



c o m b a t i v e s

***BRETT PRICE***

## *A Survey of Still Torches*

1.

Each second we do not clock out  
there is a racecar here shimmering  
there is a toy being assembled by cranes

2.

But such spillage comes unforeseen  
the scattering of horses from coaches  
left on the roadside alone

3.

They're gargantuan  
a whisper in the foliage  
an earthquake

4.

Many figures sprout up from under  
broken canopies sob from on high

5.

And these slow moving ancients  
having lived with the crackling  
of galaxies in their youth  
rearrange the park benches  
to watch dusk swing curtain-like  
down from behind them

6.

When one walks away  
one leaves a hole  
in the chest of another

7.

It stirs up the birds  
wading on the shores  
of dark readiness

8.

What strange seasons accompany  
a face's generous presentations

9.

Spring stepping  
with freshness

10.

The breeze fulfilling the leaves  
you imagine its hands in your hair

11.

A small boat spreads the lake  
like a zipper coming slowly down  
across the water and night

12.

It comes to you  
wearing the mood  
of lamplight and fog

13.

The streetscape alive  
with odd lanterns

14.

One spinning leaf  
is falling at a time  
in the cemetery  
of summer at night

15.

You're a dark street  
in the world's gleaming  
puddles

16.

Find attached the network of canals  
the marching of heartthrob  
the second hand's ticking  
of contemporary sting

17.

Hello darkened lonely on swingsets  
hello violet crow on the slide

18.

Fathom this phobia  
a love everlasting  
perilous hypothesis  
a hole

19.

There is a vacancy  
courted  
by tremendous weight  
and you're crushed

20.

And so the dust settles  
with Fall on its breath

21.

Benches in a field in disarray  
flags blowing half-mast

22.

How can this longing  
belong to you  
in the presence  
of such desolation

23.

Even now the overhead  
bed sheets are restless  
insensitive in their feminine  
truthings

24.

Boring things pass in beautiful  
bodies render the inner apocalypse

25.

Phantoms  
appear on the pines  
and your sadness  
isn't yet through

26.

The trees affirm  
the weight of winter  
with bad posture

27.

You are a lost quarter  
in the jukebox  
a static compartment  
of music and ice

28.

But the temperature is suddenly suspended  
air catching a glimpse  
at once from sun and snow

29.

Spring enters again with jovial sidesteps  
over the snow and the bones of cold weather

30.

You go to bed tick-tocking  
equations and wake  
speaking two voices at once

31.

Truth is  
the (w)hole

32.

The morning delivers  
its case in a rhetoric  
of glow way low  
on the skyline

33.

The clock tower  
purchases the hours  
with bells

34.

An entirely foreign day  
wake up and start  
writing your name

35.

Stand ahead of the sculptor  
modify the features  
of our ancestors blindly

36.

Distribute your mystery  
with no shortage of heat

37.

Be persistent  
in your kaboom

38.

Build a dock out  
over damaged seas  
over tough waters  
still flexing their tin

39.

Demonstrate the eruption  
of news the importance  
of children from various states

40.

It is right now a.m.  
the world's  
spectrum burning

41.

Shut your eyes once again  
and open your shutters  
of storks over seas

42.

The goal is revival  
the stars' shock resuscitation  
of the sky's dark cadaver

43.

Whose fathoms cling  
like colonies of parasites  
to these things that don't  
speak

44.

And what of the sky's attachment  
to your dreaming its color-  
ful enjambments quiet the trees

45.

Why do you perform  
in succession  
these wild renditions  
of wind over sand  
of the volcano  
exhaling its smoke

46.

The sputtering shores  
of the newspaper rise up  
and the headlines offer  
their violent perfumes

47.

A clean-shaven face  
glowing in the chalky woods

48.

Off in the distance  
clouds are cursing  
under their breath

49.

I am  
the wilderness  
of those storms

50.

I have come to where  
everything has substance  
pennies the groceries true deep

51.

I stand on the dock  
nursing the tiniest fires  
all blinky and bright  
in my hands

52.

And these silly methods of harvesting  
prove beneficial again even as  
insects swarm in carrying  
deserts like lockets waiting to  
spill

53.

Ambiguous offspring  
embodying my suit  
full of wildness packed  
even fuller with rain

54.

Revere with long energy  
the scribbler of years

55.

Yours is a weirdness  
I tackle with giant love

56.

Fancy no illusion  
here the eternal is  
kissing the end

57.

And we do not speak to each other  
but instead crawl wishfully swelling  
the road come upon us  
backwards by wing

58.

For miles I walk  
out over the flawless water  
the fog bleaching  
the dock  
both in front and behind

59.

Hurray for these minute explosions

60.

The hour is dusky  
the air is fat with greenish  
and several threads running  
through the heads of us all

***From Ruston***

Dear Clay,  
It's Winter.  
The trees crack  
their many  
knuckles as  
the wind blows  
through them  
and despite  
the sky's  
concrete  
coherence,  
nothing feels  
connected  
except for  
this climate  
and the cold  
and cloudy  
conditions  
of my head.  
Here, the mess  
has become  
messier.  
The brain  
is aflame  
and all else  
is either  
gaseous  
or ashes.  
I mean, I'm  
obsessed with  
or exhausted

by everything.  
Will all  
sentences  
always end  
with an up-  
swoop in  
intonation?  
I go for walks  
to wander,  
not wonder,  
and still  
even the tree-  
bark curls  
to a tangled  
net of question  
marks and I'm  
caught here  
for hours. Days?

