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Introduction

David Flynn

A Pity

It's a pity you are glorious. Sad
to think you're so grand. In the morning you
are the sunrise, night a black dress
sequined with stars.

It's so awful you are lovely. A crime
you look that way. Your eyes: their blue
makes the sky look faded, cobalt
seem bland. You gaze, and stallions run wild.

I'm depressed that I love you. Can't sleep
that you love me too. Your kiss before bedtime
makes me flinch with happiness: lips redder
than sunset, more liquid than cabernet.

You'll be my death, from this joy I can't kill,
an electrocution of romance, strapped to happiness.

Leaking Love

Leaking love isn't so much how I live
as how I age.
I love you I love you I love you--
a lifetime of squawking to silence.
As a child I could not bite love,
but I still loved, parents and toys the same.
As an adult I love only people,
who are shifting, self-centered items.
Maybe I was right as a babe: love everything;
nothing loves back anyway.

Donal Mahoney

A Chance to Say Good-bye

After World War II
before television,
before women had tattoos
before men wore earrings,
I was a child in a world
with kids as odd as me.
I'm still here but tell me
where are they?

Remember Joey Joey
who yelped in class
every day before
doctors knew the nature
of his problem, his
barbaric yawps scaring girls
and driving boys down
on their desks laughing
until the day he disappeared.
I had no chance to say good-bye.

Can't forget Petey, the toughest kid
in class, not quite right either.
He uppercut a girl in the third row
and disappeared the same day.
So did Bobby, who my mother saw
on his porch eating worms
one by one off a porcelain dish
as she was coming home from church
under a parasol, stylish in that era.
She asked if Bobby and I were friends
and I said, "Bobby Who?"
I had no chance to say good-bye.

But Jimmy was the nonpareil
when it came to kids not right.
I saw him after graduation leap-frog
parking meters like a kangaroo
down 63rd Street for half a block
woofing as he cleared them
until the cops took him home.
I had no chance to say good-bye.

They locked Jimmy in the attic
of his parents' house for years

but at least he didn't disappear.
Years later I saw him in a dark bar
with his twin brother drinking beer.
He sat quietly, not a single woof,
not a bar stool threatened by a leap.
There I had a chance to say good-bye.

Subway Sarah Splits Her Loaves

She works in a sandwich shop
splitting loaves of bread
stacking them with meat
for the construction crew
across the street.
They come in ravenous
and raucous.

One of them arrives alone,
is kind and nice.
He eats and waves good-bye.
He's had his fill, Sarah thinks.
Why should he stay?

She takes him home one night,
splits her legs and afterwards
he kisses her and says
see you at the shop, Hon,
and waves good-bye.
He's had his fill, Sarah thinks.
Why won't he stay?

Frantz in Port-au-Prince

You still wonder who Frantz was
besides the voodoo priest
you met in Port-au-Prince

now that you have shards
everywhere in your body
and the doctor has

no idea what they are.
Lab results say metal
found in Haiti only.

He asks did you go there?
You say years ago to study
voodoo for your degree

and met Frantz the priest
who helped you do
your research taking

you to incantations
then asking you to stay
but you said no and he

wrote letters to the school
disparaging your dissertation.
Now he chants in creole

on your phone every Easter.
Authorities can't find the man.
Google says he died years ago.

Rusty Nails

After all the tests
and the doctor's explanation
she thinks of them not

as 20 points of cancer
but as 20 rusty nails
hiding here and there

at awkward angles
somewhere in her abdomen.
According to the doc,

the nails could fail
at any time one by one
or else collapse en masse.

More chemo is an option.
With three kids, it might
be worth another try.

Aging in Place

It's time to leave the man alone.
He's getting old, his wife says.
He's really slowing down.

He's always been a man
occupied with one thing
or another.

No half way with him.
Now he finds harmless things
just to please the wife.

Three packs a day he smoked,
drank a pint every night, then
quit both for her.

Stopped chasing women too
when a widow nuts as him
called the wife.

All he does is weed
their garden beds and lawn
four seasons of the year

with the wife upstairs
at every window
keeping an eye on him.

