

**DALE SMITH**

**THE WHOLE THING HAS RUN AWAY SO FAST...  
A GHOST THE HEART  
FOR MORGAN, SOUTH FRONTENAC, ONTARIO  
SUTPEN'S HUNDRED**

## **“THE WHOLE THING HAS RUN AWAY SO FAST...”**

Carolinian forest lengthens southeastern woodland  
north to Lake Ontario; waves are charged  
by the sun, the city obscured in haze. Petrol flames  
gas the asphalt, dynamited granite  
one barrel of oil equals 25,000 hours  
human labor (12.5 years at 40 hours per week).  
William Jarvis kept slaves after Simcoe  
banned forced labor in Upper Canada, 1793; many  
were maintained throughout the region. The first sold  
in New France, 1629, though the Quebecois preferred aboriginals;  
in Ontario, Africans were imported for crops.  
What things a people take, they blend toward, shape  
the true size of desire. Words, as configured in my running need,  
connect force, a pressed valence of con-  
tinuity, what might be called image, dissolved. It's closer  
to what Emerson saw as spiritual practice, with none  
of the dour minister's habit. Rain and sunlight, the maple  
warmth greening May. Relief comes with each new turning.  
Plantation goes all the way to the plant, Susquehanna  
Nuclear, another apposition to the scheme of Pantisocracy,  
1794, that *Civitas Solis*, sun fueled, brown water warming  
under poplar and silver maple and Siberian elm. Electric  
Steam, Luzerne County, and planted further north near me  
the morning sinks in perplexity, a ghostly commune,  
dreaming a warm sense of union: the labor of hands  
in moist dirt, red sumac, dogwood, sassafras....  
All things absorb sunlight, converting it slowly to energy.

East of Toronto, on Lake Ontario, Darlington  
and pawpaw and black maple and all theories of  
spiritual carriage pivot by way of energetic crises:  
sun, earth, and tidal moon—tiny, coherent petals.  
“Lamps, and day, nothing not new equally forever...”

## **A GHOST THE HEART**

Each life acts as passage, coming forward,  
damp air on sandy banks. Ferried from Havre de Grace  
and by train to Wilmington, Philadelphia, New York; identity  
stamped into papers advanced inky freedom. I have attempted  
to gain through story a semblance of voice, of where, or how,  
I stand by relation to geographic pathways. If  
English youth had chosen such a place, to be purchased  
by bargain in quiet backwater dreams of Platonic lunacy,  
the intersection of passages reaches through time, and sense,  
or any monetized reality one might face in electricity  
from Susquehanna to Darlington, a great green  
distance, diving down. To plant or be planted, to reach  
into the ground. I am speaking of a ghost  
the heart is glad to have return, of a room  
I have often been lonely in. To uproot and take word  
through the confines of cold chambers, to see  
unevenly and remain. Measure the distances from Garland  
to Austin and Sana'a and Portland. San Francisco and Toronto.  
And with no certainty, refuse easy gestures of racial charm.  
For just a moment, take in the warmth and sunlight.  
Feel your lungs swell with the air you breathe.

## FOR MORGAN, SOUTH FRONTENAC, ONTARIO

Sunlight flashes; crows  
racket in maples and poplars as deer  
flies buzz in cool granite trails.  
Aboriginals cooked leaves  
of marsh myrtle, a soothing tonic.  
Narrow, pinioned edges release a fragrant  
juniper-like scent, very lightly, into your hand.  
There were loggers and fish camps, narrow  
openings through forests where the city  
thrived in memory, *Civitas Solis*,  
rare, heavenly, sanctuary. Or, perhaps, la cité  
bears wilderness, the internal wild, mutated  
faces of a sun-soaked imaginary. Morality derived  
from perception, a response by word to the many things  
a day loosens from crusty manifolds.  
A day reckoned in blackberries and beaver pelt;  
hawk feathers and lake pulsing in noon light  
very like bringing words to time, or what one might  
imagine: a narrow path to water, the honey  
locust's green illuminated as if from within,  
as if perceived by the genius of Louis Agassiz  
brooding over the ova of mud turtles;  
finding in a leaf rare intelligence, solar  
egg and lunar sperm: Give "deepest gratitude" for  
"the monotonous, unvarying action of  
physical forces, binding all things to their inevitable  
destiny..." Cicadas hum into the heat.  
See the lake, compounded to phrase

an illusion shared by convenience  
of the settled mind. A flung, hurt dependence  
of valued properties; bartering  
of vistas, and ourselves left  
to upkeep or divide social indignities  
of the animal spasm.

The lovely Carolinian lakeside  
calm is disturbed by casual dumb  
jet skis. An imposition of  
moody perplexity unsettles  
the view. Persist in making  
special attributes where none exist.  
There are lethal certainties  
in minivan excursions over  
the fray in language. Original artifice  
of the modern real  
cuts an open field  
to be a poem. And all around  
the ragged edges to contend.



Sing pensive Logos wagon  
wild pig ballad.      Fall leaves  
angles orange convert team.

Do I wake my race?  
Missionary    shakes a gourd—  
ground hollow, shout

hallowed terms      undid  
conveniencies.      Gum  
words stick chewy

fragrances unguent damp  
fall cold. Snake gains  
fallow undergrowth.

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Begin a word to whip stripped skin. What has Sutpen's Hundred to do with words? A god, perhaps, in apostrophe. And muscly sinew. Spine. The interstices of sperm and egg. Signs of the corpse of Man prior to a human humming.