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Man Alive

by Sheridan Maguire

I'm tired of words. There aren't enough of them and of those that there are, there are too many. Words are like jelly, they wobble with imprecision and cloy in my mouth. Whenever I speak, I seem doomed to repeat the dreary, the banal and the obvious. My words do not disclose new possibilities and new worlds but just seem to plaster over what has already been said before - a thousand, a million times. I find myself re-treading language endlessly and to no purpose, like a tyre factory continuously melting down old tyres to make new ones, only to melt these down again in constant repetition.

Thinking is shaped by the shapeless, formed from the formless and I seem to be cursed. As it emerges my thinking is cast into linguistic moulds as blancmange might be poured blandly into metal shapes for the pleasure of children. *Oh look, a squirrel, a top hat, a ship.*

A word - all words - exist before the space they fill. After all, in the beginning was a word. At the end will be a word. But for me, in the middle, there is blancmange.

Let me tell you how my speaking would be when it filled the space between. You'd see the glint of molten steel as it pours fresh from the furnace - burning, flaring, running free. These words would melt and meld and blow fuses and be flung across divides like cannon balls, yet to fall gently to earth like confetti on a bright cool day in May.

My speaking would scream at you, hit you in the gut, make you sick, it would rock you gently into your dreams as the waves lap quietly by.

Have you ever seen the shape of words taking wing? Have you heard the laughter of life bursting through situations that should be so desperate, or felt the power of a speech that would suck the air from your lungs or sear the flesh from your bones? When were you last pierced through the heart by a language so hard, so razored, yet so beautiful that a new possibility was born, given birth right there and then?

I'm tired of words that colour everything brown like shit. You can count *me* out of conversation that picks politely at nothing, as dinner party vultures hover over an empty table waiting for something – anything – to announce, to opine about, to have a view over, to critique. You won't see *me* picking as a crow does at dead meat. I won't be sitting on a wire with countless others squawking into the far flat distance.

I'm tired of words that weigh me down and make my belly sag like a meal of damp rice and porridge. You can keep my history, all of it, I don't want it now. I need to fly and only soaring wings of words will do.