

Jerome Sala

The Stomp

In the middle of the pandemic
the people upstairs
whose feet shake the ceiling
with their stomp

complain that our TV is too loud.

We discover nine or below
on the blue volume bar
at the bottom of the screen
is what's permitted.

We strain to hear the programs
we wish
would help us forget what's out there.

When the detective says to the defendant
"You look happy,"
it sounds like
"You look campy."

When the lawyer says to the media
"Pleased with the ruling,"
it sounds like
"Pleased with the drooling."

And the stomping continues
if anything growing louder, now adding
screams, cries and occasional laughter.

It's as if our surrender to the quiet
has opened up a space for mayhem
in the white plaster sky.

After Charles Beaumont

When I was very young
I opened a coloring book
in which a knight with a spear
was killing a dragon.

I tried, in my imagination,
to reverse the situation —
to make the dragon
eat the knight.
And he did.

The weird thing is
a few days later,
when I opened the coloring book again,
the dragon was still eating the knight.

That's how I learned about
the power of the mind.

You know that
nothing about what you're saying
is unusual.

Yeah,
but you should know by now
if you tell me it's all imaginary
it won't change a thing.

I'm still terrified by the monsters
that follow me around.

The therapist eyed the street below—
toy cars and people
shopping civilization
into existence.

It did him no harm at all to know
that if the shopping stopped
all would disappear —
even himself and his frightened patient.

He lit a cigarette
thinking it was good to be alive.

If only his patient knew
how easy it was
to remove your head
from the dragon's mouth.

Go on,
he said.

We'll Make Your Junk Go Away — All You Have To Do Is Point

I liked the way the city started making scraping noises
like some kid dragging his foot down the sidewalk
only wearing metal shoes —
maybe he went to a Comic Con convention
and bought an Iron Man suit.
Then the city started whistling.
Then you could hear a bus exhale.
Then a tree must have been waving at someone in the wind —
what else could be making that spongy whisper?

I don't know who all these beings were talking to
or if they were saying anything at all.
I assumed they were —
I know how hard it is to keep your mouth shut
when you're living here.
Even if that helicopter going by
was only walking across my brain —
I mean thoughts talk too, right?
Sometimes the sentences are tattered
like the edges of an old flag,
but doesn't your respect for consciousness
make you want to salute anyway?

Maybe not.
Maybe you're moving into a new era
and you need to get rid of yesterday's furniture.
But the question in this town is always where —
they charge a lot to cart that shit away.



Jerome Sala's books include *Corporations Are People, Too!* (NYQ Books), *The Cheapskates* (Lunar Chandelier) and *Look Slimmer Instantly* (Soft Skull Press). He lives in New York City, with his spouse, poet Elaine Equi. His blog—on poetry, pop culture and everyday life—is espresso bongo: <http://www.espressobongo.typepad.com>