

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>