A Nomad Poem (After Pierre Joris)

I’m basking in the glow of the recent visit by Pierre Joris and his brilliant notion of A Nomadic Poetics. I had the good fortune to interview him while he was here. It was less a formal interview and more a discussion about how a poetics of place (as advocated by the Cascadia Poetics Lab and as described by Gary Snyder as: “Stay put. Watch what happens”) meshes with the notion of A Nomadic Poetics. In the interview, I had Pierre read the Five Points about Nomadic Poetics:

& now these five points:

1) that language has always to do with the other, in fact, for the writer is the other.

2) that there is no single other, there are only a multitude of them—plurality; even multitudes of different multitudes—hetero-pluralities.

3) language others itself always again — nomadic writing is always “the practice of outside”; writing as nomadic practice—on the move from one other to another other.

[3a: the critic/theorist: the dog that barks as the caravan passes]

4) poetry is always, then, “on the way”—yes, on the road, as Kerouac has it here in these States where, as Sun Ra has it, “space is the place.” It is also unterwegs, (underway) as Celan writes, where I hear the unter also as under the Weg, the way. (& pace, the Schwarzwälder’s Holzwege!),

    underway
    +
    under the way
His thoughts about why a bioregional poetics and a Nomadic Poetics are not as contradictory as one would think. Listen to his reading of Part Five of A Nomadic Poetics here:


That Gary Snyder could be the quintessential “bioregional” poet, a poet committed to his beloved Kitkidize and yet also be practicing Nomadic Poetics is fascinating, borrowing heavily from the Japanese for his inner life and inspiration for poetry. (As well as indigenous North American cultures such as the Haida.) That one can stay put for decades and still be a Nomadic poet also includes the multiplicity of selves one is made of. (Brenda Hillman certainly recognizes this in her own poetry and it’s a delightful technique that really lets us in to her psychic universe, which is

[4a: insert here a critique of Buddhism, of any spiritualism as quiescence—certainly Euro-Am adaptations of Buddhism are transcendental—while only a truly immanent spirituality is viable. Cf. Janus]

5: Celan: “**Reality is not. It has to be searched for and won.**” Replace “reality” with “poetry” or “millennium.”

That is the *fin mot*, last words, toward the fin-de-siècle, or a poetics thereof. (Celan’s phrase is the quest, as it includes the critique of the “society of the spectacle”—& of the whole specular natures of our mis-takes on the real.)

a *between*-ness as essential nomadic condition, thus always a moving forward, a reaching, a tending. (I hear the need for both tension & tenderness). & an absence of rest, always a becoming, a line-of-flight [as against Being, which is always a being-toward-death, stillness].
a rare talent.) In the essay *Notes Toward a Nomadic Poetics*, Joris alludes to the notion of “poet as comet.” (Via Hölderlin.) How to burn in a short time, 20 minutes or so should be enough for a blast of a poem that includes other languages, notions from cultures other than your own, concepts that interest you, but you barely know about and graft from, always with the understanding that the world is on fire (or quickly becoming submerged) is alive and in its self-defense is creating events that result in huge floods of climate refugees. This will speed up the process of cross-cultural exchange just as 7.6 million (so far) Ukrainian war refugees are.

**Notes for a Nomadic Poem**

1. Comet-like. Burn for 20 minutes. (Does not have to be Earth minutes.)
2. There is no single other. Consider writing in the second person.
3. Consider including words or phrases from otro lenguas.
4. Change perspective. (Collage could be used.)
5. Could you graft off of a line from the Five Points?
6. Could you use the sound of the language(s) help propel content?
7. Go back to the Five Points and use the alluvial technique when stuck.
8. Employing *neobarroco* techniques may help replicate notion of many selves in motion.

*Querido Pierre*

What we meant by *Poet as Comet* we did not want to suggest as crashing small plane fireball somewhere in the Salish Sea.
Sí, una deuda infinita hermano.
As you have towards Celan
as I already had for Sam & Michael
one of several thousand Grahhrs
or cups of Otokoyama.
(As if the student loan debt was not sufficient.)

& Celan alive as any of us
our turn to give his words
breath, our turn
to behold the black crows
nightly commute over
our beloved ribbon lake someday
Ukrainians may also appreciate
once the bombing’s stopped.
Once our rain resumes.

Buen viaje hermano.
I’ll be waiting this side
of the Salish Sea.

peN
11:27am
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