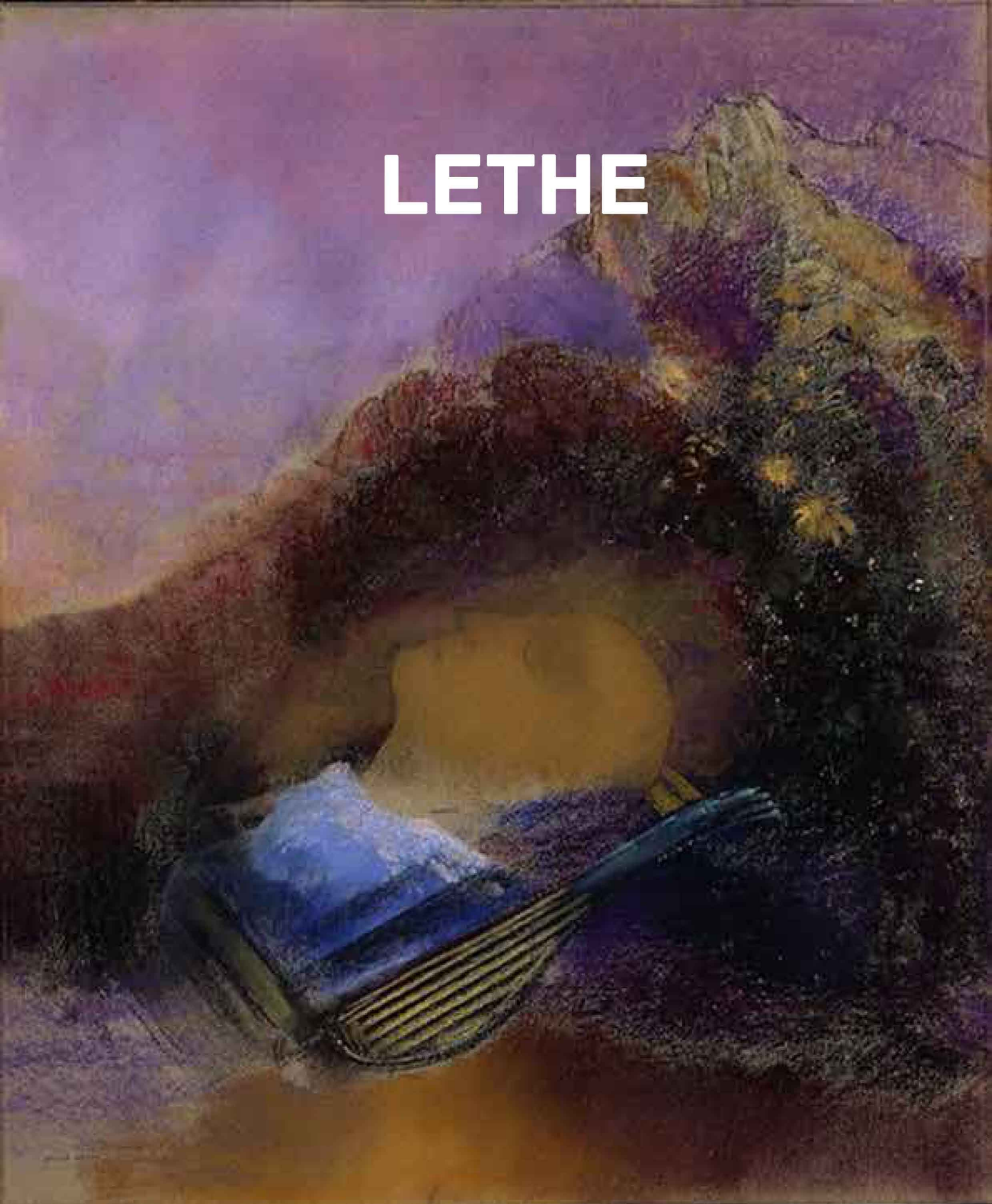


LETHE

An abstract painting featuring a central, pale, oval face-like shape. Below it, a book with a blue cover and yellow pages is open. The background is a mix of dark, textured brushstrokes in shades of purple, brown, and black, with some lighter, hazy areas at the top.

Sebastian Lopez

Lethe

Poems
by
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Lethe

*I know thou art gone to the home of thy rest—
Then why should my soul be so sad?
I know thou art gone where the weary are blest,
And the mourner looks up, and is glad;
I know thou hast drank of the Lethe that flows
In a land where they do not forget,
That sheds over memory only repose,
And takes from it only regret.*

Thomas Kibble Hervey

Oh! that dream where love consents to open its eyes once more!

Antonin Artaud

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Snivel

A sigh
Secrecy
Shame
Muteness
The music of crashing fighter planes
Atom smashers
Orchestra conductors falling to their death from thundering skies
The light cataclysms of score-reading in the mind of the musician
The enmity between notes . . .

. . . and their atonement at Lent

Deity

A face effulging with a new thought as a rose blooms . . .

X

Desire

Sex

Light rain

Silos

Flowers descending and ascending tiny steps of light in a swaying garden

Paradise

Voices

Angels

Glass stilettos

The pinnacle of intensity

The omphalos of greatness

The sky wakes up sweating having
been wrapped in woolen clouds
through the night.
It glistens with heat and there is a
ping that quickly turns to a
twangy and sinister zzzring!
A covenless witch is watching my
thoughts with unknown motives.

This pulsating, orange sky begins
to fade into something even more sinister
and nightmarish.
Is it exile? Damnation?
I push away the woman's violet arms
that reluctantly pull me into the
possible atrocity, as if she has been
forced to do so against her will.

I think I awaken, but really, I still dream.
I now appear instead in a room with
my placid and clement cousin's grand
body and presence.
In the world I never see him, and
his destiny, like mine, is enigmatic;
it is hidden in the encrypted thoughts
of my dreams that wash over a
real-life conversation we once had on a bench.
Or maybe, instead, that episode's image
pours over the dreams.
Twin worlds.

We sit again, this time in a darkened room,
and I try to communicate my existential
fear in sound bites that might burrow
inside of him.
I am not sure if I succeed.
Then he pulls out several envelopes
which he says are love letters, long
reproaches to him from our
female cousin.
I know in real life that there is no
incestuous union, but in the dream

it hurts that I am not a part of this
relationship.

And I remember how once when
I, a pre-adolescent, felt offended
by another boy who would not
share a secret with me.

I finally awaken and see my shoes,
my ragged clothes,
scattered all around the room.
I can still feel the witch, the skies,
and the tiny brandings of exclusion.
The other more harmonious aspects of the
dreams, including my cousin,
recede into obscurity.
But I must remember them . . .

