

New Poetry by David Dixon: “Last Night, I Dreamed of the Korengal”; “Look at This Thing We’ve Made”; and “War Poetry”



DAPPLING THE FOREST / *image by
Amalie Flynn*

Last Night, I Dreamed of the Korengal

boulders like giants' teeth
the kind of giant that will grind your bones for bread
jut out of the ridge like
molars from a bleached jawbone in profile against
green terraces draped over the hillsides
like a silk robe on the floor

while above me the tall necks of pines
tower to the sky
dappling the forest with the light of an afternoon
perhaps the last afternoon, for

the dark windows of flat-roofed houses
skulls with empty eye sockets
stare down at us
the stare of the dead
at those that soon will join them

rounds snapping around me like the angriest of hornets
stingers of copper poison of lead

overhead the four-bladed locusts hover
stings in their tails
as prophesied by John on Patmos
but who
even in his wildest nightmares
his fever-dreams of sickness or madness
could not have

dreamed of the Korengal

Look At This Thing We've Made

I.

Wife

Look at this thing
we've made

toothless, shriveled, red-faced, howling
at the world
with every breath

we love it as we've never loved
anything else
this perfect child we've only just met
yet now could never bear to part from

II.

Daddy

Look at this thing

I've made

a picture of a brown horse, riding
across a narrow strip of green grass
along the bottom of the page
white house on the left
with four pink windows
the sky coming down blue like the sea
to meet the grass and the horse
and the house
blue filling up every crevice

blue like her eyes wide when she smiles

isn't it beautiful

of course it is

it is the most beautiful thing I've ever seen
and it hangs now on the refrigerator
next to last week's spelling test
and drawing of a unicorn in the snow

III.

Son

Look at this thing

I've made

long and cold
it is all black steel, aluminum
grooved and machined
to perfect precision, tolerances
of less than a millimeter

slide the magazine into the well
pull back the charging handle

let it go
hear how it slides
hear that satisfying snap
of the round riding home into the chamber

see this here
wherever that red dot is
is where the bullet goes

easy

with it in your hands you need not fear
need not worry
you are a man among your fellow men

son of Aries himself

IV.

Class

Look at this thing
you've made

poster for the classroom door
so everyone knows it's us
Mrs. Foster's Wiggleworms

a picture you've each drawn of yourselves
all hair standing on tops of heads and glasses too big for
faces
heads without ears
smiles nothing more than little curved lines
dots for eyes

and each of you did so well
adding a picture of something you love
yellow and brown triangles with red circles
pepperoni pizza
puppy dogs and kitty cats
Pokémon and Captain America's shield

the sun above flowers
a drawing of the beach
blue waves meeting
a line of brown sand

I love it
Wiggleworms

V.

America
Look at this thing
we've made

holes in the wall
pockmarks in the cinderblock
splinters of the door
blasted into the hallway
broken glass from windows
designed in other times by unwitting architects
to let in sunlight
so children would feel connected with the wider world around
them
but which instead admitted
the gaze of inchoate rage

floor slick with blood
in lines where bodies earlier so bright with promise
were dragged by their classmates
teachers
police
strangers to another room
to be identified

by wailing parents and sobbing siblings
instead of by a poster of their favorite things

Look at this thing
we've made

War Poetry

soldiers are poets.

rifles fire
in staccato rhythm:
the beat poetry
of bullets snapping back and forth in lines
that sing

and sting.

machineguns talk like lovers
arguing back and forth.

desperate orders are
earnest haikus
the quiet in the loud.

reloads our enjambments.