Who else in winter shovels
piles of snow off garden beds
and lawns just to weed?

He's getting old, she says.
He's really slowing down.
It's time to leave the man alone.

Bill Yarrow

DUSTY WINNEMUCCA ROAD

respect your parents. or not.
stay put. or not.
finish school. or not.
get married. or not.
stay married. or not.
have children. or not.
work hard. or not.
travel widely. or not.
stay sober. or not.
remodel your kitchen. or not.
hang loose. or not.
retire early. or not.
watch out. or not.
die or keep living. or not.

ANNIVERSARY WALTZ

He broke his hope against her happiness
She cut her eyeteeth on his tongue

She liked the shape of his razor
He loved the smoothness of her shaving cream

He worshiped her carbonation
She thought his syrup divine

She caressed his strong handiwork
He held her in his sharp armor

He hiked the hills of her condition
She biked the path of his delight

She planted the vine of his desire
He watered the garden of her heart

POETS WHO THRUM

Poets who thrum like larkspur and bramble and viburnum
Poets who thrum like lacewings, sobriquets, and krill
Poets who thrum eschew cochineal shoes
Poets who thrum ride inkhorn steeds
Poets who thrum are unrelentingly chthonic
Poets who thrum rub neatsfoot oil on their strawberry roans
Poets who thrum are clart with hebetude
Poets who thrum are thrawn in the gloaming
Poets who thrum wind their timepiece widdershins
Poets who thrum thwack
Poets who thrum plitter
Poets who thrum also upend
Poets who thrum also brabble
Poets who thrum are eristic and shambolic
Poets who thrum eat pukka swamms
Poets who thrum use "dizzy" and "fresh" as verbs
Poets who thrum use "brine" and "soot" as verbs
Poets who thrum use "brick" and "lip" as verbs
Poets who thrum use "furl" and "tongue" as verbs
Some of my best friends are poets who thrum.

WRITING 101

ran quickly – sprinted
thought carefully – contemplated
leaned back – reclined
worked hard – labored
looked briefly – glanced
shouted loudly – yelled
fell down – fell
moaned softly – moaned
lifted up – lifted
missed terribly – missed

PROVERBS OF THE CONVERTED

a journey of a thousand miles begins with a single ticket
a person is known by the company he shuns
a good man is hard to solicit
where there's a will, there is death
a house divided against itself cannot multiply
if you lie down with poets, you'll get up with bullshit

Averil Bones

The Golden Heart

The Golden Heart

On the booming plain, where red gibber cuts vast rims, stand ruins
newborn and tender as an apricot sky. Out there, night is a crystalline
stab that, by dawn, gets right through to the heavy marrow of things,
all those that live there, and morning when it comes with melting warmth
is golden, grows bronze, then blazes desiccation down for hours, sends
molten epochs to crisp up the wide flats in endless sapping afternoons.

Out there, where the ghosts of drooped ponies step carefully round
the pain in their hooves, their sorry selves echoes of thirst and stones,
of bites and heat and pricks and stings, of the long, long trackless trudge
from the coast, men, beaten hard, with stick figure minds, stumble their
hob-nailed way from A to where, anchored low by plodding so they don't
look out to see the flashes of bright parrots or the iridescent glint of beetles
but shift in their saddles, squint, chew tar, spit, and ache bone-weary.

Out there, riches lay half-buried, and they that ride go only there to dig.
They that walk though, who stand as still as burned stumps and flicker
in and out of form in the shimmering haze, first bird, then fish, then woman,
who sprout forth from the thick red cruor of ancient times animated by the
lights of all the eyes that scanned the sands before them, are guided by
their dreams, by thirst and hungers, walk quietly, with shining snakes and
ribbon trees for minds, eating up deep lessons along the oldest paths.

