

Christopher Soden

Black Diamonds and Other Poems

↳ Black Diamonds ↳

for djd

I'm not sure how you ignited this smoldering
clod of fossil fuel clenched under rib staves,
layers of tense, sinewy chest muscle.
Is it radiant, stewing magma, like a vibe
from my dad, those comical goggles
he wore for astigmatism, just like yours?
His hair a lunar eclipse in November,
or the sky when God is finally gone

and through. Maybe you remind me
of a boy I betrayed. Not nearly as splendid,
I confess. I couldn't believe how easy
it was to just close him off. Another iron bandage
to slow the beating down. It is not sufficient
to say that I am bad news. Though you couldn't
find better company when grain and time
and distillation have turned your blood to ash
and molasses. I'm worse than strychnine,
frosty stillbirth on a farm where they track
cloud and tide but ask no help from the Father
of breath, of light. I can only say I've known
this since the night I made myself ask
you, since the Christmas of my first phonograph
and Superman cape. I am filled with chuckles
and snot and solace and bad songs. I am filled
with steam and smoke and teeth and clay and bones.

I am filled with catastrophe and disaster; earthquake
and hurricane. Black diamonds spilling
from my lips and I am here.

↳ **Alphadog** ↳

for Nate

From the very beginning something
about Nate really set me off,
hearing him talk with the others
about women. There was a shift
in tone. It wasn't leering or salacious,
but angry like, like a seething
geyser, or subtle poison swimming
the stream of their male blood.
Now of course I, am a guy too,
and probably not especially
enlightened. But he struck me as

a dolt. I would chuckle too
when the women found names
for him they would never speak
to his face. But who could blame
them, when Nate would target one
with his swagger and cooly-cool
disaffection, like he was the only one
audacious enough to bring desire
into the conversation? *You know*
you want me. He knew the value of
his stock, the dark wavy curls,
the lean raw rough appeal of his
slender nose, flush and freckle
of his strong burly jaw. I remember
him flashing his milky ass when he
and Sarah swam the cold Adriatic,
diving to give me the full benefit.

Yeah he knew I was a queerboy.

We were all MFA students and nobody

cared, though for all the repulsion

he stoked in me, he took it in stride.

He kissed me at the New Year's Dance

without missing a beat and there were

times when I thought we understood

each other better than anyone

in our own tribe. One cold groggy

Vermont morning as I lumbered

into the men's toilets I found the stall

next to him. It was easy to recognize

his pajama trousers and I greeted

him, chipper and exhilarated, as if

I could see past the partitions

dividing us, and he, again without

hesitation, cracked wise about amenities,

Why couldn't they find softer paper?

And I the pipsqueak cocksucker poet
always on the verge of sobs or eruption
could settle in with him there, laughing
in agreement.

↳ **closer** ↵

returning to your room
on the men's floor to hear
the water your best friend
borrowing your shower
explaining his is broken
and the two of you so close
he knew you wouldn't mind
grinning rambunctiously
his voice bounces
as if through a bottle

curtain pulled halfway back

his crooked wattled dick

curving downward

like a hook in opposition

to the showerhead his piss

escaping in a careless jet

completely at ease with you

winking drops glisten

from nose earlobes suds

adorning wilted hair

of ass cleft what exactly

is he offering is he

the brother you never had

do you believe you know

the difference between

recognition and epiphany

is this grace or is he

unapproachable

as God how exactly

do you connect

exhale or surrender

or horseplay if you ask

to compare or climb in

got room for me bro

will it ever be

the same

Author Bio

Christopher Soden received his MFA in Writing (Poetry) from Vermont College in January 2005. He writes poetry, plays, performance pieces, literary, film and theatre critique. His honors include: The Dallas Public Library's *Distinguished Poets of Dallas*, Poetry Society of America's *Poetry in Motion Series*. *Queer Anarchy* (writer, producer) won *The Dallas Voice's* People's Voice award for Best Stage Production 2007. Finalist in The 4Th Unity Drama Festival and LSU Outworks Festival. His work has appeared in: *Sentence*, *Borderlands*, *Off the Rocks*, *The James White Review*, *Ganymede*, *The New Writer*, *Velvet Mafia*, *Poetry Super Highway*, *Gertrude*, *Touch of Eros*, *Gents*, *Bad Boys and Barbarians*, *Windy City Times*, *ArLiJo* and *Best Texas Writing 2*.

Citation: Soden, C. 2010. 'Black Diamonds and Other Poems'. *Polari Journal*, 2 (October 2010), www.polarijournal.com/resources/Soden-Black-Diamonds.pdf (accessed <insert date>).