

CLUTTER

A Poetic Experiment of Language,
Consciousness, and Time.



A Selection from Clutter
Roy Dean Doughty

A Nostalgia for Agitated Breath

Clutter 212

Written 20 May, 2016

In this once-definitive and now outdated book on
Imagery and healing, I read: “Our understanding of how
The brain functions has come from the study of damaged brains.”
For seven years, I studied, with my own anguished limbic
Brain, my father’s brain, as its fabric’s tissues, like stretched dough, thinned,
And then tore into lesions with no remembrance, the wreck
That remained still warm with limbic affection. Now an insane
Calmness provokes me. He died three weeks ago. So? Why now
This relief? Because all that piecemeal pain is completely gone.

The substrate is destroyed, the necrosis in the tissue
Has no host, and what remains is numbness. And yet when the wind
Shakes the trees, tearing new apertures for the sun to drop through ...

I am reminded of how inextricably he remained
A part of Nature — not ever really being tamed. The boy in
The crude log hut with the hard dirt floor kept growing like the sod
Of the cabin’s roof, a part of the living meadow, reaching
Sunward, not quite content to be part of a house, and blend
Its wildness with domesticity. Perhaps he is growing
Still, though his brain is burned to ashes, and his son throws these odd
Words into the wind. Like wind, I thrash about as if — in
The throes of limbic violence — I might rouse a cherished pain.

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Passion

Clutter 702

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When I returned to the Black Hills after my father's passing,
I had to confront the question of the forest. Years of
Drought and the infestation of a certain beetle had turned
The pinegreen into dead-needle-russet, and fire had burned
Whole mountainsides to black. The miniature heaven that my
Mind maintained as nostalgia was killed by a vision that churned
In the gut, not the brain, a vision that I try to turn
Away from, but cannot. I have invested so much love
In the dying or the dead — my little heaven is burning.

Perhaps it has always been burning — this strange nostalgia for
Perishable fathers and forests. Perhaps these little mind
Forays are only ersatz models for something stranger.

I see it — Him — as a shadow behind this fire, a shadow
That lights this fire — a presence as featureless as a father's
Or a forest's ashes — this terrible arsonist, who
Has no face, no form, yet twists all faces to his own image.
He is the God of the sober poet, the masculine cry
That wakens the feminine muse, the words that hotly rampage
Through the gut to light the larger heaven of the heart. And you,
Who read this in your cool pine-shade, entranced by the fine weather,
You drowse, and cannot feel his breathing stirring the shadows.

Food For Thought

Clutter 012

Written 22 May, 2016

The ability to visualize is so crucial
To that ritual of rebirth known as “getting ready
For it”. Billions of Human beings devouring billions of
Non-human beings, insect over insect — that is the vision.
Naturally it leads to a feeling of anonymity.
When this isolating sickness comes over me, I can
See my granddad in the woods burying a flour sack, his rough
Hands scraping a hole for his stillborn son. Now I am ready.
I know the grammatology of the past — its taste, its smell.

I obtain my potency from that anonymous relic's
Bones. The insects have stripped them so thoroughly that only
The memory remains — a taste, a smell, which can cure the sick.

The disposition to illness, or the rite by which demons
Conjure illness, has a name. It is called: “The Un-Ready,”
The premature or aborted stillborn, exposed too early
To the vision. One insect is as hungry as the next,
And as anonymous. If I imagine a baby
Buried in a flour sack, anonymously, why should that vex
The readers of this text or the ears that hear this poetry's
Stridulations? Fame cannot stick to the unborn baby's
Bones, nor words move humans consumed by inhuman demons.