

# Six Poems

**Nicholas James Whittington**

## SECONDS / AVERAGES

I.

lately averring names  
like luddites in the avenues  
the traffic unmoving around us

we lie for a range of arrows  
feathered angrily capped

hurried not w/ our wreaths  
own rose or evergreen  
eliding eyes

red-winged blackghosts'  
reedy overnight tones

craftsman bones  
jackal-watered verses  
ambivalence

II.

neoclassical  
mummers

duck poems  
bum apples

& cigarettes  
& bombs

bob hare-lipped  
over barrels of shells

shellacked like the night forth

you of july & all summers' channels

swim up damnation

like diatonic scales of angels' feet

rattling beware  
the gin works double-time forenoon

III.

tried true dadaring reaching for gold  
pulling the gums of anubial clowns

half-anum aftermath of polical scilence  
in these severanced islands of oakland

the chain-link of weak nights  
& byways gone underfoot

ravens in the woodshed  
herons in the quartz room

time on our quivering lips  
so tensed in retrospect

this calm

IV.

clamming up & climbing palms  
for the vantage the visage  
of another other wave wavering  
ringing ingots ghosts of guttersnipes  
snipers & the lines that hold them  
compelled from shore to shore  
come hell & high water both  
the oath abiding under tongue  
like a junky snookered  
in the umpteenth ward  
june teeth all rooted out  
a rotten sun between twin bulls  
horns & a quarter dwindled  
down to dimes & nothing  
less these last two cents

half a man & half again  
nor bull nor horse nor goat  
sheep too easy to founder  
shorn of all was ever sworn

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appended to the end of another tongue  
the folk    fragments of song  
not lost upon the rest  
among them    the rest    tho it stretch  
on interminably internally intended  
                  in the beginning of every one

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enabled    by special dispensation  
of chance  
to remain  
                  in the pastoral city  
                  w/ views of the hills  
year end  
smoke  
curling & the sun mirrored thru it  
                  from select well  
                  angled windows  
afraid  
that in leaving

one might be disestablished  
disabled  
from ever coming  
back

one

never does

stays ever more

estranged

from what one has left

## BAFFLE OF THE SCENE

not invisible but missing  
misshapen ghosted gnawed  
gnarled at hand the moment  
w/ all its prefaces & postmarks  
remarked over three-course meals  
several families of four or more  
mistakes cornered brown-bagged  
i went to three grocery stores today  
one twice & only then did buy  
the dime bag for charity  
  
but i didn't  
go that last time my wife went alone  
i don't know what she did

## CITY PLANNING

to plot two plots squared  
filled in w/ chain-link fencing  
in rolls piled pyramidally mirroring  
all the metal that well shone self

urbane jumble of numbers  
littered w/ letters past due  
a redemption value less wry  
unrhymed skew promenades

intersections condemned  
a scaffold built around the center air  
in anticipation of tearing down  
what hasn't yet been raised

**AESOP'S ESCAPE**

knowing littered w/ mandrake

bark as birds drop from the bulging

grey underbelly of skies

scaly seas

mirror the surety plaguing isles

the cough that never goes away but seeps

ever deeper more subtly in

we gather & speak small

cry out laughing

cough & speak small

game gamed & gaining

at the edge of our existence

our instinct

imbued w/ whatever color of law

collars us

stunned into quiet

by the racking cough

**"THE MIND IS ANGROGENOUS"**

the breaking of nations as the breaking  
of bread the breaking of the waves  
nearing shore

crust edge of what binds

the bounds the sounds & shapes lines  
to be stood on or in depending on  
which side you stand

where drawn

under what circumstance what  
difference our manner of speaking  
of not speaking the distances

unchanged

elastic tongues antinomian suddenness  
a sudden sameness

we call ourselves

& it all falls together

in that coheres we here together  
hearing the sound mind's remedy

a glance back

over real resistance of what's gone

what might come next is now  
the force  
that shall leave form a wake  
upon the waters a way from shore

### **About the author**

Nicholas James Whittington was born and raised in the City of San Francisco, where he edits *AMERARCANA: A Bird & Beckett Review*. He currently lives in Oakland, having also done time in Santa Cruz, San Diego and Siena, Italy.