

Charles Entrekin
ceentrekin@gmail.com

1950

Almost lost in the smell, in the dark barn
there is a three-legged stool
upon which my grandmother sits
gray hair up in a tight bun
milking the cow
arthritic fingers plying the warm udders
black cow shit steaming in piles
when an arch of foaming milk
leaves the pail
glimmers in early morning light
while a dancing orange cat
catches the white spray.

Three Cows

Our windshield wipers
pushing away rain,
I see three cows
standing together in an otherwise
empty pasture.

One looks up
as we splash past on our way elsewhere
as if she sees me
across our vast species difference.

And even as we are rushing forward into tomorrow
she stares out at me in silent communion
of what it means to be
at home in the world, today,
in the rain, in that simple connection,
that reasonable proximity
of simply standing
side by side
next to one another.

The Art of Poetry

Once more, buddy, your last ride
has left you behind and nothing can be done.
You want someone to come, a silver angel,
to seize your hair and lift you from the earth.

But the weight of your two feet
presses against the ground. No one comes
to save you. It's too cold to stand still
and too dark to run.

Once more, buddy, you write
to save yourself. Here's the barn.
Here the horses are warm. Here, on a dark
night, between towns, between meals,
simply the heat of other animals is enough.

In This Hour

Even in the fog and dark wind
I can feel the tide coming in,
the steady wash and swell,
and sea salt along the shore,
and I try to make myself empty
to no avail.

Somewhere ahead I imagine
an avenging angel, one of swift
shadow and sure ending, and I can
almost feel its beating wings,
a predator breaking from cover
in full autumn sail.

But for now in this hour
the sea's lapping continues and
it's like an animal breathing
against the beach. I listen with each
light touch of the surf, and my hand
moves inside your silence, inside
your life and body's warmth.

Promises To Keep

Fog falls over the coastal range.
Heat heaves off the ground.
At the end of the day, in waves,
cold, ocean-gray mists
drift down damp

over my green yard.

My eyes dim as
I stand at the window
witness the blue shift
from sunshine to shade,
to impenetrable gray.

At the end, my grandmother was blind.
She shuffled through her house, her fine
gray-brown hair wound tight in a bun.

I slip into the life of this moment,
lose distance, perspective. My sense of time
disappears. Inside, in the quiet,
I wait for a word I cannot say.

I have gone on drift,
afloat in changing weather. Today
the burdened old apple tree lost a limb.
Outside, a hawk cries out for its mate.

An Early Morning Surprise

for Gail

Dances about in her new pink panties
wearing her young girl's smile,
teasing me with liquid amber eyes
with arms held high, in play,
a butterfly mood holding her in sway,

and then self-consciousness sets in
as she stands in her freckles
and pale white skin
quite embarrassed
and a rose red blush
spreads over both her breasts,
the eager one and the recalcitrant one,

and I rush to embrace her fun,
her playful dance and display
I will carry with me all day.

Thoughts From A Plane Over Birmingham

My mother sick, the plane drifts
years, banking for landing, and suddenly
I'm home,

and the orange, industrialized sky
still says the furnaces are working overtime,

steel from the steel-born town.

The stewardess shakes the sleepers awake,
the engines rev, landing gear down, and the home
I thought I'd left behind returns
as we touch the ground. Home
because what opens at the beginning remains
open till the end.

Cri de Coeur

Il est au fond de la nuit. Je me réveille.
J'entends une voix en appelant, de loin,
Mais en approchant, en viennent
De la forêt, en se levant, à travers
Les vignes, le Sumac de l'Ouest,
En montant la colline, en pénétrant
La noire. En déchirant la nuit.

Je n'en veux pas.
Je veux dormir.

Au début, une murmure :
- Pour l'amour de Dieu, aidez-moi !

(Attends, attends ! je ne suis pas prêt ! je n'en veux pas !)

Cette fois, plus claire :
- Je vous en supplie ! pour l'amour de Dieu, aidez-moi !

Je fais réveiller ma femme.
Je la demande : «Tu as entendu la voix?»
«Un animal», elle dit.
«Mais si, c'est un homme.»

Le jeune policier vient avec sa lampe de poche en noire.
Y a personne.
Il dit que deux autres maisons ont appelé.
Il sort.

Pas de sommeil. Matin obscur et brouillé.
La voix me reste encore,
Comme les grévistes à Wall Street,
Comme la visage de Bin Laden.
Dans la nuit, elle me reste toujours,
La voix interminable.

Bio:

Charles Entrekin (www.charlesentrekin.com) was born in 1941 in Birmingham, Alabama. He took his BA in English from Birmingham Southern College in 1964. He left Birmingham in 1965 and lived in New York, Tennessee, Alabama, and Montana while pursuing advanced degrees in philosophy and creative writing.

His latest book is **LISTENING: NEW & SELECTED WORK**, (Poetic Matrix Press, 2010) (www.poeticmatrixpress.com) and his recent novel is **RED MOUNTAIN: BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA, 1965** (El Leon Literary Arts, 2008) (www.elleonliteraryarts.org).

Founder of the Creative Writing department at John F. Kennedy University and the Berkeley Poets Workshop & Press, he is currently editor of the Ezine *Sisyphus*, a magazine of literature, philosophy and culture, and he is Managing Editor of *Hip Pocket Press* (www.hippocketpress.org).

His poetry collections include: *IN THIS HOUR* (BPW&P, 1990); *CASTING FOR THE CUTTHROAT & OTHER POEMS* (BPW&P, 1986); *CASTING FOR THE CUTTHROAT* (Thunder City Press, 1978); and *ALL PIECES OF A LEGACY* (BPW&P, 1975).

Charles Entrekin est ancien instituteur lycéen et professeur universitaire de la littérature anglaise et de l'expression écrite à l'université de JFK en Californie.

Rédacteur et cofondateur de la BERKELEY POETS COOPERATIVE, et du BERKELEY POETS WORKSHOP AND PRESS, aussi cofondateur et superviseur de LITERATURE ALIVE!, une organisation désintéressée dédiée de maintenir en vie la littérature au lieu du compté de NEVADA en Californie, Charles est actuellement rédacteur de la publication électronique SISYPHUS, une magazine qui traite de la littérature, de la philosophie, et de la culture. De plus, il est rédacteur en chef de HIP POCKET PRESS.

Fondateur et directeur de trois entreprises informatiques au lieu de San Francisco, Charles est actuellement investisseur et conseil d'administration de INNOTAS, entreprise informatique qui se concerne du marché émergent de la gestion informatique et de la direction des projets informatiques.

Ses œuvres littéraires les plus récents comprennent un roman, *Red Mountain, Birmingham Alabama, 1965* (2008), une histoire d'amour qui se déroule dans les jours noirs de la lutte pour les droits civils des Noirs et des homosexuelles aux États-Unis pendant les années soixante. Plus récemment, il a publié *Listening : New & Selected Work* (2010).

Charles est père de cinq enfants bien aimés, et bien réussis. Il habite une belle banlieue de San Francisco avec sa femme, l'écrivaine et poète américaine, Gail Rudd Entrekin.