

Culture is Compost

The bruised tomato deflates
and leaks, put the leftover
salad inside with the leeks
and dump the coffee grounds
and cover it, and put the
culture inside too, with carrot peels
and the crabgrass we pulled,
cover it with water and see
what remains next year

I have placed an archive
of poetry in the compost
and covered it with kale stalks
and egg shells, drafts
mostly, scraps of lines,
images stained by tea, orange rinds
and apple cores for insects
and worms that can't read anyway
and what will grow from that someday?

Shake out the barrel of grass clippings
treated only by rabbits and rain
and the pounding of sneakers.
Religion is highly compostable
a fungus always at work
and microbes go at it ecstatic.
My readings of historical disaster
cannot go into the compost
they largely came out of the compost
and I soaked them with rain water
carrying five-gallon buckets
from the drum under the downspout
it neutralizes bad news
if you break apart the paper

There is an illusion (compost it!)
that meditation on this rank mess
will provide some revelation
sly enough for a handful of stanzas.
I'll not get in there myself (most
prefer to be ash) but in imagination
wonder what would sprout.

Daniel Bouchard (2023)