

Blaze VOX 2k9

Late Spring 2009

John Pursley III

Northport, Alabama

How strange, to see a raccoon as it skitters across the road,
Our humble dedication to the arts, the art district, opening,
So many people, weaving in, & out. The galleries, snobbish
In ways our city could never be. It's wonderful! The Globe
And The Potager, the City Café—so much antiquated glass,
With cobblestone streets! a raccoon, running, stiff kneed—
All stagger-&-sway-at-once, like a Lone Ranger, a lieutenant
Crossing his barrack, the vigilant eyes of officers, following
Him, coveting a coffee, so young, in his swallow-tailed coat.

Exit: Business 71 North, Butler, Missouri

When they came to arrest me at the overpass, I was smoking
A Marlboro & whittling bark off a silvering sliver of oak

With my thumbnails—first, the one, & then the other, both
With lights flashing, both infinitely proud of the job

They were doing. The younger officer, who I knew as the father
Of a fellow student, a year younger than myself, shouted for me

To “get the fuck down” the concrete embankment, & carefully,
Weaving through the cocklebur brambles, I complied—but

On the pavement, when he rasped my hands roughly into his own,
And asked me if I thought *that* (indicating graffiti) was art—

I couldn't help but feel some sense of the rhetorical, & said
That I supposed it was, knowing that, *of course*, it wasn't

The answer he wanted to hear. Still, unconvinced he started up
The slope to see for himself. But the paint was dry, the car clean.

There was nothing to be done. The older officer stared, muttered
“I ♥ Cops” & shaking his head, just grinned—gave me my wallet,

And said for me to go. The younger, picking at burrs blossoming
In his polyester pant-legs, seemed less amused. Still, I went.

Perhaps, Body

If time were ever
Lasting and endless

Mornings unfolded
Languid like

The dog-
Eared tongues

Of books, perhaps

Even the persimmons
Would taste

As sweet—

All succulence
 & green
Rush of elbows.