*(I am the writer story-teller. and re-write,
who watches these My mind is discarded contrive old patterns
things through ends, wool tangled in the random weave
time's telescope, in the bottom of of things, chant magic
through distance and the knitting bag, bits spells to fix them,
context, through tales and pieces frayed and fail, pierce and try
of the true and the mazed, shifting form, again to cast a light
more prismatic so that I write through barrels of ink.)*

So to the gold. Picture the luckless Irish pressing east past world's end;
what they thought slogging through is a mystery. What makes men explore?
What last desperate toss of the dice was this to wander so far that they cracked
right through earth into history? What cruel drive made void their purpose,
press-ganged them to such a ruthless path? While they shouted out mirages,
bare Arcadians in the pitiless desert, it bided its time, then began to eat
them bit by bit, starting with the blistered skin falling from their feet and lips.

Those first were the silent creeping front of a flashing flood that landed
with such force that, like a meteor, it flung up a million tonnes of rock,
and the corpulent weight of those eight golden pounds three men dragged
to Coolgardie distorted so far the fabric of things that, in days, hundreds
of men had slipped into its wide spiralling arms, fell five hundred miles
east, to a far waterless horizon. She went too, baggage shocked blank
by massacre, already fattened by the rapes, and the rapes, and the rapes.

In the morning, to a clattering of pannikins and the chit-chattering of quick finches in the silky pear, with the stink of tinned dog a poor excuse for food, she would draw herself around the wanderer that newly cored her and doze, while the stinking men went out to chance gold futures, worrying about water, stuck by the pricks of greed and lust and thorny devils that pierced their worn out boots as they picked at the scabs of the desert, and wrestled hard whatever came to hand.

(She said:

Benang-benang, boorda

boordak, ngany djerap-djerap.

Ngany djinang kadajiny, dji

kaanya, miyal djan. Ngany

karlakoorliny, koodamart,

ngany nookert ngoorndiny.¹

He said:

Buion dár slua thar toinn

do ráinig chughainn,

Faoi mhóid bheith saor

Seantír ár sinsear feasta,

Ní fhágfar faoin tíorán

ná faoin tráill. ²⁾

All things have consequences. Crushed, welted, her blossoming was failing.

The frail vessel of her body swelled against its self. Her thirst grew. Water was rare, and the camp gave cold quarter to the weak. Her terrible night came early, icy and writhing and stabbed through by vicious pains under a million callous stars. Her screams lit up a hundred men, though none

¹ In Noongar, translated as "Some day, later on, I am happy. I know this a short time of shame and tears. I will return home to my sweetheart and I will lay down to sleep."

² In Gaelic, from the Irish National Anthem "The Soldier's Song": translated as "Some have come from a land beyond the wave sworn to be free,

no more our ancient sire land shall shelter the despot or the slave."

went out to her. In the desert, slow news of her bloody hours snaked out through low gullies and woke the wet nose of a Wangakathaa dingo.

Grim and grey, the sky a vast blank, an eerie dawn rose to a new cry second to the night's cruelty. A mewling. A ragged, a relentless plaint. There was no doubt. Following the tracks of their absent dog two Wangakathaa men started upon the scene. Sand. Red earth and the broken thing that was a bright Wudjari girl. Across the last of her warmth lay the shrivelled child she'd conjured from impossible pain. And over the low rise came my people, proud fathers, moved at last, and too late, by the morning's siren song.

"What fresh hell is this?" Their wary eyes met over the cooling corpse. Whose now a death to be wept over? Whose child to be loved or stoned? The dingo, knowing something or drawn by blood (who can say?), was first to move, titupping silently over the sand. She sniffed at the child, licked at her skin. A comfort, or a pain (who can say?). The child's mewling went on. It echoes here, and in the eerie desert night, in the ghosts and blood of those nuggetty men, celebrated, built up in statues and tombs.

(Are you sitting laugh with a brother? your songs anchor you comfortably? Does Did a grandmother in who to be. And set it your warm bed wait? reward your pretty all aside. For here now In your mother's arms, smiles? See how the understand, you are did you drink up an shape of your hands nothing but hunger armoury? Did you and the language of and a heartbeat.)

So, let's say hands reached down. In spite of the seismic waves of cruelty, of apathy, of intended plotting, of scheming and clutching and targeted killing, in spite of a hundred seasons of relentless cleansing, this time, this one aberrant time, those hopes for golden chances that fluttered from the silky pear won out, and palms, large and hard and flat and strong, shiny with callouses and veined with the red dust of the opened plains, reached down and plucked the bloody child from certain death, to certain life, which is, of course, a sentence.

