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POST SCRIPTUM

Patrick White

EVERYTHING SHINES EVEN A WET CIGARETTE BUTT ON THE SIDEWALK

as the world turns

lurching on its axis

we are tiny ravaging viruses

named and fingerprinted

et pourtant imperméables aux remords et au repentir [yet immune to remorse and repentance]

sculptures de viandes congelées [sculptures of frozen meat]

inoculated with jealous wrath

birds' eggs coated in winter's ice

swallowed by serpents

languishing

ouroboros of the never born

suffering recreating itself

carnival acts of felony menacing

Orenda of the third eye

eroding existence

SS

rabid incantation, orgasmic blood lust

days, years, decades, lifetimes

spent fully expended

infecting others to be servile

to one's every whim

quel est le taux de change d'aujourd'hui? [what is the exchange rate today?]

quel est le coût du bien? [what is the cost of property?]

Vision quest of the Conquistadores

awakening the libido of Death

eternity of anti-substance :: mother of Enslavement

full moon of artifice waning

into the eternal cries of children conquered

lives interrupted in eruption

SS

from within them,

billion petaled lotus blooming paralysis

rêves orphelins de la dualité – abducted supernovae of innocence *souffrance* ::

dream orphans of duality – *supernovae de l'innocence kidnappée* suffering

dismantled, disinherited, deposed, decomposed ::

omnipresence of slaughter personified
omniscient etiolation of Homo christos
omnipotent recalcitration of mercy and equality

from eternal sky to die

under the weight of the human rock ::

insuperable, this erosion from inside out,

from erosion this outside in

enfants avec tout le cieux et la terre avant eux

children with all heaven and earth before them

committing suicide as infanticide reigns supreme

lives as long as a blade of grass

crossed sticks overhead under monument

... avoid ... system overloads ... a void ...

tiny fragments of human beings

tiny stains on human progress

avoid ... eyes straight ahead ... focus on the mission ... a void

Éviter ... les yeux droit devant ... concentrer sur la mission ... un vide

Sullen soldiers screeching,

these human bayonets

thrusting their lives up through the ribcage

of Mammon's foes

thrusting their lives into the heart

of Human Destiny

steaming blood crimson in distant jungles

upon the black tar sands of greed and war

under the blinding diamond hooves of Apocalypse ::

piétiné ci-dessous the red horse, the white horse, the black horse,

the pale horse of Death

chartreuse as sickness decanted in the cesspool of winter

"Let there be meticulous attention

to the successful creation of

our systems of suffering ::

"Let their orgasms reek of monotony & fear ::

as we are the Lord's, we shall manage

sensualité convulsé dans des récipients corruptibles

[sensuality convulsed into corruptible containers]

our systems of war

in the same scientific and efficient manner

as a business

voluptueux, charnel, caché dans des salles de conseil

[voluptuous, carnal, hidden in boardrooms]

"Let us be as predictable and efficient

as an assembly plant

for it is our technological superiority

and managerial skills

that are the foundation of our prowess

Soldiers left to die alone in the wilderness of rebirth

crying out for mothers whose wombs are sealed

calling upon Mercy to unfold her wings

groping for human touch, a single human breast

SS human savagery foams from the corners of our mouths

human cruelty drips from sharpened teeth,

corpulent as the louse of imperialism sucks and infects the generations

"Let there be

"Peace, though beloved of our Lord, is a cardinal virtue

«La paix, bien aimé de notre Seigneur, est une vertu cardinale

only if your neighbors share your conscience."

uniquement si vos voisins partagent votre conscience.»

Let us prey.

Comme des lapins du chapeau d'un magicien

[Like rabbits from a magician's hat]

simulacra of Peace

in]de[scribed through the language of War

observed through the eye of Strife,

created malformed by the hands of Conquest

wand of obedience dismissing conscience

baguette magique de d'obéissance

rejetant la conscience morale

neurilemma sheathing the creeping virus,

rabid cells seeking soft grey matter

leaving scarred and traumatized children

buried in crawlspaces

laughed into being

by antics

of Clown

"Let there be crawlspaces.

"Let there be tunnels of no escape.

