

COMMUNITY TRUST

Right now in Houston people are having the worst sex of their lives. Not me, I don't even know where to begin. The surveys are correct, people in the checkout at Fiesta are sweating, their clothes pressing down on them. There is a charge in each of us. It's not easy to master its tremor, but it's possible. And then you help somebody else, that's what being part of a society is all about. A connection that strings us together, our breaths more than vehicles of greeting. So please help me. Think of me with my hand upturned, with a tooth that is possibly infected. Decorum or drapes. I'm not clumsy, that woman was too pretty. Tendrils everywhere, and smoke too. To help or to change the story again. She who loves this community must also love the dark. Houston falling too silent, wake it up, sister! I want the list of those who have moaned my name in the dark. When my ear was present or when it was not present. *Sta viator*. All the names I cried in the dark, something physical, your hair against my cheek. The hotel mirror was so big and we thought there could have been cameras behind it, and no, no, that definitely didn't stop us.

COAT

The city has allocated several million dollars to remove the murals of dead children from city property. There were no

permits, death just came to them. The children,

we didn't know them of course, not all of them. On the city council broadcast they cry millions of dollars in damage, in cost, but aren't there millions

of us? The money, they say, the children. Eyes peering

from the concrete of onramps, flowers and banners forming a crown. How could we have improved the "American Scene?" The first light cast

the first shadow. If we can't be on top, we don't even want there to be a top.

Factories and children, the school year now ends in April to save millions on salaries, power. The children praise the extended vacation, summer unrolling like a cartoon dog's tongue. I-10 bisects

this city, and we make paint. On the south side of I-10 are factories, that's where the kids come from, the dying ones. But it's not

related. On the north side of I-10 are galleries, museums designed by architects to resemble

a canopy of trees, ten foot
sculptures of every president's head. Our community is too large
to know what it wants, the surveys say. One person or

a hundred people. The bar

is lonely but we feel special when we ask for a drink from a local
microbrew and it appears with small talk. A whistle splits

the factory air to signal a change in shift just as each
worker could no longer suffer the tedium

of factory routine,
the banality of loving a child, a family. Everything looks a certain
way, and when we cover it we can imagine it has changed.

MADNESS INCARNATE FROM THE MAKERS OF *BLOOD FEAST*

Two thousand maniacs, a song with an immense chorus. Imagine Mahler had his way. He refused to finish his Ninth Symphony for years because

he feared “The Curse,” that he would not live beyond it. He did not live. His Eighth, “Symphony of a Thousand,” played only rarely it’s so exhaustive. There’s no

melody, nothing famous, only movement in strings and wind. Why is a cello so sensual, because of the movement, the embrace? A student claims the way

to win an argument is to be the last one speaking, like saying goodbye, or being the last one to give a compliment. Who knows if that’s right, I’ve never

won an argument. Everything in my chest is wrong, all the organs mixed up, the air squeezing through them dissonant and arrhythmic. Imagine at this hour,

in this city, all the parties that are going on. It’s Houston, it’s bigger than it gets credit for, bigger than it even deserves. Thousands of parties, just mathematically.

Discussions, movements between men, between women. Music played at a volume neighbors will find inappropriate. I am not at a party. Probably,

neither are you. I wasn't invited, and you, I don't wish to presume. I can picture all the faces through the doorway, the faces of women engaged and dis-

engaged. Mahler is not that well known, not that well liked. Lucky Pierre, he is at a party. He avoids all the things that make life worth leaving. I'm not

interested in singing well, I'm not interested, even, in invitation. When the movie *Blood Feast* came out people had never seen mutilation on screen before,

they paid lots of money to see a woman get her tongue ripped out. Carnival shows, geekery. People partying in the courtyard, I should join them. How

old am I? The flashing lights in all of the city's cop cars are replaced. Now they are more vibrant, cause distractions on the highway at night as people crane

their necks toward the aurora, something buried deep within our genes, two full choruses who scream at each other in harmony. Believe me. I don't need to beg.