In all of this leftover rubble I must
rediscover life's precise beneficence . . .

The Desert

“The desert knows us,”
the man thinks for an instant
beside his companion.
Swept by the wind,
the desert looks like it is
made of glass and soft fires . . .
A heart pulses on a branch . . .
The worlds of words fall to
the dunes and vanish before
reaching them.
Vocal chords emit tufts of lunacy like an Apostle’s
children, afraid of nothing, yet never straying far.

Like kids the men are “owning”
this world they cannot see.
They cannot behave. Only just.
Their dream-minds are beginning to
uncrumple and hatch muted fire . . .

The camels and their unnerved,
laconic eyes mirror a reservoir . . .
They are a larger consciousness;
apprised of the sand and fire in the sky.

The invisible King is slowly teaching
one of the men that the genius innocent’s
glory is to dry under the sun, the soul
left as a beauteous carcass in the air.

And whether you be a flight commander
or a poet, or a knave made of thunder
glimmering in the meadow — neither bowers
nor the contrail can fill the
Desert King, the Lord of Silence . . .

Only the thumb of death can
snub out the perfidy of petals
who had imagined their tones
apprised the silence of its contours . . .
They are not even silent
steps in a garden.
Not even the left-on
hose, trickling . . .

Death will make pathos into the
soft pages of incantation . . .

But, for now, we must ride . . .

Forsaken tides catch up with us;
they meet us in this place
where time gets gently eroded by
big eternity; where seconds and insects
are the same, and girls
like roses fall into the palms . . .

The one-toned sand is a present to the mind
forgotten itself by the world's clutter.
The clutter then covers the epic softness
of the desert in a subtle misplacement inside.

The other young man,
not forewarned of any of this,
begins a walk over diamonds
in the brittle music of his experience,
losing himself in a highway,
in the smallness of his crimson tears,
vaguely scented of wood . . .

The King remains silent.

Leave Home

It came at quarter-life in suburbia when I,
as the caged wild man,¹ erupted into
the coolness that moves through seedy streets
and alkies lanes.
I got taught the ways further by crazies.

The day I left I heard in the American
house the low orange and black siren
sounding from deep inside the earth.
I slew the last fear and made a
break for the city.

A freak with an alien or cotton
swab-shaped head in transparent
goggles — H — became my friend;
and I made peace with
this strange young star,
caressed by
the archaic skies.
Never could find his missing
component, not even in the north snows.
The baby stars hid themselves away and
all of history boomed in the still, silken
night around the all-night cantinas. H
showed me the Devil's claw at a
bazaar on the first night we met,
when I still had a face that dripped
the innocence of a nerd's wet dream.

But I learned to walk my mind
without moving the body.
I learned to walk and be on different
levels of reality at the same time,
to meet aspiring kid
champions in the silk layers of
the summer night.
I had all the sex I wanted.
I learned in the end to speak
without moving and to leave
bodies without saying goodbye.
My words enveloped worlds,
women, prophets, meridians and
the tragic, onlooking moon.

I urinated my ego under the rocks
and through the fields, watched
by the stars.

I climbed out of my hole and smelt
the musk sky of eternity where
every day was G-d

Muse

Dreams, will you never unfold my wings?

Sagacious, exquisite thunder thinks
inside me, in my body, under my
yellow-milk blanket in the last
hours of night.

My chest and body are filled
with empires flown from
dreams' Empyrean.

Colors stream from dark worlds
and enfold before my eyes;
then they run like the marbles
of children.

The encrypted sky of the dreams
whispers, but not audibly.
Even the physical sky is singed
with the fire of the secrets
which are gifted to us, but do not
unravel themselves in either world.

Dreams, will you not let me permeate
my hands with your presents that
have my name written on them?
Will you help me to find the
fragments of a mythic woman,
and a piece of her, inside of me
like an erotic morsel wrapped in
white cloth?
Will you not let your world's
darkness bloom like the naughty
rose and then alight in the realm of dreams?

The dreams are lit, but only because
I begin to surface to the morning light . . .

I ask to stay in the soft REM sleep
where I was soaked in my rapid
dreaming in the telethons of night.

But awake . . . I wake . . . am giftless . . .

Hold a wake for my dreams . . .

Wait . . . I'm so bright I match the sun . . .

From the glory of darkness, I rise into this day,

And so to it I shall return . . .

Sin

Like a dark ray she was so sensual
that the music playing took over my role.
How this connected to the crazy man who
thought he had discovered the secret of
immortality, I cannot say,
but the link was there — perhaps
a little how thunder and sighs are
connected; or how the dream world runs
adjacently, interplaying with this one.
I celebrate my lust and love and the
glory of other worlds by writing poetry
in my dark room and burning incense for
the lurking incubi and succubi.
I am used to faster vibrations.

We are woven from intuitions,
just as the woods are talking nonsense,
and as my cousin knew beforehand that
someone would die as she saw a piece
of ash fall to the bottom of a bucket filled
with water.

It is time to stop yearning now under grey
skies; it is time not to spiral down for the
5,770th time.

It is time to forget all theory about the soul.
Remember, somebody is leading you forward.

After

God once lit up God's face.
As I was young, I prowled the streets
with only dim insight of this,
but still the night and I were pregnant
with a sacred and wild favor that I could
not articulate; only could I detect
its fire in the world.

Then I had a Laundromat sighting —
seeing in this image the sign of some
divine world; a sign that came as a triple
déjà vu...

God could leave me inebriated for ages
on my bed; so much more than drugs
enhance our perception of the universe.

I was connected in a flash to the
voice of God, versus the voice's echo
through the fall of the curtain of samsara.
Call the echo religion, maybe.
The curtain: a mere veil.

Later in the night I was thrown
back into that divine dawn.
More than fire — I saw God for the lapse
of a moment...
I felt like a ravaged woman
"O gawwd."
I saw the face in the wide and warm
countenance of a friend.
"It's just a passageway," he said.

Hexagon (venerable)

I see the feral, reptilian intensity in a
medium-small man whose words flow butane
through thin lips, though he is not alarming.

And there are frames
falling away
from his mother's
tenderly fuming expression.
Harmonies bathe
upon her face.
Though he does know it
yet, he loves this umbra of
hers.
He is witness to
the high grade
of animal strains.

The big, clumsy bear is surpassed
by aggression that is nothing more
than energy choking through a gland.
Night descends.
There is a stunned doe;
a heart waits for repair.