"Let there be conflated psychological mazes

whose mouth of outlet is old age & Death

les voix coulage mots dans les mers mortes

[voices casting words into dead seas]

"Let there be graveyards for the clouds of witnesses,

the eternally young, the orphaned ravaged,

bodile SS

alienation trembling, shaking, haunted, anti-

anti-destinies raped in the rabid terror

"Let there be life crawling underbrush under monument

"Let there be ghosts of I Am

"Let there be a single fragment :: quantum spectre

eyes straight ahead :: synonymous point

in space and time

at attention saluting morbid human history

a void ... crawling beneath the mud ... a void ...

un vide ... rampant dessous la boue ... un vide ...

pour rigidifier ... her desire came to be that he stiffen

[to stiffen his corpse through love] *pour rigidifier son cadavre à travers l'amour*

[unrelenting rod of passion] *tige implacable de la passion*

[unable to let go] *incapable de lâcher*

[juxtaposed flesh inside flesh] *chair juxtaposée à l'intérieur de la chair*

[spare the rod, spoil the child] *épargner la tige, gâter l'enfant*

"Let there be impassioned hearts once beating,

"Let them be hard as stone, cold as steel

once green this mythos

life as lush as new grown grass

crossed sticks overhead

"Let there be sucking of mud and sand into their lungs

"Let there be tongues swollen choking out their breath

"Let there be crossed sticks overhead, crazed and dismantled

érigeant une guillotine pour décapiter la genuflexion

[erecting a guillotine to behead genuflexion]

"Let them be curling toward the sun

"Let them be fetal in futility

"Let them be human petals drying under My merciless gaze

"Let them be dry and brittle most forgotten

minds catching fire crackling through their souls

esprits rugissants capturés dans leurs âmes

[roaring spirits captured in their souls]

"Let there be crossed sticks overhead, aflame with despair

"Let them be spirits ablaze turning love to ashe and dust

"Let them be crawling beneath the grass

tandis que le monde détrempé les couvre eux,

[while the sodden world covers them,]

ils hurlent leurs protestations au silence

[they howl protests to the Silence]

"Let there be a catching afire within the guts of the Earth

"Let there be prophets reading their dead intestines,

"Let them be gamblers rolling their adversaries' hearts like dice

...a void ... at all costs ... a void ...

"Let there be beating of plowshares into swords

& beating with cudgels innocence enslaved

"Let them be dead grins tossed up to Heaven

eyes straight ahead ...

ordered ...

shined ...

"Let there be lives as long as a blade of grass

thrusting their minds up through mud and sand

"Let them be spirits clouding together

scourged eternally with human possession

"Let them be monsters raving savage madness

diseased beyond recognition or rehabilitation

slavering ...

SS overt glaze-over ...

"Let there be

futilitarian fustigation downpouring upon the earth

eternal return of the devotedly damned

alien to love, insanely remorseless

"Let there be

souls of wild animals

hurlant à la fin du monde

[howling at the end of the world]

hurlant leur mise en garde

[howling their warning]

à partir des portes de l'enfer

[from the gates of Hell]

howling at the end of the world

ululatum in fine de mundo

"Let there be

survival driven by fierce cruelty untamed

fugitives from paradise

dwellers of the jungles of desire

to eat or be

dévoré par le devorant

eaten

[devoured by the devoured] *Attaquons! :: Laissez-nous proies*

"Let there be

no relegation to linear reading allowed

"Let freedom ring

honest as a heart attack

"Let all life be puzzled as a sinister cross-wardened

crossword puzzle

as adulated as seduction

history writing rewriting history

SS

unfolded by the same bloody fingers ::

lumps of coal pointing heavenward, facing paradise

des morceaux de charbon tournés vers les cieux, faisant face au paradis

from ovens of extermination

a partir des fours d'extermination

"Let them be

light

je chuchote

I whisper

Michael Mc Aloran

iv-

...abattoir glimmering/ speak now/ speak of the rest to follow/ of the teeth of it rattle lest to come/ chasm spinal and the restive sense/ sudden/ yes/ as if to.../ scattered the remnants as if to end/ bleak disavowal of none/ cluster till breathe/ the all sung unbreathed/ wals of silence and the flashlights carousing a darkened rooms walls/ as if/ as is spoken/ from out of the film of distances/ irredeemable nothing/ struck vein till bite of delirium/ it asks of/ yes/ collapse non-stir of frozen winds/ here or now another cleft till spinal/ what words/ words spoken unto the emptiness/ prayers of the absence tasted till dreaming else/ mocking the desire of shadows/ silhouettes/ vapours/ the silence's sickening tide/ amber yes/ back till forage/ as if to end/ it murmurs/ heightened tide/ the unspoken leaves it cannot return yet reverberates in the closed wound/ the scarring of/ what of/ what less/ as if/ no nothing but the shit-smearred walls of broken lights/ clean as a new penny/ so laughs the mockery of night/ till claimed/ sudden to exhale/ deep breathe of absolute/ asking as if to fall and forever bite the hand that grazes/ speech foreign/ silenced/ the tide biting the sky's indifference...

