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FIVE

GORGEOUS

LOSSES

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*Not all loss is catastrophic.
Some can leave the old euphoric.
How releasing it would be,
and pleasing too, for instance,
to lose without resistance,
not only all your teeth, your hair,
your nimble gait,
but what is lost by happy wisdom,
not the tragedies of fate.*

I. THE LOSS OF A LITTLE STUPIDITY

Waking up from dreams
insane with truth
that wing away like bats
wearing political masks,

you can tell you are alive,
right now, right now in the morning sun,
by the absence of the phantoms
of stupidities of power

all undone, idiotic-seeming
as losing your keys
then feeling free with finding them
right where you put them

rather like finding life again
and putting down the gun.

II. THE LOSS OF SOME WRETCHED FEAR

To lose one impacted fear,
one dark novel of a worry,
just one, is worth

all the corns, the bunions,
twisted toes, sore backs
shot knees that pile up on us

like an avalanche of books
unwritten and unread. Just one loss
of any dread long mummified

is a feast of such resplendence
that all the stars ring out with light
sounding through the somberness of space

like a dance tune of the gorgeous graces
soft shoeing on the moon.

III. THE LOSS OF A SLUG OF IGNORANCE

It's the standard joke to say
the more I know the less I understand. But
ignorance does have a way

of beating a path to your door,
like a salesman can make
the absurdist claims seem like wisdom

gleaming holy above the herd.
What a happy smartness, though,
to accept you'll always know

next to nothing when compared
to what is aching in you to be known.
Uncountable as drops of rain, and so

increase your store of ignorance
gone right down the drain.

IV. THE LOSS OF A DOSE OF ANGER

To feel a grudge just vanish
is better than losing a limp,

or a molar throbbing.
What could be worse

than to be wronged
and then to let that wrong

crystallize into a way of life,
like a bone spur or a kidney stone,

so startlingly flawed
all the stars seem ruthless

and even heaven scared,
blank and cold without a heart?

Is that any way to start the day,
day after day after day?

V. THE LOSS OF AN OLD BAD HABIT

Bad habits don't want to be said,
They want to be denied so surely
they can seep unseen like strain

makes rigid the subtlest of brains.
But the loss of one of them,
like wasting without caring

that your having drains another,
the loss of rote indifference, of this one
forced way of living wrong, is like

expelling a dill seed from under a denture.
What relief! The simple habits of living right
in your own eyes are exquisite

as the body's youthful joy is wise,
seeking noble pleasure with no compromise.

AND

FIVE

HEALING

LOSSES

I. THE LOSS OF A FEW STALE FEARS

Our dead pile up. Peace is snagged
like ducklings gobbled by perch. Loss

consumes us, even as we come to lose
some of our dearest dreads. This is age's

consummation. Fear wears down to a darkening ember;
we're burned out on our horror of ghost sins

and failures moaning under the bed.
The joke we learn is that letting go

is the full and only meaning of control.
Even the loss of fear's mere dander

rings a bell: What joy for awhile,
in the silence of the night, to open our minds and find

ourselves just rippling out beyond
the carrion smell of all the myths of heaven and hell.

II. THE LOSS OF SOME STUPIDITY

Hope gets conned again. Suicide gulls the proud
with cruel applause for being pointless.
And even as we scream diatribes of grief

we feel in our selves, from time to time,
the sweetest vanishing of idiot delights, like spending life as if it
were money, calculating love o

n a cost benefit analysis. hating,
as fallen and debased, the whole
truth of the world that we know exists

with our body's infallible savvy.
Oh, go ahead, ask the hippo
to get off your foot. Wisdom's

too serious to be boring. It counsels
the painless safety to be absurd

III. THE LOSS OF A LITTLE IGNORANCE

We think we know too much
about the look of death, about depression's
tangle of burnt roots. We even think
our ignorance knows no bounds and so
seems filled with knowing
what we cannot know at all.

It's wonderful to figure out, of course,
that stars aren't holes in the sky, that everything
has to go somewhere, that motives
are so knotted none proves wholly true. It's more
wonderful to learn that knowledge is the road
to doubt and humble pie, to seeing mind itself

as a reassuring haze on the endless
deep surface of the Far-Beyond-Us.

IV. THE VANISHING OF SOME ANGER

Kindness drapes itself
with a more revealing fold than pain's
grim skirt of bones. Beauty and honesty
see each other home in the dark.

Shooting stars have shown us
death is not out to get us all alone.
How could we be rage-torn at leaves falling,
or bodies wilting? It's ease we need

opposing cruelty that believes it's good.
The ease we have with fact
cancels anger as its own slow torture, dark
humiliation, comparing life

to solid dead abstractions. What a relief
to care so much we couldn't care less about judging.

V. THE ABSENCE OF A FEW OF BAD HABITS

It's no different from removing
vestigial hooves from your heels,
or that pesky boney tail that pierces love seats.
It's a mundane metamorphosis, the revolution

from the habit normalcy of gloom.
Even when friends are falling all around us,
we still can lose the guilt
of the of the automatic yes, the stunting caution

of the automatic no, the urge to force the truth
into a tiny hole not deep enough for a single fact.
Such wholesome heresies cheat grief, free us
from deforming lessons, wrong and old,

we can't defeat head on. They leave us illicitly
released and oh so gorgeously replete.

*"If what heals can bless
can what blesses heal?
And all come green again
That was bodied forth
Years and years ago?"*

–Wilfred Townley Scott