The big bear remembers,
immediately afterwards,
shaking off leaves, that he
can suction red berries from a
nearby bush, which will snap
into place with each pull.

Under a sad, beige sky,
the serpent raises her head,
as if asking for consonance with
the radial sun.
In her indirect seeking she must
be looking for a moment that will
leave her with the gentlest inner smile,
all of earth dwellers' kindest satisfaction . . .

Lilith

I

The white breath of dawn
washes over Lilith.

A tiara rests on her head.
Queen of time, mirror made of moon.
God sees her foot as she
walks on wooden planks.
I am her sleeping breath of a warlock
and artist shelved away in
the multi-storied house.
Beyond her Teutonic and open palm
are singed pillars of cities
on a glass tray.
My paintings and words point
toward such realms
and poles.
Since she came I can listen into
every quadrant and clime of the universe . . .

But nothing attracts like the heat of her language
which is
an expanding and closing object:
who only I can sketch, and whose
resonances — unlike with other girls — do not
flake.

I put myself into Lilith
who is made of fire.
So, my words multiply,
but are consumed, failing to render her.

II

Lilith fills my grievance with words;
they are lighter than the sonatas and nocturnes
that truss my limpid mood.
For long I have felt I am condemned
In the hereafter to separation from Love.
This life being a prelude of that end.

Her matinal warmth is the evidence
against my curse.
I had trekked for ages in the infra realm.
Later, I began to see dulcet worlds in a crib,
a wreath, a swim, an undertaker, and the
storms of Arabia or Antarctica.
I wrote of these in poems.
But a cure was still requisite and this
prospective “cure” became a blue sound
that never descended to the body.
I still feared an eternal damnation —
written across the world — a destiny decided
for an irrational reason by a sinister deity.
If there is an antidote, it is Lilith.
She is my faith, my hope, my glow.

She materializes as an awesome and
calm flame.
Existence exhales.

Patterns of numbers in clocks
and signs are still the signals of ruination.
And she helps me to open them like
encrusted wounds to find the goo of vortexes.
We look at these, and she takes me to the
place where the great void sings with silliness
and flows as dreams, sleeping lined with a
knowledge impossible to disentangle.
So, no answer can really speak back,
but even so she is my headlight
in this journey through darkness.

III

Since I met Lilith, night is more laced
with silence; brushed with camphor and
filled with sentience.

Sleep is more effortless even though
I still am apart from the world.
I cannot fully be with people or relate to them —
trapped in my subtle and artistic vision.
I can see their auras, but not their emotions.
They belong to a world where I am not so
welcome; where my points of view are irrelevant.
My consolation is a draught of Lilith’s mulled breath.

And Her eyes are mine too; she aids me to see
the little more I am able to.
This seraph's energy becomes me,
so now I can begin to trace the people's realities.
This counts more than being one of them,
because I need only be seen by she who is God.

IV

And, yet, Lilith was ever separated from me
by a lake of awe and difference.
She was a woman walking barefoot in a
field, the expanse of three dawns,
who I tried to recall;
whereas I was a man without a soul
walking hypnotized in a peopled city
to a brittle melody no one could hear,
including him. Strange climes with
blue dimensions they could not see
above their heads;
the ethereal — no different from
nature, benign and dark.

But I was not always a dispirited peon.
I was also fire looking for
a new world.

She was bloodletting, nonchalantly;
softly touring through my existence . . .
She let a bead of her place fall into my
system and it swirled with the cutting, cold
stars; it swirled with the destiny
I numbered in clocks and digital displays.
She spoke of a nameless sun that at first
from envy I disdained.
But my body relented to the notion of this
source that echoed my shape and
resonated with my sanguine hands
that I held still without pressing the palms.
They only wanted to cup the face of light.

She also mentioned an old, crusty writer who
recorded the trace of this sun.
His vision eventually dimmed to darkness.
She meant to revive his eyes, but he passed on.

Her sunset breath and memory lingered in
gelid oceans and fanned a little extra
the flame of my once failed soul.
My head spun to the abstract song of this
faraway country that was her energy.
I christened the ship of her glorious body.
The wave crests of her aura became the ambrosia
I thanked as the morning dew.
She is a single notion whose strands, it seems,
I can never hope to splice . . .

V

I remember her in the cities dead
with melancholy and
in rotten leaves and
in mediocre restaurants.
I waited for thirsty eons to meet her.
She is a sapient specimen of the mythic
sea that closes like a curtain over God.
A teardrop fragmenting into dervish eyes
and universes.
She is also brazen, incarnate.
No hollow butterfly.
Yet she shines for me weightless . . .

An Obscene Night with God

Lunatics drinking fluorescent green energy in the manic
night were painted across your American T-shirt.
The evening's violet-indigo tidal waves of softness belted across
our brows — blonde and black respectively.
They belted across our supernal and supercilious
bodies woven from a spider's ludicrousness.
The moon bent down at our boy knees in
loving inclination.
We were above the sacred.
We almost didn't know.
We knew without knowing.
We were but little, yet vaster and vatic.
We shook the night's silk-gloved hand.
We had finished third place in the human race,
with all that is disrespectfully named as nature by everyone.

We were pre-adolescent fervor.
There were and are no favors for one
another and no salvation, only a salving grace
we never questioned or picked up with ladle.
My pilot vest was of that evening.
Now Incan ink spills the dangling ice cream
letters of that vespertine ecstasy.
My chest and cheekbones and claw-smooth²
shoulders were a soft resting place in the mountains;
and your lit demigod boy-face and sapphire eyes
were the evidence of supernature's fuel which whisked us
along a deity's blade edge.

Your face effulged in a dream a spearmint,
obscene ecstasy through boyish
toy-button features — surreptitiously human.
You were the candied ken, the candle.
I was the lost whisper, the lost dipper,
the soft, misguided stairway in a slit iris . . .

Bodies

Beauty melts off angular,
aged gents like finely carved chairs.
These folk are like antlers ablaze and
melting with old age's graceful playfulness.
They drip candied mist and spice into the ether
which exists only in our dreams.

Chiseled young men and women with
six packs are less beautiful in the way
they occupy space arrogantly.

But I watch girls like fire stars dance
barefoot over sand.
It's the way they angle their feet against
the mounds that throws out musicalities,
sweet, digging ardent gullies in my skin.
My tendons and my long muscles
pray to the slight movements of their arms,
ankles and shoulder lines that dip in distraught
honeyed light and surf the world of the word
feminine.