v-

...here then obsolete it says/ clasp-rhythm/ cold stone of a winter barrage/ desolate as if to say
of it/ washed away yet entropic/ atrophic time and the obscene breath/ marred skull of disused
flowering/ failure in spite of the longing held to be/ knock upon/ knock upon/ again/ again it
knots the blood and makes a circus of in-dreaming/ from out of which births the unseen light/
abandoned as if one could follow on from/ hesitation before the blade seemingly at an edge/
callous tide/ no not heard/ as if till mockery else there there of the in-step/ retrace/ a surgeon's
will/ all aside in catascope of virulent absolution/ such is the mockery which dispels tears/ a
broken jaw/ a fractured hand/ the fragmented calling out as if.../ all spun together/ no/ not
once/ not not ever having been/ traceless the pulse gathering out of abstencia/ knock knock/ a
filigree of tears/ shadows to form/ through the glass eye of the/ sands to gather as the hands
dissipate/ sing low/ sing chariot/ gutted the emblems of desire reaching out till purpose
shredded/ as if to lie were to be enough/ basking in the shit of delusive stillness/ ach spit/ the
nose rubbed in shit not to have made the same mistake again/ over and over/ no consolation/
absence of redeem/ a dead stun/ collective as/ saved for tomorrow/ as if it could...

vi-

...here a breath/ there another breath/ shite for sustenance/ shite again tomorrow/ having breached/ asked/ begged/ not a fucking chance/ echoing laughter fills the silence of it/ what spun from depth till follow/ exhaling/ breathless/ shine a light/ only the mortuary sting should suffice/ effortlessly clouded by vapours/ the drenched pulse knocking upon the sixpence of the lack/ here or there/ it says/ in some subtle confession/ stillness to trace/ bleeding from every wound/ mocked by the none no not the nothing/ yet still the skeletal with which to pick the prick of it/ dense then/ marrow dense/ lightless accord/ no/ no other route/ as in dreaming there may have been until the slash mark struck across the gait/ sun then/ out of which the birthing of the silent light/ the light by which no light can be seen/ hence the distil/ the teeth of it/ the bones of it in a slaughterhouse of all/ mocking the lung lock/ awash with bile and unspeaking reckless nothingness/ no prayers for the now/ silenced/ shine a light/ here a breath there a breath/ in damage seasons/ having breached/ absconded/ not a fucking chance/ no nothing/ no not from the commence of/ no no other route...

vii-

...vertigo ice/ what said/ yes/ said/ it follows/ the clasp-knife breath that lingers/ in the rat deep
of vermin obsolete/ of the night's claim/ shadowed by meat/ in the presence of the none/ a
blind man's cane tracing the brail sheets of nothing left to be/ inherent dice of the unknown/ till
failure/ terror of/ asking then of the what till else/ semblant/ dissipatory/ click-clack and the
roundelay of ashen promises/ so speaks the silence filled with a grandeur of displaced light/ in
the laughter of confrontation with the hope that never was/ such swings the light bulb in a
deserted room filled with scarlet dust with scarlet vapours/ till a-dream in sun lights/ hence the
spectacle/ the a-breeze block smashing out the remnants of the ongoing/ here alack/ vibratory
tone/ perhaps/ else/ till foreign once again/ [we all fall down]/ drag of the pelt of skinned
longing/ here or there a vibrant echoing/ voices the voice clings to nothing/ vagrant the ice
subtle as the dawn growing upon the unearth-ed flesh/ breath no/ violet no/ synergy/ some
distance of/ collapse of/ said without spoken/ glacial the tide consumes the lack of air/ lung-
lack/ spitting out the teeth of pissoir abnegation/ furtive/ in the silence of ever having been/ as
if...sudden as if...back then to fall upon the crest the wave of it/ oceanic as a cadaver's
wonderment...

Charles F. Thielman

Arranging the Roses

She dons a robe of silence
leaving the burn-pile of love.

Reviewing her life-spread maps,
embers spiraling down, she notes

the junctures, the choices, hears again
the crack of bets flung at reality's walls.

Well past being tripped up looking back,
she knows how solitude vases the rose stems

of unspoken needs. Pushing face first
into sandpaper wind, her dream

of flying brought down to wishbones
snapped short. Her gaze reaches inside

the forest's quivers of moon-light.

