



ROY BENTLEY

The World is Moving and True

and funny. Take Francis Ford Coppola's *Apocalypse Now*: Harvey Keitel was supposed to play Willard but Keitel hated the Philippines, jungle heat, snakes, the insects. After rushes, Coppola flew to LA to look at Keitel's performance and smoke cigars and fume by the light of a humming film projector. Coppola replaced him. Sacked him for Martin Sheen. Once back in Manila, a civil war broke out. Which meant: no helicopters. To make matters worse, sharks dogged Robert Duvall in the beach scenes. Nipped at the tasty star as if Nature hated big-budget movies about Vietnam. Weather?—Hurricane Olga stalked the production. Forty inches of rain fell for six days and six nights, without stopping, until the shoot was underwater. Then, when it stopped, God Himself might have had a tough time orchestrating fifteen Bell helicopters in flight, each trying to stay in frame over jungle-as-hellfire-and-damnation. All of it now colossally fantastically over budget—like the War. Of course Dennis Hopper, high on one illicit substance or another, improvised. Marlon Brando hated the script. Said so. Shaved his head without informing Coppola. Maybe when Brando-as-the-shaved-headed-Kurtz says, "The *horror!* The *horror!*", he was speaking from immediate, personal experience. Martin Sheen had a heart attack so serious he was given last rites.

The movie got made. Was a hit. Coppola laughs now about most of it. Maybe not at Sheen dragging himself a quarter of a mile to get to help; or that he, Francis, scolded the crew, “If he dies, I don’t want to hear anything but goddamn *good* news....” Not that.

Sal Mineo in Rebel Without a Cause

His parents and teachers can't tell him anything new.
Talk of ordinary things is like dancing with the wrong partner.
Along comes James Dean / Jim Stark. Who's been in trouble—

we first meet him in a police station—and has had to move.
Maybe if more adults felt what the young feel or could recall
a Christmas-wish fantasy of having wings that is Childhood.

Maybe if impulses we fight all our lives made as much sense
as the perfect swoon of hope and finding what it means to hope.
Maybe. But Plato can't wait to feel something other than numb.

Sal Mineo / Plato, the teen who shadows the new kid in town,
doesn't sprout wings. He's shot while surrendering to police.
His face wears the look of one who knows that we go alone

into the night-after-night of Nothingness we sprang from.
And he dies wearing one blue and one red sock. Jim Stark
has made his pal a gift of a red leather jacket, his jacket.

Sleeves are constellated with the spotlights of patrol cars.
Dean bends to work a zipper. Without wings, the landings
are hard. Jarring. The jacket is to cushion the worst of it.

A Fisherman Casts His Net at Sunset

Maybe he's not in the right place, not a fisher of men,
but he raises a bible of black net in praise of mariners
and passerine birds and the luck of the long last breath.

The sky is streaked blood-of-the-poet red and an indigo
like the umbra at the center of some fireworks displays.
The waters of the inlet translate all of this as darkness.

Again, he's landed a memory—sitting on the tail of a
sailfish, working free the barb in the mouth of the fish
as his father or an uncle shout instructions in Spanish.

Again, he feels the doomed fish rise as big as a Prius.
Recalls belligerent weight and the blind faith of gills.
Brave respirations on a bloody boat floor after hope

of deliverance had gone. Now an iPad with ear buds
plays classic rock. He turns it up. Hears himself sing
aloud the Jackson Browne song about taking it easy.