My face longs for this sticky world like
dew falls and fallen heroes project in astral
dreams to the beckoning sun.
Swimming in spirits, their feet are among
the most musical and lustrous in all of creation's
spice boxes.
Summer.
End.
Beginning.
Trouble cease.
Birth me forever into your fervor.

Could it be we are even less than something?

Two Hours Sipping Wine with Two Girls

A crystal ship³ filled
with gills sent out musical sounds.
I love my love light like the sweet white
wine we serenely swam in that sent shivers to my skin.
Two white girls outwardly calm
but maybe invisibly writhing
Or, maybe, they were lightly disturbed,
waiting with the anorexia of insecurity.
Not yielding.
Neither coming on.
Or maybe they were even-souled.
My imagination played with
filaments of ideas.
The roulette whirled,
as I watched.
Let nothing happen . . .

I was elected for a life of little achievement,
mostly the wheeze of years whizzing through me.
My victories are symbols,
not incarnations.
They are incantations
with fire scraped off life's freeway . . .
The blade of poetry marks these sacreds
upon the wild tree of the soul.

So let the girls play . . . Nothing is like the
play of freed girls; not free verse nor
sempiternal genius.
Let the sound-symbol of something
that could have happened but never did —
occur outside as nectar-thunder falling
on the tarmac . . .

Luminous tan legs, mountains of opalescent fun,
they sat sprawled on the couch,
as did I, errant Eros: always out-to-lunch.
I smashed my soft head against their shore
like a nihilistic child nigh to heaven,
but slipped into limbo.
I swam surreptitiously like a heroic man under
their wave.

These women knew where Eros laughs and
where he drags a muddy stick on the ground,
reluctant to do the unnecessary . . .

Outside it began to rain.
The rain is strain of light and glory —
irrespective of girls.
And the sensuous ecstasy in my soul
is silver prayer . . .

Now our pinions were unfolded.
The breath of a thought bumped into
a barrier and became a translucent
color spreading above us.
Now we breathed by the
blaze of symbols and signs;
where even the temperature was signal,
and every superfluous word wrinkled the air
by us as a warning — while its sense was still
inflating in the body.

But this still merry-go-round went nowhere . . .
There was an eye in the storm of silence
where I sat cross-legged.
They looked around them calmly like
lionesses with hardly any evidence of
anticipation or error in thought; only the
tiniest quivering or brittle teardrop formed
on one of their pupils that filled the room
with confoundment.
Eros was lost; the party
was not here; life was sad once
more, and uncertain.
Or maybe some unfinished homework
from school days plagued them, dribbling its
caustic breath on their pink hearts.

They knew as they always know: girls.
The thought of anything else happening
circled in a poem within a pond with no recourse, neutral.
They were they and I was I.
Yet the possibility of truth was splayed all
across the marble and hairy air.
Our glasses clinked once more,
but suggestions were absent because
they were vulgar and

displaced the sweet green grape air waves;
so, they went away and fetched something else further away.

Our union was written with the
little stars of the wine.
The stars exuded in the light — the soft turmoil
of the little love
between me and two of my roses. . .

Easy

We never would have to brace ourselves
in the midst of an orgasm or when we
were overwhelmed by a perfect girl like
a sun with its radiation of music.

“We don’t want you to feel so bad.”

Instead, we walk straight through the
orgasm’s palatial hive drizzling silver
tears on the outside, like the orgasm was
just a museum or play center.

“We just want you to be yourself.”

“Be at ease.”

I hear winds.

I hear the winds of the capacious wombs
of the tribal-descended women
who gaze at us.

These are the ones I wish to pour their
milk over the gruel of my hurt, and hum
a lullaby that is their sweetness inside
threading through the stars.

After the holy orgasm, we transfer to the
mild green parks where Lorca walks softly,
astounded, looking for his leg brace and
pitying the baby moon’s tears.

His homework is this world.

He is advancing into his memory,
into the gulf of childhood.

This is not the world we know,
not the one of passersby.

There is no crashing and there are no
winds and suns that upset our ease.

We are neither in the living or dying.

We ebb and flow with currents
that cannot lacerate.

Poets like Lorca get slayed by the blade
of everything light and profound;
sparrows attest to this, sparking
the unsullied stadium dreams . . .

A Woman and a Ghost Called the Sun

Her calves feel like silk in the crystalline
summer air, numb and faint with desire, paralyzed.

The invisible being traces down her leg softly
and runs along the inside of her smooth foot;
he traces with gentle stroke the heel and
curvature.

It seems to her that little violet blossoms
have been demolished into nubile perfume.
For some this move is the echo of the
charade of a summer night;
that evening is etching itself again in
a flashback in this chancellery of
consummation; the vespertine ecstasy —
flirting through nice sandals on grass or
flip-flops — is consecrated in this pagan
heaven, dimly lit on these white satin sheets.

The ghost kisses the foot once and holds
its arch against his neck.
They would stay in this position indefinitely
if the flame of the caress lasted as long as the desire . . .

He then raises her foot, dominant,
pressing her toes back.

She feels seas of erupting bubbles inside her foot
as he kisses the sole below the toes . . .
Stars of cool champagne draw flushings
of small rivers.

Her foot is this nether cape or suggestive instrument.

Kisses pour on her arch and touch invisible buttons
connected to her soul.
Each kiss connects him to dimensions
within the soft and heavy coolness of her being;
to something murmuring and loud;
to something sweet and softly wild;
female feet are tame and wild, at the cusp.

He rubs his stubbly chin against her lush foot.

As a sun he is a trespasser with spiked boots,
marching over the earth
of the kingdom which is hers,
scorching the softness.

His soul brims in his lips rich with the brulee
of her being; and so, in successive figure eight loops of energy

She says: "Possessed of rain, you reign.
Only the tear drop of, you, the cosmic jester
can remove my clothes and never deliver them back:
not even on the high tide."

He takes possession of her body.
Tension gathers . . .
Pressing the small of her back.
Winged-insect flutters come from her language.
He bites her fleshy upper arm with wide jaw.
This is the way to bite the flesh of an Arab woman
with ethereal core . . .
Her body gradually becomes a ramshackle of jazz,
of soft, wild twitches and movements.
Riding sexual waves,
the cool water of the melody that flows
widespread and down, surely, slowly into lowlands
over sweet hells with appeasement . . .

Moans tell stories, each note a symphony,
fluidly sexual, whimsical, terse moans,
and exclamations of daft surprise
and provocative feminine teasing.
Each sound is a note
in the slowly gathering symphony.
Riding a hypnotic wave . . . undulating body over bed . . .
Beyond sexual. Something other, something numinous,
infinite loop of pacific state . . .
"Release your inner rhythm,"
the warm, male ghost chants like
upbraiding choirs, like slanted rays
of the whiskered, captain sun striking
down upon earth and situation.
Graves. Tocsins.
Rawness over sped and overfed starts gripping
and pulling the atlas corners of her slowly brazen world . . .