A Wave's Green Curl

Dream's warm cowl pulled
back, her eyes are drawn by

the nomads of waking thoughts,
roses spun through river fog
onto an imagined current.

Needing a clear salve applied along

the rough trail his angers scraped
across the skin of her heart.

*

Dawn's scalpel bevels a memory's edge
as future love fins through one wave
then the green curl of another.

She draws faith's thick incense
inside marrow and searches

the pockets of old jeans
for the keys to forgiveness.

Trenches bloom in all directions

The uniform unravels
as storm anoints branches,
his neck flex pivot from page

to window replayed ,
overcast pooling on glass.

Down on the sidewalk,
an urban denizen adjusts
her long black hair, leather jacket

and mirror shades, standing in front
of a bank window as secretaries walk away.

The hourly onset of habits carves
through river-borne fog, ad copy laid
flat and face up, the march towards release

gains minutes, dragonfly
in slave hut doorway.

Today's rush hour avoidance
sits him at a library table close to
a sky-catching window. Tomorrow,

it'll be irish coffees fueling
outtakes and embers after sunset.

Forearms, wrists, his pulse alongside
open books on tables, texts detailing
humanity's octave range, intellect

to toxin. After a day of negotiating
for clarity, purpose, this happy hour

spent with one hand on a familiar tome
while his gaze slides over the face
of an approaching storm.

Lightning caulks the sky, revising
the peripherals into focus as he relaxes

the fist of his heart, soul pin-balled cubicle
to cubicle as he monitored underlings leashed
to desktops, ankles pulling custom-made anchors,

secret roots divining through day-dreams
onto a geode. Wishbones held gently,

a whispered prayer reaches for fossil wings
as adjacent realities mallet desire flat,
fatigue building, weekends shorter.

Fat raindrops smacking on glass,
thunder rolling a back-up rhythm,

everyone at these tables
watching the sky.

The Rainforests of His Subconscious

Night rain rivulets down Chicago glass,
blue palms beating on the skins of city hives.
He twitches inside a firefight broadcast live

from the rainforests of his subconscious,
barking orders in his sleep. Snipered awake,
he crouches in double shadow between bed and wall.

He breathes deeply in, then out, slow, steady.
Fingering his imagination's trigger, he dissolves
night-clad demons, then visualizes

a sun-warmed hamlet, teenagers flirting
and day-dreaming, three clean white blouses
drying in a light-filled breeze.

Preparing for a Friday at work,
he stretches six foot of solo in a doorway,
then readies himself in a mirror.

His true eyes opening without faith
in the ruins, apartment air striated
by the echoes of a lover's last words,

needs clawing out of the grave
of one dream. Guttered candle
in a can at the curb.

Swelter

Clouds accordion and flash a wet promise,
sweat and grime layered on skin,
bones collecting thunder.

City sidewalks over-ripe with chalked stats,
the night thermals steam inside marrow
as you press an ice cube to your throat

and watch the midnight parade
sitting outside café neon,
dank cloth heavy

on skin waiting for
the glimmer robes of summer rain.

Michael Ceraolo

A House John D Built (3)

This is a house John D built

This is the refinery in a Texas town run by a house John D built

This is the octane added to gas at the refinery in a Texas town run by a house John D built

These are the flammable liquid by-products left when the octane was added to gas at the refinery in a Texas town run by a house John D built

This is the equipment that didn't work when clogged by the flammable liquid by-products left when the octane was added to gas at the refinery in a Texas town run by a house John D built

This is explosion and fire that happened when the equipment didn't work because it was clogged by the flammable liquid by-products left when the octane was added to gas at the refinery in a Texas town run by a house John D built

These are the fifteen killed and one hundred seventy injured in the explosion and fire that happened when the equipment didn't work because it was clogged by the flammable liquid by-products left when the octane was added to gas at the refinery in a Texas town run by a house John D built

And this is the paltry fifty-million-dollar fine assessed five years after the fact that allowed a house John D built to kill again

Thomas Midgley.

aka The Angel of Death,

aka

The Angel of Brain Damage and Developmental Delays,

as well as

The Angel of the Ozone Hole,

a prophet much honored

in his own time,

in his own place,

by his own peers

(though all but unknown today),

all

stemming from his tenure as a research chemist

for General Motors,

which

in the nineteen twenties formed a consortium

(definition of consortium

-the business euphemism

for criminal conspiracy)

with

DuPont and Standard Oil,

to create

a gas additive they could patent

that would protect their profits

in two ways:

first,

by improving a car's performance;

second,

by driving out other competitors

such as ethanol that were cheaper to make

and less profitable

(because unpatented?)

