing from time. Westward
Light. All of us.

If you are always
Feeling the space
Around you, then
You'll understand when you're underneath. It covers
A certain place for a particular
Period of time. It is keeping
Away the other time headed
Toward this place.
In the middle, beneath
The apex when the other time still looks
Lumbering, the space around you
Feels perfectly infinite.

Dome

And that's when
You know, in a few more clicks the beast
Will start to level its gait. The arc
Will slope & the pace
Swiften. Grab the air—
You'll have to find
A different way
To breathe outside.

It was all
Long really, even though
It doesn't remember
That way. I know
From the calendars & requirements
Of days that whole swaths
Of the firmament had to be
Filled with every
Beautiful mundane gesture
Of fatherhood. There were
Minutes in the recess yard after
School that lingered undestined. There was

So much it didn't matter
What you spilled. What a glorious swim.

Swim

Rage

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San Rafael, CA • rsalvadorreyes@mac.com • www.rsalvador.com