Now the sun-ghost imperceptibly repositions so

she can feel or see other sides.
“Come soft and deep, embrace my atlas . . .
carefully unfold my pinions . . . “
Gorgeous water of touch begins to
fill the more deeply parched
earth with its yearning sound loops levitating
clouds and cliffs and youth cultures.
He waters the delta and the prairies, from whose
fissures and seams the seeds transcend to his palm above —
a sketchy vision is beheld of all the lands of this Orb.

Open world. Long legs dancing, reaching
for the skied dome. Soft and slow, luxuriant movement.
Legs bend back with pointed feet parallel to the bed.
She opens herself with the candid smile of welcome
upon lips and body — to the ghost sun with whom
she has pierced the veils and fleshed the subliminal
out of the commercial.
So naked, so soft and apparent . . .
He is almost too bright . . .

This sun-ghost has come and freed all emotions.
A few emotions are still in a court trial and sniveling . . .

“You love this,” he whispers like a wasp into
the trove of her hearing delighted by the candied
waterfalls of his chant.

The ghost slowly brings his work to closure,
but not before squeezing her in a few more
gyres of diaphanous joy.

He refrains from his work and flees...

Sleep descends on woman.

Dreams kiss her lobes. Her hair becomes the sea . . .

The hours advance and the remainder of the night is restful . . .

Then morning breaks eerie-beautiful through the window,
and the sun looks on from his usual place in the sky.

Ethel

Let's string the syllables freely, intangibly,
silently, for a perpetually stoned monarch
of moribund and infinitely beautiful, infinite
hopelessness; wonderless and sated, in a sated land,
under a forever starred sky...

I deplore the intricacy of the stars.
My tears efface them from the tablet of night . . .

I pray for the air to be love.
And then, to my gladness,
sultry women,
goddesses and cold beauties,
comfort my emergency,
suffuse me with their pity,
with a mother's priceless sigh.
Wash the glass casing of my heart
with the love of words, and bleed dark,
purple wine over my child body.

Then I resurrect, still-souled and titillated
by the universe's enigmas.
I am emboldened for cosmic thrill;
inebriated, a reality captivates me with
its abstract, violet-colored scent.

I become one of the wall-eyed, lost men who
eternally search for their way in the city's maze.
Cocaine thieves beyond either fear or hope.
Free to rove and live illegally,
denizens of a realm once or twice
removed from the ordinary world where
consequences of actions mean you are
frail, systematized by gravity.

I do not last long in the maze . . .

It spits me out and I return, alas, to regular life.

I am programmed differently than
I had anticipated.
I am tied up with the Dream and
I am hungry to record a lazy god's

footprints

forever.

But I am also bursting at the seams of

my subtle body. I want to ride

with the wall-eyed men.

A raw child, I want poetry's

direct action

I want to fall lawless into the night, where the city

intersects with the underworld —

adumbration of heaven.

I will not have so many

experiences such as these

in this life . . .

But all shall be reconciled and forgotten if

I can dine with Rimbaud in paradise

in the end . . .

Lift the brimming cup to my lips . . .

And receive the immortal gift . . .

No more words will have to spill.

All music and letters will flow

redundantly from here forward . . .

because I will have attained

the empyrean

of realities . . .

God at a BBQ

I once saw a picture in a religion's community magazine
of a strange and very fat man.

seeing you . . . and me . . .

To him, I believe, we must be as does trapped in green fields
under the black sky's view.

I saw in this being such a benign witness to us all.
Like heaven's rain . . .

His eyes, partially hidden by rolls of flesh,
conspicuous yet easy to miss . . .

I saw him looking at our souls without a cause . . .

He effused the tenderly feminine and wise . . .

Now, the world swarms with angel wings soaked in blood
and empty-flask voices that spill only words . . .
Faith-seeking mothers pray for the sky and a remedy . . .

Yet at times I am reminded of that face that spoke of youth,
of good,
of beauty in hedonism . . .

He was unworried about us, in spite of endless love.

When I look into his dark, lost eyes so close
and his bulging face I see inexplicable
ships, and rescues, and falling stars.
I see the tears of mythic creatures

His face portrays the faraway, so nearby . . .
. . . just around the corner, I swear!

I can hear a nymph's laughter prompted by the fall of her sweeping brown hair
during her swing ride.
Her parent says: "Now pack up, because we're leaving." "Get in the car."
And then on through tunnels of nocturnal fear and dark.

Sleep covers all . . .

World without praise — upbraided in dreams....

Would you look into God?

The man was flipping greasy burgers and hot dogs under the English cloudy sky.
My father exclaimed at the picture, hurtfully: “What an interesting face!!”

Late one night, lying in bed awake years later, I was shocked by his God-likeness.
God staring back at me through a kind of big, motherly man . . .

Speechless

I could feel a sound all around
rumbling
like a greasy motor shooting streaming stars.
Sex's beauty flowed in the air like the hair
of a girl you love too much.
An old drunk spoke like he was the voice
of ancient Greece and Rome booming in the night.
In the day, music gleamed from my friend's
car stereo: violet and blue, sweet effulgences
of rave-type melodies.

Sirens.

I made love to a girlfriend who never
existed and who told me to go slow.

When I ambled the ancient streets,
I saw the white disk of the sun with
the small cry of day faltering before
unspeakable eternity.

My exposed arms turned honey-gold —
the fierce warning to rogue and wild
men passing by in trucks.

I hung out with cool killers for a time;
they handed me guns like they were a
license to even cooler and lower freedom,
but I declined.⁴

I seldom thought of my mother or siblings;
they remained wrapped within another dimension.
I threw a legendary white party that I
barely attended.
I serenaded a big female butt like the
obesity of nature flowing in sweet and
forbidden strains of music.

My soul spoke through the radio
that I had nothing to lose —
so I better go for this new life.
Old God said that some females
of the world across a span of walks

of life were my dear hook-ups.
With my friend I waited under the
benign sun for the rumored embrace
of death.

The sun was white-gold.
The streets' dust was sweet and soporific.
I was probably in some kind of fighter jet
crashing softly onto the pavement.

Pyramidal

That year ethereal and obscure threads
of light washed into my mind.
Tiny frequencies, however potentially global
and sky-wide, interfered with my sleep,
even as I walked, virile and leaden,
touched by the vernal explosion of the
city that May.