Or maybe the order of importance was reversed

The solution?

A chemical compound that curtailed engine-knocking:

Tetraethyl lead

(TEL),

always

called ethyl

because the dangers of lead were known even back then

(Indeed:

Midgley became so sick he had to take

a whole year off to recover,

and

at least ten workers died before a 'safer'

method of production was discovered

Thus,

over the next fifty-plus years,
more than four trillion gallons of leaded gasoline
were burned in the United States,

with

all of the predictable,

though seldom acknowledged,

effects

But Midgley wasn't done yet,

not by a long shot

In

the early nineteen thirties,

while

working for General Motors' Frigidaire subsidiary,

he invented Freon,

the first

of a new class of compounds called chlorofluorocarbons

(CFCs),

which quickly replaced

the dangerous substances previously used in refrigeration,

and found many other uses as well,

such as air conditioning

And

for more than fifty years these substances

worked their white magic at ground level

and their black magic in the upper atmosphere,

specifically,

on the ozone layer that keeps harmful radiation out:

holes in the ozone were first noticed in the nineteen eighties,

will linger long and lethally

Postscript: Poetic Justice

Midgley later developed polio,

and,

physical health flagging but spirit of invention

still flourishing,

created

a system of pulleys and cables to lift himself

One day

he became entangled in them

and strangled to death--

from part II: Water

-the second most essential element,
one
you can survive without for only a few days
before the body shuts down
(permanently)

And yet,
for many years,
birds called their dim ones humanbrained,
after
seeing those same humans dump their shit
in the same water they would then drink from

"Historically,
in the development of our civilization,
streams and bodies of water have been used
for the purpose of water disposal
and the public interest
has been and now is
served by such use"

and
all manner of trash were tossed
into any available body of water,
no problem,
because
(the original natives of the place safely exterminated)
there would always be another body of water
to move away to
(water-borne diseases from dumping notwithstanding),
or
the problems would be foisted on those further downstream
(still a problem today,
because
of the continued cleaving-to of man-made boundaries,
rather than natural ones)
With
the advent of sewage treatment in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries,
biological waste would cause fewer problems,
though
such outbreaks as the one in Milwaukee in 1993
that killed over a hundred and sickened hundreds of thousands
showed the need for continued vigilance
And
soon industrial effluent would be added to the menu----

Times Beach

You can't get your kicks on Route 66 any more;
the road was closed years ago
You can still celebrate car culture and the open road
at Route 66 park southwest of St. Louis
You can also,
 while there and if so inclined,
commemorate the chemical contamination of the country:
in the ground there lies buried the former town of Times Beach,
where dioxin rendered the town uninhabitable,
where the complete evacuation of all residents was required,
where humans, horses, and other animals were harmed,
where it was deemed too expensive to clean up
 But,
man, can those mutant plants thrive
on contaminated land----

Gary Beck

The Western Front

Explosions rend the night.
People fall, bleed, scream,
sirens shriek
piercing the smoke,
echo in debris-filled air,
responders arrive,
treat the injured,
carry out the dead.

Neighbors yanked from sleep
line dangerous streets,
trembling in apprehension
expecting attacks,
yet this is not Baghdad,
Bombay, Beirut,
foreign and disorderly,
but civilized New York City
entertaining terrorists,
instead of tourists.

A Glimpse of the Past

Early settlements
in America,
completely preoccupied
with the struggle for subsistence,
required constant effort
to ensure survival,
allowing little time
for pursuit of the arts
by frugal people
intolerant
of frivolous activities.

Faces of Fear

Worried families huddle
in polluted waiting rooms
in devouring hospitals
consuming loved ones,
despite hope and prayer.
They wait, sit, twitch, pace, fret,
dreading the news to come
that husband, father, wife, son,
will not reappear.

Overburdened staff ignore
suffering support groups,
barely able to contain
the daily flood of demand
to ease pain, cure disease,
heal injuries.

Apprehensive families
hover traumatically,
wishing for life,
preparing for death,
helpless to alter
the course of illness.

Log On

Newspapers are departing
replaced by the internet
providing information,
accessible entertainment
electronically delivered
to the home, workplace,
any personal outlet,
making relics of print users
genetically chained
to pulp of the past.

