



Image from Pulse

Conrad Gurtatowski

Caribbean Reverie

From my table outside the café
I watch the cruise ships snuggle with
the dock on St. Thomas, as if they were
enormous white dolphins wanting to mate.

A net of traffic covers the boulevard,
languid stream of taxis

hauling red-faced tourists to their
island fantasies, cameras and sunscreen in tow.

I sip my diluted ice tea and watch
the harbor waters sway with the afternoon breeze,

reflecting cubes of Caribbean sunlight,
reminding me that it's February back home.

Back home where it feels like an old man's frail hand

Back home where it looks like degraded tintype
Back home where you can see your breath
but not feel your fingers.

Back home used to be home
when there was family left to cherish
and tomorrows in the planning
and lives to share.

Back home has dissolved like the ice in my glass.
This island is my home now

This island where I can feel my fingers
and never see my breath,
where my last years are spent leaving footprints
in the sand, as I imagine myself flying with the seagulls,
equatorial currents uplifting my wings.

This island is where I spend shiny afternoons,
drink ice tea and watch the cruise ships
unload their frozen dreamers.

Four Questions

What shoes will pretty your feet?
What sunbeams will sparkle your eyes?
What song will smile your face?
What kiss will passion your day?

Suite for a Day

Yesterday . . .
was a symphony
(*mezzo forte*)

more Brahms than Bartók
ornate without edifice

willowy chords latticed together
like the delicate bone structure

of a fossilized sea creature
each subsequent movement

wending its way with increased dissonances
into the world of Schoenberg's

twelve-tone nightmare, unrelenting
concertos as brittle as a child's sob

devolve into lumbering sonatas
cloistered by chromium beams

of moonlight. And today arrives like
lumbering church music
(*lamentoso*)

unsure of itself, unraveling
like a poorly told lie

shattered notes resting
at the bottom of the sea
(*pianissimo*)

Conrad Gurtatowski's poems have appeared in *Blue Collar Review*,
Barbaric Yawp, *Valparaiso Review*, *The Stray Branch*, and other poetry
journals.