Say the palms were filled up and over by the milk of human kindness, by all means, but really it was the face-off that moved them. "Can't leave the wee thing to them," they said lowly, shoulders tight to ward off the mysteries that scared them, and kicked the dog to do the Christian thing. The Wangakathaa watched with bright eyes, quietly. Morning rose apace, birds and camp noises, and they risked themselves to linger. "Mookiyang³," one said to a nod. The dog, her primal self in the crimson on her jaw, called off, darted back bright-eyed.

By mid-morning, the child, swaddled in rough hessian, rode the tilting dray to Coolgardie under the rising heat of a winter sun, through the singing concussion of picks at work, their metallic tang cutting the red earth and into the liver of the ancient thing that turned below the surface. The miners knew the low sound of snake scales shivering against the desert sand and ignored it. But it roused the babe who was hushed with the suck of a rag dipped in grey milk pulled from the sore teats of a forlorn cow whose brown eyes dripped for green pastures.

³ In Noongar, "Useless".

(A Short History of Kalgoorlie:

Kalgoorlie is a West Australian city, located 596km north-east of Perth.

The Aboriginal name for the area "Coolgoorlie" has endured over the settlers' preference of "Hannan's Find". The first Europeans to explore the area were searching for suitable pastoral lands in the 1860s. It was with the discovery of gold in nearby Coolgardie in 1892 that attention was drawn to the area. A railway from Perth to the area was built in 1896 and by 1902, wide streets and 93 hotels accommodated the 30,000 people who had arrived.

Water supply was a serious issue, and caused many health problems.

A solution was proposed by the government, and the Engineer-in-Chief of Public Works charged with building of a 563km pipeline that would transport water from a weir in Mundaring to a reservoir in Kalgoorlie. The project was completed in 1903 although, tragically, the Engineer-in-Chief committed suicide due to the stress of overseeing the construction.

In 1934 race riots took place in Kalgoorlie and Boulder, as disgruntled Australians set fire to foreign-owned businesses. By 1945, Kalgoorlie was in a steady decline due to increased production costs in the mining industry and static gold prices. In 1989, the towns of Kalgoorlie and Boulder amalgamated to become the city of Kalgoorlie-Boulder, and today Kalgoorlie is a thriving mining town helped along by the pastoral industry and tourism.⁴⁾

⁴ Adapted from West Australian Vista's *History of Kalgoorlie* (2015) published online at <http://www.westaustrianvista.com/history-of-kalgoorlie.html>

We moved on, as settlers do, and tapped our white pegs into a different place that was greener, where the very air didn't bite back in the afternoon. We found a new set of riches to glut on in emerald estuaries smelling of snapper and oysters and policed by blue-swimmer crabs. By the time I arrived, axes had been through, had chopped canoe trees into fence posts, shaped laurel trees and privet hedges, cleared hours to mess about in boats, drank tea, ate scones, and hunted down any midday shadow that spoiled the pretty view of England.

Summer days were me and the blonde-haired blue-eyed boys, doctors' sons with golden skins, and the intent games of naked children, safe and squealing. Their deep pool had a diving board, and from there we could see our fathers' yachts stacked like epaulettes on the glinting sea, ready for Easter when the rain would pool on the tarpaulins while inside I painted with condensation and listened to the slow lap of ripples gentle on the splinted wall of fibreglass. Long sweet years of a rare childhood, and in a new-found paradise, were mine.

Some said it was Guringai country and, though I lived there, I walked beside the ground. The stolen land looked at me awry, as if the steel and concrete pours that made my foundations, and the black snake of bitumen that walked me down to school, were transposed onto an ancient thing that held itself away.

Swimming, there was a brown girl who tailed the back of our golden pack now and again. Like lightning one day, out of the blue, she pinned me in the shallows so I panicked for air and choked on her vicious whisper: "You don't share."

(Take up the skates.

Fit them on your feet.

Lace them up tight.

Uncover the blades.

Go to the ice.

Take the first step.

There is no rail.

This is your life.