Irony

The farmers in Afghanistan
grow poppy that makes opium,
which is turned into heroin
that finances the Taliban,
who face our troops
who fight and die,
while folks at home
are getting high.
American drug users
support our enemy,
as they erode the fabric
that sustains reality.

Ali Znaidi

Labour

5 hours & more
before the twilight
the sound of
my own Muse:
signal/noise:
overheated crystals
decrepitating
ideas encrypted
the code is broken
crack crack crack
crack crack crack

[cannibalistic ghosts apparition]
remnants of idea
on the brink of vanishing

licking the blood of
my wounded cigarette
(a kind of cure)_____

 equals
 release

sunset pigeons

ideas being released from
their pigeonholes

A Method

- 1.**clip that fly's wings. Each wing will have a particular use.
- 2.**1st wing determines recantation.
- 3.**2nd wing determines insistence.
- 4.**dip both wings in a shot glass full of vinegar.
- 5.**Adding the values of enthusiasm, liveliness, & vim to both wings determines your ability to stretch your wings.
- 6.**try to separate the wing of insistence from the wing of
recantation.
- 7.**throw away the wing of recantation & sip the vinegar
w/ the wing of insistence.
- 8.**Now, you can start afresh...
- 9.**Now, you can whisper the vinegar incantation to other
weary souls.

Drop

Every drop is a labyrinth.

Tiny bubble. A cell

too broad to wander in.

Invisible molecules in puzzle
shapes roam in sequence.

Chemistry filled w/ writhing
mercurial liquid. I ooze

astonishment. I can't find
the clue. A tiny drop—here
philosophied, the wiggly

worms suck on the invisible
molecules. I bet they have
big eyes; bigger than mine.
But I have a memory, thick/
thicker than the oceans' waves.

Rehan Qayoom.

Advice from a Senior Executive

The Senior Executive where I work
Called me rather unusually to his office one day
Frowning uneasily he asked after a couple of files -
And my non-civil pastimes
Then shed light upon the standing of a poet in society
The gist of what he said
Was that a poet has the same role in a nation
As an appendix in our bodies
Absolutely Useless but able at times to cause great pain
So there is only one way of getting rid of it – Surgery!
A faint smile played upon his lips, as he imagined he had rid himself
Of the appendix of my personality
Then said
'An ideal consultant
Has no face
First lips disappear
Then eyes
Followed ears
Until finally poets lose their heads
Without loss of lips, eyes, ears and brains
Nobody can become, a Federal Secretary!'

To further enhance his argument he referred to couple of barmy diplomats
But I think he must've read my mind or facial expressions
That this fool is content merely to remain a Local poet
Disheartened he permitted me
To take my leave for the day
And I the fool returned to my office
Having found inspiration for a new poem
Well aware of a possible entry in red ink
In my A.C.R. *

* Annual Confidential Report.

Upon Clifton Bridge ...

I have said that Poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings: it takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquillity: the emotion is contemplated till by a species of reaction the tranquillity gradually disappears, and an emotion, kindred to that which was before the subject of contemplation, is gradually produced, and does itself actually exist in the mind.

William Wordsworth. *Preface to Lyrical Ballads*. 1801, 1802.

Clifton Bridge

Well-travelled by the city Elite
Upon which the high and mighty Traffic Policemen
Are seen to perform their duties
Around the clock
Including, 6 or 7 undercover
Not even an unconcerned bird may flit its wings around them!
I saw her!
In a deep ochre
Gold sequined dress
Every fold aligned!
Her Lipstick so dark
That my eyes were drenched in it
Her Foundation dripping in the mid-May sun
Seemed to say
No amount of money can buy this *
Her face caked by the smoke of a cigarette
Stuck between her fingers drowned in clear blue Nail Polish-drowned fingers
With those captivating glances and such gesticulations
She could easily have been arrested by the Police under Clause 294
Parked at the Traffic Signal I thought
Any time now, this PC will hand over an arrest warrant
To this heroine of one of Minto's novels
But before he could Book her
A car with a navy-blue Number Plate
Parked up
And she disappeared into it
Along with her Clause 294 persona
While the plain-clothed P. C.
Stood aghast!

* Literally 'Wealth and beauty do not see eye to eye'.

Advice

Our love has died its clinical death!
How much longer can this fake respirator
Of excuses and diversions
Keep it alive
It is better
To switch off the plugs of our hypocrisy
And let a beautiful emotion die in dignity!