Still, my heart rusted without its
natural streaming of soft energy;
tenderness flew out the window.
Love was only ever cosmic,
but not so focused and brimming . . .

Also, the base of consciousness followed me
around as a libidinous and squat entity
by my side.
None was aware of this imp.
Even I forgot about it often.
Sometimes I noticed the blood-red
banquettes of the chain steak restaurant
in the metropolis.
They reminded me of the base,
but not of the imp, who eventually
faded into obscurity.

My sexual drive and soul and other selves
were disconnected from each other,
so that in such an imperceptibly
discomposed state I could only render
the lightest poetry.

My subtle body was aghast and taken
aback by an adjacent world that blasted
and glared with its inaudible thunder.

So was I that I could not see the lines
in a girl's hands or feel her scent
pleading for me to return from the
shore of perfidy and obsolescence,
and instead sit and float on this boat
where an autumn sky cried
little joy for our reality with a ripple of its

liquid. But I only wanted to chew meat like
a brute, at a restaurant, in front of her as
she looked on.

I grew different during that time,
at times demure. My subtle energy
attenuated, when it wasn't lighting up the
daytime sky.

Outside of me, sex seemed naughty like the
pink walls of the girls' floor of the college dorm.
But I didn't care to listen in on
their splendid orgasms.
My higher self was
repulsed by the dorm's sleaze.

Nameless spiritual things were guiding
me forward.
In the end they annihilated themselves
in the narrowing channel of my mind,
or got lost in my overpopulated dreams.
That year I almost held the astral dust of these
very dreams in my palm under the moonlight
of my prison-like room.

But the strangest detail of that time,
I think, were the murderous screams of hate-filled
men that only I could hear at night
as I softly strove to doze off in my dorm room.

Vincent

Poems inspired by Vincent Van Gogh and his artwork

I

Suds almost slide down celestial bodies in the
heaven of Starry Night. I hear the echo
through them of ancient and glorious epochs.
Now is a different age. The sun is new, diaphanous,
its rays streaking through our modern era
like scepters.

The thoughts of revolt and despair throb within the boy's
torso inside the airplane. The mother points out the
sun-threads to him. But he is slowly feeling the
skeleton of his curse, and the drip of semantics
smoldering on her lips. A docile shadow of the
fuselage covers the burn in his small heart.

The sun is radiant and beautiful through the eons
of suffering — from bygone days to this private era,
where bodies are transported across conveyors in airports.
Sobs are suffocated or expire when glazed dreams carry
humans in their gelid arms through the
signposts of their trajectories . . .

II

There is some greater trajectory within eternity.
We dream about ourselves, about finding the yellow
brick path back to the wreath of forever union . . .
What can our eyes see in all of this existence?
What can we see of us?

Our souls, minds and hearts are
dead to the vision of the greatest.
None can see us.
And what is the Spirit?
Can anyone hear the susurrus of the cosmos?
I walk through a labyrinth littered with faces'
and limbs' melted parts; broken cheeks
and fingers.
How can I see persons?
Is disintegration the answer?

These pieces that flow over my
fingertips like a waterfall . . .
I have a trace of deformity or maybe
harmonies on my hands . . .

Fragments . . .

And the perfect smiles of humans
who are only faintly blemished.
I must find “we” and “I” before any of this:
wrapped in plain fabric, not in the glisten of the
sexy cream air or the hypnotic Brugmansia.
Dry it all down to the fiery origin
I want to wrap myself in
others’ burning thoughts.
I must leave this deprivation tank too —
to find the sea of crystal shapes
and pictures emerging from transience . . .

III

Ringed halos, you, Vincent, placed like a bearded
father upon the crown of everyone. You dignified
humans for a second with your pictures.

I do not share your faith, but like yours
my flesh is agitated.
I long for a kind and irreligious day when the
daze of old-fashioned and unconditioned
days will settle its lightness upon the world.
But, still, I must live in nature and the city.
I must carry the fire of muses on my
burning hands and in the cavity of my skeleton;
press the blue skies for the gush of my truth.

IV

Pyres smoke amidst the breathlessness of Sundays.
A soporific quiet mutes the soul.
The muse sleeps, so I sleep.
On Tuesday she begins
to pull my hairs — she who is the dawn steaming
on the horizon as a roused animal over the hills and
over my house made of rock.

Violet and peach rays strike the structure,
entrancing it with
myself inside.
Now I move to the threshold.
My character is a white smear of bone
on the sole of a shoe . . .
My destiny is heaven bound
and beyond; out of control.
This is that salving dawn — soft and
unheroic; like the echo of light . . .
And yet strange how it must be lighter
than even this . . .

V

Your stroke was the fuming of scarlet and
white roses that speak from origin. Their craven
tongues recapitulate the speech of the blazing fires
of creation. The roses are yours like the downcast
eyes of maidens. They say thank you for showing
us all that the world cannot recount to itself.

VI

Release us from the fairy tale of our worlds.
Desecrate the Kingdom and set the dark forest afire.
Let those few of us who care and who suffer exile
until the end lead the ceremony, as we
stand there with hands interlocking until,
in universal anger, we say goodbye to every distance
between hearts, every private fear, unrequited rant and
unspoken hex. Let us have only the torrents of light.

VII

The lights and azures of your paintings speak
of magnanimity, horror, the dripping knife of
beauty softening a nightmare into a colorful diapason.

Some of your pictures speak of all that is placid and
fragrant again after the holocausts of unreason and
vatic torment. Still, the world could not see through
your crystal eyes; eyes as big and radiant as the skies;

bigger than daughters' hearts — though darkness was
your companion and no one cared for your vistas.

VIII

There are views such as a man suffering
and tried by insanity; a tetched face on the
canvas. There is the illumination
of the night café and the starry sky.
In the first case, there is the saturated glare
of humans — popping, then chafing the
neckline, skin, and eyes, with its
whining.
In the second case there is blissful heaven,
dripping ecstasy, expanding without antagony.
Even its knife is kind . . .

What is our destiny, Vincent? Is it this heaven?
Or will this disharmony always reign?
Does the curse of this world continue?
In a tainted heaven will I live to sing
hymns, by coercion, to a Power that disagrees with
your savage grain fields swaying to their own
winds and music?

IX

You channeled distortions of every season into
depicted harmonies. Mouths go hungry.
Wrapped in the gossamer of predictability,
full mouths do not tell of the world.
Life is slowed into a slur by the earth's
perennial revolution. Mouths eat potatoes,
mouths do not speak of euphony or recount the
always sinking night-ship of our dreams,
as the world continues.
Mouths do not recount the body-crumpling
of society's disharmony; and the subtle body's
wounding with gaudy color.

