

CHRIS MOYLAN

Three poems

Sleep

All this talk of pits and fires,
of saving and wanting, it's not
interesting anymore, not here.

The body is going on vacation.

The body is taking a leave,
as in gone, as in not there anymore.

The body is mythic gone, elapsed,
immaculate awol. So long gone.

The body gets too big, it wants
too much, the body wants
the wrong things, it doesn't deserve
anything, the body is overstated,
the body is obvious, explicit,

graphic, frontal, and worse.

The body is gone. That's all.

That should be enough.

The body is nobody, then, and
never was. The body is nobody
now and always is. The body
has a new attitude. Don't
take it personally. Don't take it
anyhow or anywhere, don't
leave it. Don't give it any mind.
The body is not there.

The body is a word, that's all.
It's all trees and forest, now,
it's all leaves and grass. The breeze
makes a soft, shivering sound,
it's shaking off what does not belong—
the body in the grass, the body
in the scene. The body is making

A pass at the extreme and
the absolute, the body at the centre

of everything—the grass, the green,
the scene, the sky—the body
is leaving, the body is saying
goodbye. The body is drifting down
and going to sleep now.

Calligraphy without text, now—
not zen or tao. Modesty's work
-in-progress flourish, that mostly
watery figure wound and stretched
through never and ever to what,
promptly, it is anyway—is gone.
The body is gone, withdrawn,
impeccably absent. And gone

Asleep? The body is gone. Forgotten,
lost, and gone. No consolation, no
help, no body. No ache, no sting,
no body, no pits, no fires,
no wants, no desires, no body.
Just this, is all. Just this—no ache,
no sting. Just this. No want. Just this.

Just what? Just rest, all the rest,
in darkness, in sleep, in quiet,
in peace, just rest, in nothingness,
in sleep, in sleep, awaiting
the dream that justifies the shock
of sudden breath. Our Lover
is jealous and never far...

After Clausewitz

A serious means to a serious end,
never absolute, never an isolated act,
never a single, instantaneous blow.

With the utmost use of force, utmost
exertion, dream becomes art,
art becomes knowledge. Knowledge
then, becomes simple, if not,
at the same time, very easy. (How

to wash your hands, how to tie
your shoes, how to connect the dots,
how to take them apart again, how to

explain what happened to you, how
not to explain what happened to you,
how to make unwarranted conclusions
when the occasion requires, how
not to make unwarranted conclusions.)

And positive theory is impossible.
In war, the probabilities of real life
take the place of the extreme and
the absolute. In dreams, the probabilities
of real life take place in the extreme
and the absolute. That is, in extremes,
the probabilities of dreams take the place
of real life and in love the probabilities
of the extreme and the absolute make war
(how to follow through, how to hold
back, how to snap to, how to sag,
how to close your lips, how to open
her lips—how to fork the cash, how
to tuck it back, how to separate, how
to clash, how to coordinate, how

to clash.) In life, in love, in bed...
Was it violence, or the lack of it
one regrets...Love is diplomacy by
other means—the one thing Clausewitz
said that anyone can remember,
or was it, love is sex by other means?
What was it he said? In the next life,

in the never ending future, love
will make all this clear. Or maybe
that woman, cell phone to her ear,
butting the incongruous down the walk,
is receiving the word even now
and she will make all things clear,
slipping news under doors and windows
like Chinese takeout menus. Maybe.

Maybe not. A serious means to a serious
end, a serious end? a serious means?
Milkmen, firemen, and postmen
and all the ladies of the Bell Epoque
are marching down the sidewalk,
grim-faced and starved, in a fresh
effort towards an extreme...

Learn

After the anatomy of angels,
the anatomy of pleasures, after
pleasures, the anatomy of silence,
after silence, silence, after silence...
Learn to praise in a new language,
or no language, no words, acquiring
terms where and how one finds them—
read from right to left, or upside down,
read letters of flange or hail or shaken glass,
read in a new body, with a new name,
or with no body, and no name, just
a voice, and this speaking softly,
words slipping from sense like ice
from a windowpane. After the sacrifice,
decipher blood before it marks the page.
After the wanderings in the archive
of pleasures learn to deviate,
to make unwarranted conclusions
when the occasion requires, or make

no conclusions, no inferences, and wait,
turning the same phrase over and over.
After the pleasures, after the denials,
meditate, convince oneself, one's days
are filled with pleasures, one's nights
with raptures everyone needs to forget
and forget, from one moment to the next.

Take desperate measures; forsaking
all others, forsake yourself. Embrace
all things, embrace nothing, withdraw
into smaller and smaller space, until
it's not space any longer but rumour,
nuance, the slightest shade of difference
where there is no difference, there is
no point in making a difference so
there is no point, no place, no space.

After the anatomy of angels, the anatomy
of pleasures, after the anatomy of pleasures,
the anatomy of silence, after silence,
silence, after silence I will hunt
you down. I will take you.