

New England Night Drive  
Mike Sennott

What Transcendentalists  
don't tell you about  
the sunset placing a  
golden crown on the  
trees and winds whispering  
*Walk outside and  
bask in the majesty  
of autumn light, becoming  
one with nature*  
is that after  
the sunset has faded  
and darkness has leveled  
the forests into an  
indefinitely infinite desert  
the landscape does not  
stop calling.

The silence won't shut up.  
It bangs on the windows  
and darkness seeps  
through the cracks,  
reminding you that one  
twitch of hand  
or one  
drowsy moment  
or one break  
in concentration  
could cause your three  
thousand pound steel  
armor to crumple under  
the billions of liters of  
nothing  
and leave you  
one with nature,  
which you will be  
someday regardless.

You sigh and turn  
the radio up so  
you can focus  
on the ground ahead  
the headlights clear  
like a machete  
and hum to yourself  
like you're going somewhere.

Ode to the Physicality of the Mind  
Mike Sennott

O rolling tides of chemicals  
conducting charged light across  
the fault lines in our heads;  
O winding wire pathways  
carved deeper by the thought,  
becoming set,  
etching our selves into ourselves;  
O tireless cells and signals  
building memories with care,  
revising recollections  
with creeping blur and sepia glow –  
Guide us to the utopia  
of equilibrium!

Thank you for overseeing  
the countless miniature reactions  
that comprise our lives,  
sparing thought from trivial concerns!  
Thank you for the slow decay  
of sight and sound and memory,  
automatic nepenthe  
to ease the transition  
out of stale and weary life!  
Thank you for shrinking happiness  
to a capsule or a cleft,  
instant transport to the golden fields  
of equilibrium!

Who could refuse your loving guidance,  
spurn the contentment you reward us?  
You purr *You need me always*  
*just to think yourself a soul.*  
Who could deny that declaration,  
consecrating fluctuations,  
railing at your boundaries?  
Save us from such desperation –  
sing us to sleep, imagination!  
Commission odes and lamentations,  
fear and lust and t.v. stations.  
Distract us 'til you find for us  
equilibrium.

Outside  
Mike Sennott

On certain disarmingly warm autumn days,  
leaves fall from trees and grasp onto rising breezes  
in vermilion fervor, straining to squeeze the last drop  
of fire from life. Once, walking through a park  
on such a day, I felt something burn out  
with a soft crack. Outstretched branches curled  
and shivered only slightly, yet I froze,  
seizing with some vestigial instinct, and looked to the sky  
in amnesiac longing as the silent crosswinds swirled,  
wondering what once connected me to the world.

Since then the only trace of sunlight left  
when I step outside from hibernation  
is the rust on burnt out blades of grass.  
No unspent spark or lasting glint is left  
for life-starved eyes. Then, even a slight  
echo of birdsong would seem a rapturous scream,  
exorcising me from my insular cycle,  
plunging me through darkness and cold shock,  
past each layer of crafted detachment and dream,  
back into the shining waters of time's breakneck stream.