Every day, soft missiles are exploding and staining
the world with pigments that are in fact
the worst kind of grayness . . .

And though it be ethereal and light, the world's
mind is stale like the day-old trace of a ghost
or an angel.

X

On a summer day I stand over fields with arms
outstretched, thinking about you. The streaks
of sunlight on my body are matched by the
darkness inside, no different from the shadow
on the frond . . .

Never released.

Later, I walk away
a wisp charmed, balancing a few dreams on the scales
of my mind; inhaling and exhaling your subtle
majesties, your air-light that plays with milky
mint greens and pastel blues . . .

How I hope your vision was clear, and rendered
faithfully the beatific night which must be more
than glint or façade. Or is the sky, I wonder,
insecure and onerous — prone to condemning like
humans, in its clandestine wars over continents?
But this will not do.

Instead, I believe that starry night's stillness
and radiance outlasts forever the tones of pain
encrypted in the soft cosmos that you revealed to us . . .

Heaven

I spent many days at a resort in sunny Spain.
It had health pretensions, and so a woman
doctor would take my blood pressure and
weigh me every morning around ten. Her
office was right outside my room. She was
utterly relaxed, with a hint of a Germanic accent.
In the laid-back Spanish style, she would say:
“You can weigh or not weigh, today.”
“It is really up to you.” She had silver and
gray hair tied back, and a broad face.

“We can always do it tomorrow.”

On the last day she began telling me about
a vacation that she and her family were taking —
in a place near Cadiz, where they would be
completely off the grid and away from civilization.
Spain is of course closer to heaven than any other
nation. For some strange reason, I seem to
remember her saying that there were whale
or dinosaur bones on the shore.

I saw her the next day at least three times.
Twice I saw her from inside the glass elevator
as I went down or up. She was standing in front
of someone and looking, at an angle, in my general
direction. She was bleary-eyed as if some
unforgettable and disturbing thought had
caught up with her. It was as if she realized
that everything she had said about that
fantasy place was a lie in the sun;
that her tongue had been betraying her
most of her life. Or maybe her preoccupation
was due to something else she had said
recently which was so, so far away from the
quivering chord of the truth. What truth?
And if heaven was in Spain, where was heaven?

The most beautiful and museum-worthy image
was when I came out of my room and an
Indo-European woman stood in front of my nurse.
The woman wore a white bathrobe drawn down
over the shoulder, as she complained to the nurse

something about her dark caramel breasts.
Then, also, the nice doctor looked to the side
with that lost look.

Obscure (realm)

I sat at night talking in my yellow room
with my sister. A peach-colored, scented candle
in a glass sat on the night table, the flame
fanning like a dancer's dress. Poems as waves
broke over me. My head garbled the tape of
thoughts, with reels spilling over, yielding no
satisfaction except the faint reminder of my
vocation. My heart hungered for some answer
to my problem with solitude — where I was separate
from my sibling, from the yellow room, and
from all the scoffing matrices of the world
keeping me at arm's length like a frosty parent.

The wicked and beautiful candle lay beyond the
instance of connection. My eyes were not
caressed by the flame. They were not lit by the
film of the fire; they only "saw," which meant they
cut out the image and lost the rest of the world.
The light now strained hysterically as if challenging
my pessimism — stating that it was in fact mine,
or even me. Or maybe, searing the air, it was
celebrating an angry victory . . .

The realm of separation persisted. And I
embarked with my sister on a conversation
about whale echolocation as a metaphor for
human disconnection. I felt the presence of
mammals, receptive to sounds. Touched by her
kin's dread, my sister's black eyes were
disturbed for a few distinct seconds as she looked
at me from their corner. When this wave passed,
I strained my eyes to see God in the obscure,
rich and pagan flame, as my body shuddered out
a ghost of cold.

She left me as my realm grew piercingly glacial.
This time I uttered complaint from inside the
narrow cavity of my body, soon relinquishing
the effort when I realized it was pointless.

Eons

elapsed.

The room stirred with the scent of
new motion as a little pyre in my stomach made a

crumpling sound as it ignited. I connected to the idea of being loved by the cosmos and its daughters. I envisioned the universe's aura smooshed and bleeding rust orange into slinking rays.

Memory alighted with its transparencies for the partial refreshing of my body and mind. A thin wave of pride returned as its symbols flexed gently within my breast.

The candle squealed. As if pulled by a string making it pointy-tall, the candle's flame indicated the sky, which whispered my name's praise or some sweet refrain in connection with it. The next whisper of my name, which was no less beautiful, seemed to darkly echo writing across a cavern by some tribe that had not survived its age. Either way, I could feel my voice again . . .

Poets and Their Eye

I

My eyeballs turn into diamonds
to receive light. I see through
them into night where they are touched
by the nocturnal emissions of sleepers.
My vision is transfigured, and a flower
becomes part Alsatian. This “dog flower”
dripping genitalia from its petals also looks
like the smooshed face of a windowlicker.⁴
This stupid youth that is its kin is trying
to find his way into the window pane.
His desire is to enter the flower’s state.
Such are the gravid images of poets, seeing the sublunary.

Again, the sperm washes the screen of
everything and unrolls a new vista.
There is a parrot-green and yellow garden;
an insult to the feebleness of a private
imagination and its inability to conjure up
such visions. Mostly only a child’s eyes
can see the shine and pandemonium of such a
star as this bright scene.

The sky is tarp or jelly bean blue, and
the leaves from this dazed distance are like
lit, burning, toy logs. With their
later-in-the-day waning they quiet the
seer’s befuddlement. The seer has crawled
into the house. She blows murmurs from her
lips that part in breaststrokes upon exiting
the mouth. They fill the room with a little less
loneliness. The sound of a superlative symphony,
that only the poet can see, bastes her brain.

The last thing the poet sees on this day is
the pulse of an alien mother’s red perfume
falling from the petals of a flower, as though these
lobes were draped high above in a sky.
The holding out hand becomes dotted.

II

The poet hears the sea's symbols — loud and cerulean blue.

He turns his attention to the flower
with his eye's heart; with his own
wilting dog flesh.

He smokes the chrysalis without lips,
and blows back a soft violet storm
that ensures a bit of cooling for the burning
patient in a hospital; the young man who,
green with pain, lies naked like a dragonfly Christ.

The next day the poet sees seas
of existence interrupted in their falling.

