

a marketer's prayer

by John F. Sherry, Jr.

don't be angry
with the goods —
they've been tried
and found wanting
just as we have

alley of rogues

by John F. Sherry, Jr.

shaking the carpet from her parapet,
each sharp snap sending dirt
and flakes of gritty lint
to flock the neighbor's wet wash
cracking in the stiff breeze
on overloaded lines stretched low
beneath the balcony rail,
she finishes with a flourish,
drapes the rug across her shoulder,
and takes one long last deep drag
before flicking the butt into space,
watching it arc across the narrow alley
to bounce on cobblestones
where it settles with dozens of others
at the crest of the stairs.

Beyond Dungiven

by John F. Sherry, Jr.

starlight
broadcast in stark clusters over hills
behind a misty night so black
you wear it like a wetsuit,
city lights a soft suggestion
somewhere over your right shoulder,
farm houses scattered wildly,
their random glowing panes
flickering on the edge of vision,
roofs luminous
with rain slick slate,
their cracked ceramic chimney pots
glazed with ancient soot,
the dank offing of sheep
like so many ripe bolls splotched in imagination,
where Cara soared and Eoghan overreached
they all allowed, that drab allowance
binding dignity to place,
integrity to place
as if lodging it in field stones
turned to cottage walls and fences
could keep you here
forever

on first looking into mclellan's *things come apart*¹

by John F. Sherry, Jr.

o improvised implosive artifice,
to knock the stuffing out of stuff
in such a joyful burst
of perverse engineering,
to celebrate a blowout,
dissembling dandelion mechanics
on brico-lurid bass-o-matic'd breath,
then reclaim every cog and coil,
each bolt and bezel,
strut and spoke and shim,
realigning all in anal complement,
eternal aside, ephemeral together,
the sum of the parts just parts
undone, undead,
a hole in imagination
that swallows self and leaves
an anxious aftertaste -
the image overwhelms the word,
i wonder
what you meant to say

¹McClelland, Todd (2013). *Things Come Apart*. London: Thames and Hudson

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