You learn late

too many falls

will break the ice

and kill you.)

She is Alice, carted in from the red plains to my green school because, as she said, "I'm trouble". My teen-aged self was caught. We raced through the crowded corridors for the wicked sake of making scenes, brimful of the strength and speed of antelopes. On autumn afternoons, we learnt to dance, girls' school style in netball skirts, and the quick timing of our perfect jive, our waltz, the easy glide of our skins together, our held hands, brown and browner, was a revelation. Sooner, not later, pregnant, drunk and on the street, she killed a boy with an Ouzo bottle, went to jail.

She is Bina who led me down the paths at Mutawintji, her hands like birds against the bluest sky as she sang up the thousand ghosts of festivals held in the hot dark Bynguano Hills. A silent showground, an amphitheatre, still but for the waves and waves of echoes struck up on the walls in hand prints. Later, we slumped together on broken steps, drinking beer, heads down over our dusty boots, and she told me in quiet voice her worries; the violence that went along with hitching a ride to town, her infant son, walking many ways, and her heaviest burden, the mantle of the place.

She is Yinpanja, free and whole, stolen as a child and making her way through homes and nuns to love and sons, and chairs in the highest places where awed men wait for the sound of her voice, and note down the crimson in the things that she says.

She is a sudden dream, bright black eyes cutting through the city lights, waving, her body extended from the car, laughing, long hair a flag of ancience resounding in the salty air. Bring the choir, sweep the streets. The Queen in the south, she rides, she lives, she guides and broods. Lay down your slurs and guns and listen.

(Ngan giyara?	school? Werden	diya nura. Will I	εμπιστευτώ; Will	някога се върна
I miei figli	sie meine	fit in here? 私が	I see my mother	у дома сега?
saranno felici?	Sprache	今まで家に行く	again? Ngaya	Murray murray
Siapakah yang	sprechen?	か? Sarà mio	Buruberongl. 發	nara. Ma vie ne
akan menjaga	Вони будуть	fratello mai	生了什麼事我的	sera jamais
suami saya? Diya	говорити на	uscire di	兒子? हम कहाँ	heureux? Beidh
ngalaium nura	моему мовою?	prigione? ¿Dónde	रह जाएगा? Waar	mé a dhéanamh
warra warra.	Ngalaium	está mi hija? Is		go leor airgid?
Eu estou seguro	bembul. Why do	my family safe?	gaat mijn	Durubin Ngayri
aquí? Που	I feel so out of	Wellamabami?	kinderen naar	mulbu. Mgyina ni
μπορώ να σε	place? Как може	Ngan giyara?	school? Werden	diya nura. Will I
εμπιστευτώ; Will	някога се върна	I miei figli	sie meine	fit in here? 私が
I see my mother	у дома сега?	saranno felici?	Sprache	今まで家に行く
again? Ngaya	Murray murray	Siapakah yang	sprechen?	か? Sarà mio
Buruberongl. 發	nara. Ma vie ne	akan menjaga	Вони будуть	fratello mai
生了什麼事我的	sera jamais	suami saya? Diya	говорити на	uscire di
兒子? हम कहाँ	heureux? Beidh	ngalaium nura	моему мовою?	prigione? ¿Dónde
रह जाएगा? Waar	mé a dhéanamh	warra warra.	Ngalaium	está mi hija? Is
go leor airgid?		Eu estou seguro	bembul. Why do	my family safe?
gaat mijn	Durubin Ngayri	aquí? Που	I feel so out of	Wellamabami?
kinderen naar	mulbu. Mgyina ni	μπορώ να σε	place? Как може	Ngan giyara? ⁵⁾

⁵ Translated into English, from Dharug and other languages: "Who are you people? Will my children be happy? Who will look after

my husband? This is our place. Am I safe here? Who can I trust? Will I see my mother again? Our country. What happened to my son? Where will we live? Where

will my children go to school? Will they speak my language? Do I have to learn English? Why do I feel so out of place? All around here. How can I ever go back home now? The

river and beyond those ridges. Will my life ever be happy? Will I be able to make enough money? We look after these places. Will I be hungry? Will I ever go home? Will my

brother get out of jail? Where is my daughter? Where are you from? Who are you people?

