

Spring 2020

At a Party Tonight & Tomorrow We're Supposed to Catch a Plane

Adam Clay

Follow this and additional works at: <https://egrove.olemiss.edu/yr>

Recommended Citation

Clay, Adam (2020) "At a Party Tonight & Tomorrow We're Supposed to Catch a Plane," *Yalobusha Review*. Vol. 31 , Article 14.

Available at: <https://egrove.olemiss.edu/yr/vol31/iss1/14>

This Poetry is brought to you for free and open access by the English at eGrove. It has been accepted for inclusion in Yalobusha Review by an authorized editor of eGrove. For more information, please contact egrove@olemiss.edu.

AT A PARTY TONIGHT & TOMORROW WE'RE SUPPOSED TO CATCH A PLANE

Adam Clay

after Cate Peebles

I didn't know the word for it was *lintel*,
but I knew just what you meant. Not a usual party,
you & I playing charades with building materials, glasses
clinking each time we stump the other, cleanly
but with a delicate ringing tone. To be exact
seems the point of the game, but
what we mean to say can be the bridge or the water
that passes under it. Tone's always our god. How
are you? Today I feel around inside your head, anything
goes until it stops short. A clink of drinks again, the pickled
vegetables in your Bloody Mary stir in the ice & we look: spread
across the table, there's cheese cut into tiny bricks & cloth
napkins laid out to be thrown away like tarps. Other conversations
might be interested in ours, but it would take the room
going quiet for them to hear us, for the walls
to squeeze in slow like a Saturday. The corsage
you chose from the other table suits your skin, not too bold
for the dress, though I neglected to tell you my
vision's troubled always by color. It's just one thing I
meant to say among others, plus my lips don't pucker
up to lemons or limes, but it's not a talent worth playing up
when more important missives should become language
remembered. It's time to go, but we can't. I'd drive a tractor
through the heart of a moment to stir up adolescent
hopes we've all had. Let's not go there now. Between
sips we acknowledge there's no tractor here, but how heavenly
to imagine an afterlife where we each have our own tractor, cruel laughs
as we disrupt stifling patterns from another life. The humid
air just broke, & I just remembered the beets

we left roasting in the oven, but I bet they're barely
softening even now. Did you hair curl this way when you were a girl
or did time twist you toward the sky somehow, hovering
from point-to-point like light? When the fans
turn on, I worry about you, but I worry about everything
from the postal service to why the color pink
(& why it's used to color in some shades of cartoon skin)
isn't called "green." The nights always turn out this way, &
I like it when the expected blooms elsewhere. If my palms sweat
in dreams, don't hold it against me. I'm in this life & there's
another me if you look away, but then a buzz & our flight's
tomorrow, time to check-in, but we won't experience
regret or remorse if we stay another day, visit
some museum we've never heard of, enter a parallel dimension
through the gift shop where we'll buy nothing, ones
& fives in our fists, darting here & there like wild children.

ADAM CLAY's most recent book is *To Make Room for the Sea* (Milkweed Editions, 2020). He is editor-in-chief of *Mississippi Review*, a co-editor of *Typo Magazine*, and a Book Review Editor for *Kenyon Review*. He directs the Center for Writers at the University of Southern Mississippi.