I Should Have Known

We met

When the snows were melting from the mountain-tops

When the cherry-tree's first buds were in bloom

The entire park heralded the coming of spring with its sweet fragrance

The nightingale had just begun to sing

We strolled

Arm in arm

In cherry blossom-strewn streets

Catching at butterflies and glow-worms until

The rain came to join us

Like a dear friend

The day the first leaf fell from the trees

I bent down to pick it up

Turned around

Saw you were gone!

Now I collect my tears in broken leaf-images

I should have known our time together

Was to last

As long as spring did.

In a Way We Are All Dr Faustus

In a way

We are all Dr Faustus

Some barter their souls

For pleasure's sake

And some under blackmail of duress

Some pawn their eyes

To begin trading in dreams

Others are led to mortgage their entire mind-set

It has only to be seen

What currency is in circulation

So according to an estimate of the Wall Street of life

Among those who can afford to buy, sell or invest

Self Respect is a popular commodity!

Kushal Poddar

The Wireless Receiver

With this new listening device
I talk to no one on the other side.

And no one on this side stares hard
at me. I say, Mother! My voice jaywalks

through some stumps' abrupt ends. Its world
an ashtray, those fag ends run a fence so

death can sit on one pole and watch
my voice wane inside the fog, near, so near

to the hard slope, to the plane land
where our house sinks into the earth, but here

everything means something else. I
say, Mother. The voice saves murmuring

an apology. It sounds sad.

Our Small Economy Sector

The butcher's cow raids
the flower shop again.
So we call the shop
The Blank Verse. Khan says,
Do not chide the cow,
do not restrain. So he
becomes a customer,
the best, of flowers.
The cow, a cloud, we
find amongst many
in this end-monsoon,
stamped as ephemeral,
always end in rains.
A new cow adopts
the situation.
It strides into
the blank verse and
our butcher remains
the florist's dinner.
The street gleams for some
wet miles before the road
kills it with asphalt blade.

Beside Mrs. B

My help cannot retrieve
her from the time's rapid.

I watch her die with her
husband who spins ahead,

almost drowns, recovers,
sinks again. So we watch

the white ants form a stream
and flood the street lamp's inside.

The stars beyond, soggy
in the town's pollution,

if we feel optimistic,
looks like a line of shore

one can reach not in one
but in several births.

A Mock Song

A mocking bird drives a car
with my childhood voice.
Brr, it rolls on the zigzag.
Somewhere a mower
shares its rust with the weeds. Brr.
The voice controlled car
nudges the mower's frontal blades.
Can we evade a war? Ever?
Why does the bird stir some memories
that it doesn't know? The car trips into
the red and fragile metals. Crush it.

Ferried

Most part of the day
goes in cruising home.
The mist stills those palms.
A chimney quivers,
its only trick that
makes it magical.
We are not there yet.
A tarp spreads its good wing.
A boy waits on the pier.
From the mud underneath
peeps an idol's forehead.
Most part of the day.

The Posh

The shelf
she says
should be
the resting place of the books.

I returned them all I swear.
Each one.
You can
sleep now,

sleep in
that shelf
over
your warm television set

ablaze with a skating duo
on blue
in blue
stuck in

between two pages from night's
journal.

The Perks and Losses In The Monsoon Hills

You live within the clouds,
inside the handsome, ugly,
bear, bearded man, hat, islands.

So you fear the sound of water.
You fear mud, falling stones, sky.
Sometimes constrict your goat in your hold

and pray that the water will not rise
as it did last monsoon
and washed away all your animals.

Then the music comes to the clouds.
They ring in gold. In yellow.
In rainbow. You stand on a ledge.

The terrains show their hands-
small cards. You unfold your arms.
The clarity of wind burns your lungs.

Post Scriptum

Patrick White

EVERYTHING SHINES EVEN A WET CIGARETTE BUTT ON THE SIDEWALK

Day Two

Everything shines even a wet cigarette butt on the sidewalk.
Glad I didn't miss that. Whole town's dressed up tonight.
I'm changing costumes on the inside. Come to my door
and I'll slip the universe into your bag even if
I know who you are behind your mask. Giving
is the way the world renews itself. Take it all.
It will still be spring, even as winter approaches
like an empty silo, and my sense of balance is restored
thanks to the Dexamethasone. Tired. Don't sleep.
Want to be awake for every moment of awareness
of life. Time enough to dream in a black hole
and then be shot out of the abyss like a fountain of light
someanywhere, someany space of any kind,
some anywhen. Who knows anyway. There is no end
that's ever really been out of sight or the beginnings
would have never known which anyway to go.