And on the booming plain, where red gibber cuts vast rims, time hums. Out there where night is a stab, the sound of digging eats into the breadth of things. It drowns down the rhythms of the pasts and eats futures. It sounds a clanging change that clutters up the place but yields nothing. It nets in the old horizons, fills up its own vast holes with sand, then turns the hourglass. If it says anything, it says we have not changed. Morning comes with melting warmth, turns bronze the bones of men ground down to white wide flats in endless sapping afternoons.

Out there, with thirst and stones and pricks and stings, death, beaten hard and anchored low by plodding, sets down the vast sack of hope it schleps so pilgrims newly dead and dogging its steps, a hundred now, a thousand, with their vapid pleas, "not yet, not yet," "I was good," "I was redeemed", "but I can pay you!" can be tempted down to sleep. Death holds their eyes with long-nailed shadows that stretch out to the dusk of all things and pours forth mirages, fills their minds with clouds and angles, choirs and bearded saints, dead parents, lovers, new lives, lost children found, virgins, mansions, island scenes, harps, blue skies, billowing robes, white sails against the rose of a sunset sky, so believers sigh "Father," and, reconciled, unhand their fierce grip for a moment and death lays them down, lines them up, black matches in the sand to be warmed and pressed into glistening coal that, deep and dark, will flash with the light of bright parrots and the iridescent glint of beetles, and flicker with all forms of yesterday in tomorrow's shimmering haze.

Lana Bella

THE LEAVING GIRL

nature not thoughts that stir her,
most times conscious, sometimes defiant,
it is strange to think of language,
space and time as threefold immersions of who she is
underneath her curiosity:
the quiet hours teeming on the changing seasons,
the waterlogged hyphens and half-way question marks,
the discharge of music through her fingertips
is a scattered shot of shavings
flapping wings and flying away--

She used to believe she could climb up straight
over the spine of her hiding place,
where thoughts flare in rings of dim violets,
and lullabies kneed the marsh of her sinews into sleep,
but instead,
when her brain begins to fret,
she creeps around the curves and sere troughs,
her hands move with hunched fingers
clutching the wisps of decades gone,
her feet:
fixed in carbon and clay,
lurch forward like a beetle on its graphite trail,
tracking veins of sediments as coarse-grained and indelicate
as a girl's leaving--

EYEPiece

the last of winter, idling its white
and charcoal at the edge of the
universe, there, she stands alone,
sensing abstract things weigh in
concrete, like a Monarch butterfly
bereft of wings--

maybe she has been wrong, but is
it possible that her ego is a ghost?
humming verses of perceiving, she
imagines her dual selves lay atop
one another, the outer half is the
eyepiece for its focal twin--

now she touches curiously the fragile
skin of her mouth, chasing the air
into a darker plane where calm pools
of speech stir edgewise, here, she
knows her voice has already slipped
away like lost songs of a nightingale--

VITAE

a black poem fell through the sky
to a white landscape,
hyphens then colons slid from cleft formation,
and question marks sprang into every pore
on the grim snow,

you touched fingers to the cold disarray,
tugging free the apostrophe keys
that were pinned
between the strong arm of the wind
and raw pine roots,

chafing of skin on its powdery track,
the curious teeth of the air
flicked dispersed shapes of onyx-skin upside down
until all their ink drained out,
while the time-clock ticked ticking--

I REMEMBER REMEMBERING

I remember remembering, I remember
the way you croon and moon-dance
beneath the street lamp, I remember
the quick track mark of your voice as
each syllable loses its run and gives in
to the freeze of a snowy day, and I too
remember how my pockets are emptied
through of air and light and inertia,
along with the ghosts of Mr. Good Bar
and Camel cigarettes, now the twill
bottom shrugs itself back into the blank
hole, in line to the haste of shadows,
splaying the remembrance wide as
crevasse--

these are the moments I live for, I guess

we all need to be remembered for how
long we can monopolize the light before
our shape and form go grim and gray
between the pleats of dark--

