

TOO BRIGHT TO SEE

**TOO BRIGHT
TO SEE**

Poems

DAVID BOOTH

**SIMI
PRESS**

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For Ingrid

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APPROPRIATE KISS

I'd never kissed a cop before and when I did it was like a regular kiss but with a loaded story behind it. She didn't know I knew her profession but had left her badge lying open on the table. What she did for a living had nothing to do with our curiosity about each other. So we French kissed. I want to say it was nothing special. It was neither special nor unpleasant. It would have gotten better with practice, but our hearts weren't in it. It hardly seems worth mentioning that I'd never kissed a cop before, except that it brought to mind an objective fact about my upbringing. I have no memory of my father ever having given me an appropriate kiss. Not once on the cheek. Not once on the forehead. Never on the mouth that I can remember. Nor did he hug me or say I love you. He may have ruffled my hair a little from time to time, but I don't think so. I think he had a total aversion to touch. If this is a loaded story it is not sad to me. That I've never kissed my father, or him me, may be a quite significant story about individual human capacity that I may or may not wish to delve into, but either way it holds no meaning for me in my life.

SUNFLOWER

When a man's much older husband
begins to convalesce
he takes a lover
someone close to his age
and the two of them
the new lovers
tend to the needs
of a dying man
their elder

A WORLD WITHOUT CARS

With birthdays but a year and a day apart, and she the elder and young for her age, and he the younger whose turns of phrase grow frankly repetitive, they'd eaten beef in the early days of their joint celebration and across sinewy time, when bodies gray with food beliefs greening, of the baby spinach and veggie lasagna they swore up and down to savor, they left bites on their plates and their stomachs a quarter empty in an inner and outer show of moderation. Pressing her cheek to his to blow out candles one day in their fifties, she wished to herself to feel happy and fulfilled at the time of her death. Like planning a wedding, she arranged the flowers in her head and the ones before them that make the best centerpieces for birthday dinners. He wished that the movie they were seeing later that night would be at least a little entertaining. It was to be a hundred-minute car chase broken up by scenes from the childhoods of the chasers and those chased, as if so many turning points from the deep pasts of so many passengers could justify such a hair-raising event as two cars careening down the highway with little regard for the safety of others. It was after all a hot day and the gist of the chase, like an old-time feud, involved an ancient wound, an insult like a family heirloom, about somebody's mother that cut to the core of a man's need to strut his stuff with his chest thrust forward and balls of fist hung like unused mallets. Childhoods aside, the funny part of the chase was the fact that every time the chased sped up, the chaser sped up, and every time the chased slowed down, the chaser slowed down, so that the distance between them remained constant. As you may have

guessed, you must suspend your disbelief when it comes to the guzzling of gas. Chalk it up to that six-shooter that in the movies shoots a hundred rounds or more. No one is stopping to reload and underneath it all everyone cares about everyone immensely.

*TO DRIVE THIS MIRACLE OUT OF
EXISTENCE*

Some people enjoy the taste of Miracle Burgers. We speak now of the ahimsa crowd, that doesn't wear a single strand of cow leather, let alone cook a goose, swat a fly, or eat raw honey. A Miracle Burger is a meatless food item that tastes like venison. Its critics call it 'an ultra-processed junk food.' They wish to devalue, to de-popularize, and ultimately to drive it out of existence. They will do so, they claim, via a relentless word-of-mouth campaign. It doesn't matter, though, if in fact it does taste like the real thing. If it's delicious, nothing they can do will make a difference.

CALENDAE

The year of the horse
 is an action poem
so seize your subject matter by the mane
 & ride it/write quick!
 The animal of the year
 of my own birth
 the monkey
 of popular imagination
 many find agile
 if not a bit mischievous
I find at its worst
a royal pain
 at its best other-
 worldly

 always landing on its feet
 somewhere between
 not much to look at
 & yes, handsome.

But this is not what I meant to say.
 What I meant to say
 was will you go out with me?