

Editing is Never Done

Chris Espinosa

I *finally* get it
as the fish tank light flutters and
sparkles over the shipwreck,
while the Youtube rain soundtrack makes
it feel like the room is dripping.
The three little ones dive and dodge
the bubbles, pecking at them, convinced
they are food.

I finally get *it*
searching through the mass of digital
folders, all scattered and down deep
in a hard drive.
I finally get it when I reread old works after
promising some girl I would send her
a few words, just a taste, something to whet
the appetite and maybe she'll think
I am *good*.

I get it, *finally*,
that editing is never done, and it's late and work
wants me in early and there isn't enough water
in the apartment to wring in sobriety so it's all
suffering and cotton mouth. It should have been a quick send,
copy, ctrl-V, but my finger slipped an hour ago
and I'm trying to decide if "circumnavigate" is the right word
choice in line four, stanza nine, and it was two
hours ago when
I wanted a cigarette and for
some reason, or the shift in cold weather,

“circumnavigate” just bothered me.

So ten minutes ago I decided to rewrite the whole poem from scratch, and it was shorter, *compress*, Hall always said, *Chris, please, for the love of god, compress*. And now, two pages is four stanzas and it’s marvelous and I am a little less than drunk, but it doesn’t matter.

The poem is gorgeous and the confidence is back and I feed the fish and *finally* stand for a congratulatory smoke, knocking the water over, slamming the top of the lap to rescue the hard drive from the wave and as everything crashes and swells I realize, I never pressed save. And it *doesn’t* matter.

I finally *get* it; the poem exists for as long as you see it. Poems are “Super Position,” an electron in two places, simultaneously. A stanza existing and unwriting itself all in the same moment.

In my head I type an apologetic ballad to the girl and crawl into the cold covers of bed, all the while still wondering why circumnavigating just didn’t seem like the right place to end.