VICHYSOISE

you'll forget the dorsal fins of leaves,
but remember pale strands of sunrise
tearing through a bead of dew which
poises just so at the turn of her lips,

where the light flows serenely about
her like a fish glides edgewise in the
mellow pond, your black mouth gives
flight to garbled songs, seeking water
for thirst,

as you enter a sanctuary landscape
of milk and honey, your tongue sips
vichyssoise from her cupped hands,
tasting the emergence of a question
mark at the dip of her flesh,

so you tilt your head, working loose
the tiny grains caught between your
teeth, with small effort you gently fan
away a mime's melodies, your lips on
a curve, and it's because of her--

Moulton, Samuel

Uncertainty

I was once in an affair
With a despondent physicist
Who specialized in motion study
So she told me calm and coldly

*You should lose yourself much less here
Take your next orgasm as
A cliff, rather than horizon—
To be measured, not predicted*

And so I climb with fingertips
Crystalized in rotten hazel
Turpentine on my eyelashes
Pine tar smeared across my chest

Bits of sour bark and algae
Dripping from my bloated tongue
I advanced where darkness broods
To stand nude on a precipice

And shout down for affirmation
Behold the sky has fallen twice

September 27, 2015

To taut one's sight across the sky
And speak in smooth and vibrant psalms
One spits up at the twisted moon
To make of her a sinking thing
One quiets not the street light screech
Nor sugarcoats nocturnal musk
To disregard the lunar weight
And dodge her dry and jealous eyes
One cleans the mouths off hands to breathe
And lets her sleep incessantly
Now conducting warmth and insects
Swarming in invented silence
Toward the constellation points
To taut one's sight across the sky

Feathers

Last night I ejaculated
On an ugly woman's

Victorian pillow
Fuck you feathers

Simon Seamount

Epicurean Paradox on the Problem of Evil
Excerpt from Garden of Epikouros
Hermead Epic of Philosophers
Surazeus

Returning home after long summer tour
to visit poor families on Samos Island
and aid his mother as she applies potions
to heal wounds and disease with panaceas,
Epikouros sits quiet, weighed by thoughts
about suffering and pain, while his whole clan
attends Toneia, festival of chastity,
to celebrate birth of great mother Hera
under Lygos tree, where pretty nymphs dance
and chant hymns around fires under bright stars.
"What strange sorrow drips heavy from my heart
that aches at bleak misery and despair
how poor people in small villages suffer,
bodies wracked by disease, or festering sore
from wounds achieved in battles fought for glory.
I admire my mother, sweet gentle soul
braving wild animals and rugged lands
through trackless woods, shrouded in dreadful gloom,
so she can bring medicine to poor folks.
Eager to heal wounded bodies and minds,
and ease wracking pain that tears at their souls,
she brings soothing peace so they again feel
pleasure from engaging in simple joys,
eating, dancing, singing, and watching stars
twinkle bright before death devours our souls.
How often my mother, while tending souls
suffering pain of sickness or wounds, asserts
creator Zeus is powerful and good,
omnibenevolent and omnipotent,
great all-powerful god able to perform
any deed no man could ever accomplish,
and perfect good god who cares for mankind,
watching over humans with generous hands.
My mind roils from turmoil of paradox
since I contemplate riddle about Zeus,
how this great all-powerful god allows
humans to suffer, as if he delights
in watching them writhe from terrible pain.
If God she worships is loving and good
why does he allow sharp suffering and death?

