



UNDERLIFE AND PORTICO

POEMS

MICHAEL LYNCH

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for Samantha

CONTENTS

PORTICO

Small Thanks.....	3
Song of Suburbia.....	4
Album.....	6
Implied Pastoral.....	7
What the Letter Said.....	8
Sub Rosa.....	9
Birthday across Parallel Universes.....	10
Storefront: Botanica San Miguel.....	11
Substantial Fascinators.....	12
To a Blind Goldfinch.....	14

UNDERLIFE

Lost.....	19
Falling in Love with the Girl with a Facial Tic.....	20
O! Her cursive eyebrows.....	21
Contagion Fetish.....	22
Cross-sectional.....	23
Apse.....	24
Afterword: Oil on Canvas.....	25
Afterword: Pen and Ink.....	26
You Will Disregard the Following Directives.....	27
Postcard from Exile.	28

PORTICO

Small Thanks

Skyline, voluptuary of every morning,
frotteur of horizontal pink vastness,
I have done nothing to deserve
this spring sky wadded
with low clouds & the foil
strobe of distant lightning,
potholes freshly patched,
plum pit & flesh & blossom, young men
beautiful on English three-speeds,
whirr of freewheel, the legacy
of the inclined plane, peri-urban
houses candy-hued between the dawn-
damp hedgerows & the prim
march of garden snails creeping
to unknowable victories or failures.
O lavishes, daywhelm & patron blushes
of A.M. I am small & grateful & among.

Song of Suburbia

O sock drawers of paunchy, square-fingered mowers, monochromatic sedan drivers!
May you be spiked forever with rogue golf tees, the ubiquitous Playboy
secreted always in your depths.

O cut-glass decanters of the wet bar! O filament light sculpture!
O deep blue, wall-to-wall misery smooth as the skin of the inner thigh—
let no decorator revise you.

O fainting couch, green glow of banker's lamp, O Reader's
Digest Condensed Books tawdry in your gilt spines! O intendance of oak
paneling, of chenille swag and fleur-de-lis!

O furbished stereo console! O high fidelity! O Whipped
Cream and Other Delights! O Jump Up Calypso! O On The Street
Where You Live! O My

Fair Lady still jacketed and unmolested! Endure beneath the sunburst
clock and the swirled plaster of the ceiling spangled
with flecks of light!

O aquamarine coin of wading pool! O corrugated carport overhang!
May you share eternally those trellises of summer afternoons
drowsy with pink blooms.

And O split-level entryway, wrought-iron balustrade—glazed bonecage of the landing!
O soft, skylit corridors and childhoods murdered in each room
remain, remain!

Remain unchanged as the dioramas forgotten in library storerooms, pristine,
delicate as embryos, dazzling as miniature scenes jewelled
into enamel eggs.

Album

We are given to each other. Unwitting gifts of pulp and circumstance. In this photo, we have drawn blinds on the neighborhood, cultivated shade.

Given to flushes and low angles, you are an awkward beauty—all dark eyes and smallness. In this photo, your face ruptures into smile, your midriff stretched to bare.

Sole heir to a turnkey disaster, I am given to walking back in rain. In this photo I am ridiculous with black ostrich feather quill and blood poisoning.

The scraps are given to the dog who is dark as marrow and given to moonish leanings. Both the howl and the silence after. In this photo he wears his cuffs rolled.

The heart viewed through knifewound is given to percussive fits. In this photo the lawns are burnt with frost. We are poised to trample.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Michael Lynch is the author of *Underlife and Portico* (Aforementioned Productions, 2013). His poems have appeared or are forthcoming in *Hayden's Ferry Review*, *Switchback*, *In Posse Review*, *Harvard Divinity Bulletin*, and elsewhere. He lives and writes in Boston.

“In a series of minutely observant poems, the collection paints a picture of domesticity, of ordinary (perhaps slightly suburban) life. The images are familiar, even friendly...but there’s also another side to this set of twenty poems, in which these ordinary objects and scenes are underlined with a quiet and oppressive darkness. In this way the title of the collection is particularly apt. There’s the beauty of the portico, and the little-seen underlife with all its seething, quiet shadow. The two elements meld perfectly throughout, each balancing the other...

Lynch displays a fantastic eye for detail, constantly throwing out quirky yet effective descriptions which surprise both with their use of language and their wonderful solidity...It’s a wonderfully smart collection, where not only are the individual poems insightful and well-constructed, but the collection as a whole is itself an elegant model of mundanity and the underlife that lies beneath.” — Christopher Frost, *Neon*