Me and Archibald Lampman, poets everywhere
always the warrior minstrels of the forlorn hope.
Holy war's not much of a challenge if it isn't
against the odds, is it? Be equal to your victory
and your defeat alike. Pasternak. The victory's
only worth as much as you had to overcome
to achieve it. I forget. Poets don't jump bumps, they
jump mountains like the moon or their hearts
when they stop dead in their tracks, startled
by the unforeseen beauty and truth of everything.

The woman that you love, the man, was once
an ugly little comma or cingulate of an embryo with gills
in a womb that didn't go to waste, did it?
Even if your loved one is not the hero or heroine
of the play anymore, you venerate them as great villains
in the course of time. Love and change do that,
don't they? And then you forgive everybody,
even the audience at the end, with an encore.
I applaud everybody whoever played a part in my life
as well as those who didn't just as masterfully.

Three cheers for the hopeless, and the lame and the broken.
I wish you'd spoken up sooner, but better late than never.
Garlands of flowering herbs for your wound. Laurels
for the mute, and the deaf and the dumb. Well done.
Your art was seamless as stitches in an emergency ward.
I couldn't always see that. But I see it now. It's playing
creatively with life even as you're dying exit stage left.
You can change the shape of the crosswalk but
that doesn't help you to get to the other side any faster.
And when you do, you find you've always been standing
on the side you're supposed to be on. The heart empties.

The heart fills up. A waterclock. The tears you're crying tonight
were a mighty river once, or a sea that dried up.
Go ask the moon. It doesn't forget you've got tides.
You ever find, in your whole life, fossils of water?
What profound silliness life has ever been
but who would want it any other way? Sacred syllables
dressed up as apostate clowns. Rebels
in the ice cream cone that toppled to the ground
like the tower of Babel, comets from a dark halo
shining like crown jewels of ice in the sun and astral ants.

You know you've got your stuff together.
That labour is done. And it weighs a ton.
Leave it at the side of the road. Travel lightly
and walk on, walk on. Your spine is a suspension bridge
with cables that sway in the wind. Not an anchor line
that keeps you in the same place you fished last year.
Cross over. Firewalk the Milky Way like a bridge
that's burning to show you there's nothing to fear
from the flames that flower in the mouth of dragons.

If my bones lie down like spilled toothpicks,
broken twigs, yarrow fire sticks, a petrified forest
on the moon, what's that but firewood out of the ice?
You've got to count the trees rings to know
how old and happy I was to expand infinitely
in the wavelengths and ripples of the rain.
It starts out in tears but it ends up popping the cork
like the Big Bang and quantum foaming all over the place
laughing in celebration of chaos about to slake
the windows, the mirages, the desiccated life
and I could hear the mermaids with their
beautiful hourglass figures as if God not Gabriel
ran his hands over those breasts and thighs
or underwent a cosmetic sex change to enter
a meaningful lesbian relationship, and yes,
they were singing to me. Gender change
for all you disenchanting feminist priestess witches
out there. Athena wasn't born of Zeus' cosmic
cracked egg skull. A god cosmologist of any sex with eyes
in the back of their heads could see that right away.

But don't start a war. The rafter of that house of life
is fallen and splintered like the weight of too much snow
on the roof of an abandoned farmhouse. Be

the ground hugging, tree climbing snake
that enters the nest like silence and swallows
the egg that flew away in scales that turned
to feathers just as it began to rain. Let's be
dragons together, let's heal the wounded caduceus
like doves and snakes together. It might feel
like a live mouse falling into a snakepit
or being held by the tail at first but
in no time at all you'll have them swaying
in unison like a flying carpet of wavelengths
woven into your picture-music and the distinction
would be unthinkable as a magic baton out
witching for water in hell like a lifeboat
in this sea of freshwater and salt, fire that burns
like a blazing starmap and the rain that falls
like tears of mercy and soothes them like a cream
of moonlight and hand-picked shadows, and not finding it.

Quick. Something. God. Whatever's left bless
dexamethasone, wet cigarette butts, and death
slowly lifting its eyelids like the moon to take
a good look at me. Give me my winding sheet.
I'm going to cut a few eyeholes in it and get around
like Caspar the Ghost pretending he's Zarathustra
adding his lantern to the market place like a poet
and prophet that's never recognized at home
like a candle with a good voice that's trying
to throw a little light on things Halloween night
when the dead come as close as they can
to whispering like a nightbird in the ears of the living.
Longing is as great a characteristic of death as it is of love.

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