Either Zeus wants to abolish all evil,
but cannot accomplish this magic task,
or he can abolish evil from Gaia,
waving his hand in casual nonchalance
to hurl lightning bolts that strike evil men,
but chooses not to protect us from harm,
instead minding his own blissful affairs.
If Zeus does want to abolish all evil,
but cannot, then he must be impotent.
If Zeus can abolish evil from Gaia,
but chooses not to, then he must be wicked.
If Zeus can and wants to abolish evil,
why do evil, disease, murder, and hate
stalk humans with suffering, pain, and death?
If Zeus cannot nor wants to abolish evil,
then why do priests call him immortal Theos,
most powerful spirit who created life?
Confusing paradox of this conundrum
batters my mind with endless dissonance,
snapping at my heels like wolf chasing sheep,
if I accept definition of Zeus
that describes him most powerful and good.
However, I never see real results
of his magic transforming miracles
heal sick people or bring dead back from life,
though priests wail on their knees, pleading in prayer,
and begging loud for divine intervention,
to bestow blessings on our rotting corpses.
No matter how much I pray for their lives,
requesting Zeus save them from painful death
so often their painful suffering continues,
then animating soul deserts foul flesh
and leaves warm bodies stiff and cold as dirt.
Healing I see results from vibrant herbs
and brisk potions my wise mother concocts,
for only when she fills their flesh with liquid
and spreads potions over their wounds and sores
do I see change in state of health occur,
so plants made of atoms people ingest
provide physical substance in solid form
our bodies use to battle foul disease
and close wounds, thus our bodies made of atoms
require rich plants made from atoms to heal.
No god can heal men with magical puffs,
for witches heal men with substantial herbs.
I suspect all-powerful all-good god
never existed except in dreams of men
who elevated some great noble man

who lived long ago and performed good deeds
to represent highest ideal of action
as bright example to guide how we behave.
Zeus, who once was normal flesh man like me,
plays role model through ethics of his deeds
to present perfect man we emulate,
like ideal man clever Platon described,
noble guardian reigning in high Olympos
to keep watch over men, and guide their lives.
Perhaps some powerful benevolent god
does exist in peaceful bliss among stars,
who created vast Kosmos where we dream,
but he knows little about our small lives,
caring nothing for such small fragile souls,
providing no love to ease suffering pain.
Thus we have no reason to fear his wrath
as punishment for breaking divine rules,
rules I think men create to suppress men
by forcing them to obey strict demands
that benefit their good at our expense,
strange rules they invent to control our minds.
I see people like my mother work hard,
performing noble deeds to heal sick souls,
tending wounds, and easing terrible pain
with potions she brews from natural plants,
as if she herself were goddess on Gaia,
gentle caring woman who plays grand role
of powerful good god who cares for people.
If good god exists, then spirit of love
motivates heart of my mother to heal,
and though strange superstitions veil her mind,
her tireless work to ease pain I respect.
My healing mother gained apotheosis
when Hermes influenced her soul with love."

This passage is an excerpt from the epic poem Hermead, or Science of Hermes, which is a series of biographical narrative poems about the lives and ideas of philosophers and scientists. This passage from the longer poem on the life of Epikouros contains a versified version of his paradox on the problem of evil.

Post Scriptum

David Flynn

Memory

Love is not love that does not remember.
Can you take love for a vine,
a slender, brittle cord that maintains us both?
Better is the love we have, the tree
that lives a hundred years.

Women in stores tell you how beautiful you are.
In a room, a painting of chaotic things, you
are the joy, the moving center that makes
the chaos one. You glow. You coalesce

all in the room, like a planet draws objects to it.
Gravity is love, and you draw me to you. I can't resist.

A tree, a planet: you are a 27-year-old woman
with long red hair that tumbles, blue eyes that change
from dark to light, red lips, and the whitest, most porcelain
of skin. My hand touches your shoulder

and stirs milk. You haunt old boyfriends, a physical ghost, and
you haunt me. In the dark of the bedroom, you are supernatural.

I remember you even when we are standing side by side,
holding hands, smiling, looking into each other's eyes
as only lovers, logic lost, control cancelled, do. Mystics say
be nothing and god will come to you. I say be nothing

and love will come. There she is. Tired from a day's work,
pouring hot water into a cup of tea, needing to be held,

to be kissed, to have her hair stroked. There she is. She looks up.
I remember. I forget. I kiss her, all I want of memory.

You left

You left, and took Certainty with you.
As you walked out the door, I saw Love in your handbag.

Whole fish tastes better than fillets

Whole fish tastes better than fillets.
The tail, the head still on, the eyes staring,
I am reminded of what food is,
life force.
We call it protein or other dodges,
but we must take the life force from one being
and take it into ourselves.
The fish fought not to die; now it is dead.
We pay the bill, with a decent tip,
and live.
Whole fish tastes better than fillets.

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