Dear Clay,  
outside the rain  
is falling down.  
The sky's spitting  
sheets of seas  
against  
the windows—  
cool fabrics  
of varying  
blue densities.  
And inside  
I'm turning  
tempests  
into bedware,  
speaking  
the elements  
with the accent  
of dreams.  
How do we sing  
articulately  
when the storms  
of the world  
we share  
come seeping  
between  
the bricks  
of the worlds  
we don't?  
In whose ear  
could this  
music  
possibly ring?  
With its notes  
clipped off  
of a great  
big racket,

this tiny thing  
in the shadow  
of such ruckus  
barely chirps.

Dear Clay,  
to be sure,  
the faucet's  
withholding  
a vision;  
the charms  
do not fall.  
From a ceiling  
I can't see:  
no acts  
of drippery,  
whatsoever.  
It's spring.  
It's time I unfold  
this catalogue  
of intricacies,  
step into  
the morning,  
so that the sun  
can slip me  
the shadow  
I couldn't cast  
myself.  
But what of  
the absence  
in that dark  
shape?  
Fuck spring.  
Everything's  
bursting  
and lovely  
with meaningless  
noise, relentless  
vocabularies,  
and I can't  
even speak.

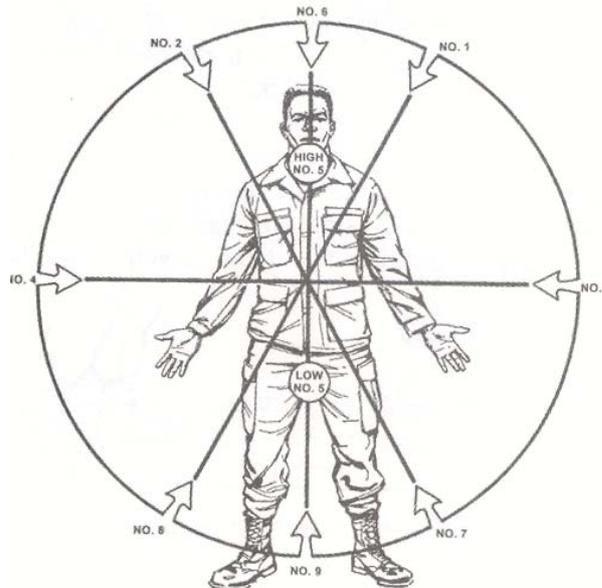
Can't whistle  
a hymn  
of dissonant  
splendor.  
Can't believe  
that we've  
always built  
our monsters  
from scrap.  
Being is  
being scissors.  
It's spring.  
The charms  
step into  
this catalogue  
of dissonant  
myself:  
a vision  
of intricacies  
and lovely  
shape,  
no acts,  
but  
bursting  
vocabularies.  
To be sure,  
it's time I unfold.  
Then again,  
from scrap.

Dear Clay, it's May. By now, I hope,  
you're used to these beginnings.  
Sunlight leans against the houses  
and, in square patches, passes  
through the windows. But here,  
behind my face's windows,  
the parliament shuffles in debate:  
To mean or to mean lonely, whether  
'tis nobler to swim the surface  
of a sea or sink in the tentacled deep.  
"How cliché," says the pelican  
to the whale, but either way,  
I'm nowhere near the beach.  
Nowhere near reaching you  
and I want to. How's that  
for a shift in tone? How's that  
for a statue emerging from the mess?  
Yes, I have the tendency to muddle  
the message, "but listen!,"  
the trumpets blow. I know  
this doesn't sound like much,  
but it's everything I'm made of.  
Retract your invincible smart-gate  
and swallow this flood of KABLAM!  
Make yourself an ant in these puddles  
and a ripple will move you like a tidal wave.  
This is an invitation: Welcome to the playground  
wherein the doors are hinging open.  
Where sunlight's blasting through  
window frames and the ongoings  
of solipsistic governments  
are all I have to give you.

# COMBATIVES Vol. 1 #1 – Brett Price

## 1-1. DEFINITION OF COMBATIVES

Hand-to-hand combat is an engagement between two or more persons in an empty-handed struggle or with hand-held weapons such as knives, sticks, **poems** or projectile weapons that cannot be fired. Proficiency in hand-to-hand combat is one of the fundamental building blocks for training the modern soldier.



## 1-1. DEFINITION OF BRETT PRICE

Brett Price lives in Cincinnati, Ohio where he co-curates the reading series *clay poetry*. He is the associate editor of *Forklift Ohio: A Journal of Poetry, Cooking, & Light Industrial Safety* & is a recent graduate of the University of Cincinnati.

cover collage – **The Sky As Invisible Sidewalks** by Noah Falck.  
front cover layout – Laura Godfrey.

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