III

I remember the birth of poetry; the lullabies of
childhood; the soft fury of wide days and nights
casting the glistening child far into fields near ravines.
There were suns that had the mild insanity of
children's books. They were disguised as paupers
and descended to my child self with a game that I
never told anyone because it was magical like the
sun itself. No one would have believed me . . .

Now, when nestled in poetry, my dreams are
knit to the wave crests and winds. I renounce
the swans; they are not saviors. I want only
primal elements, like the water and dirt, that quiver;
they are clement and unconditioned as the day.
My pen and mind sail on such lightness that
perhaps had never sprung on the boy, or opened in
him with a quiver of his gently calculating mind.

IV

The poet's is a bison's heart and his senses are
blown open as ejaculating flowers with
piping voices. For him the city walls
are spiked. For a subtle body metal doors are

vile; physical bodies, elastic voices, bar counters
and offices, also.

The raw-flesh poet's heart drags by the ground
like pants rolled down, either with emotional
saturation or despair. He fumbles at every
corner of worldly endeavor, forsaking studies, jobs,
maintaining tenuous links with the living.

The poet observes the others who are rootless.
The homeless whistle wanly like paper bags
with the city currents, with a secretion of
delta blues flaming in the air.
The bags can never be filled; they are
like mile-long willow branches slinking in the city.
These men supervise faintly with their tall bodies
the people's indoor talk and their work that is as
spoils or festering bubbles, pure clutter.
Sometimes these homeless are one with the poets.
Together they are personal
deserts with stereos leaking sound. Deserts
whom the ordinary world does not listen to.
Return to the world of dreams.
Where else is there to go, but inside?

V

In all the world's soft miseries,
anguishes, and in all the poetry — there must be,
latent, a lullaby to restore the poet as the arboreal
flame before which the stars bow with their majesty
in loving tribute and welcome. Finally, they impale
his body as its dark blood trickles in rivers of
tender glory in the experiment of human
souls: to be tried ad infinitum.

VI

In poetry or the dullest line of words; in the
benignity of the store check-out transaction;
in the savor of hostility mollified; in brevity; in
the heaven of the profane face captured by the master
photographer or painter — must breaststroke the being
of serenity. He forevermore fashions a shelf for us

to crawl onto, as fatigued thunder, and forsake pain
for the diurnal heaven . . .

Lawrence and I

I

The film of Lawrence of Arabia is a
lysergic drop that runs in slivers down the
actor's slender back. The skin absorbs the liquid.
He is by a swimming pool in the day and sees a
star growing its yellow threads a little and then
shrinking them back inwards, in the sky.
He has flashing blue eyes and his torso is pulled
by big and sharp pincers. The freedom of the desert
is fraught with the torment of violence.
The soft cloth of the British empire is dulled horror
for him who has wings that are meant to be extended
in a great place — cleaved by the sun's luminous and wide fingers.

Let us fill the turbulent souls with kind energy, and do
something about their schisms, about the cursing
schools of life. We pray that enigmas, when
unraveled, will unveil God's panting and happy
face smiling, embarrassed, over everything
including our garlands of tears.

II

I feel like Lawrence because my affliction is palpable;
yet it is hard to capture and tame with words.
My lips falsify. Lawrence could not be apart from
the desert, although the war waged there tormented
him. I long for the sky, but the sky forebodes
blue and cosmic desolation, destruction of my body.
The void is sinisterly painted a happy color.

Where is heaven? Is the kingdom not in the
unconditioned skies? Is the sky, really, not a mare
to ride? A shawl to wear with that glory that
flows down by celestial rite?

Lawrence and I have bulldozer souls
that love freedom, designed by symmetry's
nectar, yet something is so amiss.

Did God leave us to die in the awful
hallways full of wind? The void?!

As for the others, none share my plight;
not even a tittle of my dark agitates their
soul, although a film of wariness might
perhaps be peeled from the white eye
of these human butterflies. The wariness whirs
by with the slide of their eye to the side,
as I speak of the nightmare hidden in my
life, which must also be in some way their
nightmare. They remember the soft perversion
of reality that is like the ancient wars between
holy persons. The ironically “divine” massacre.
In their mind’s eye is a carnage like unwanted
apocalypses of white horror. Such stories whisper
the symptoms of a greater disconformity with existence . . .

III

In this life, Lawrence and I cannot
contain only the peaceful
solemnity of the sky,
nor the profusions of heaven.
Yet we are enthralled by the vault.
Celestial bodies leave us poets to
sketch them on earth. We create distant
adumbrations of the orbs. I have to
leaf through these thousand-high stacks
of documents, faint copies. Maybe their
shadows can speak for us, save us, like jet planes.

On earth . . .

Speaking — I am — plenty of verses — slinging
them out my mouth like fat friars from an old-
world balcony. And my soprano voice is
sharpened by the birds. The decrepit birds
on the vines. They alone know how I feel the
plants beneath my weak hands like silk, plants
no different from the rough edges of the building’s
façade. The birds know every caress of objects is an
unending penchant in an eternal cloud of memory.
But really every touch of nerve texture, the currents
and bright thoughts of air as well as the placid

animals — is wordless, thoughtless.
It can never be an
interruption of “nothing” . . .

In the sight of every whiskered general is a
Sunday whose arms and hands stretch out
touching the rogue sun’s dentile rays.

In every teacup and wineglass is the
distillate of the comatose but sometime
hopefully ending cosmos. She pretends she
breathes — to assure all the wavers on earth,
gesticulating to their relatives on cruisers,
that their surges of feeling are justified.

After the sun disappears nothing matters but
the crumbling residues of the heart. These
chunks of fire we take to the grave of sleep;
and spurn the lapsed day in search of a better
and softer arrow sending us through the void
of creation. The leaves and skies and mountains
camouflage the void.

The only thing that really makes sense to me
in the universe is the peaceful daze of diurnal
thought where there is no enumeration, but perhaps
the cracking of sky-mind with a light bleeding
of its careless memory; neither here nor there.
There is no whining or winning movement.
There is only a head, ruptured, emitting an endless
waterfall sound.

IV

In heaven, would my mind empty itself completely?
Would it drain the anguish cutting
up my body like it was a giant ear drum?

The world is the desert. People are sand I cannot
see. I am blind to their hearts and essences like
an autistic boy. I can see only their bodies.
I cannot feel them or be with them on their level.
But then I perceive the crest and cream of
thought; the poetries of life and the sun.
I look at people as though they were

flowers and not characters. People need
poetry less than the concrete things of the world.

I should raise the call to prayer under a violet sky
in an irreligious country where my verse
awakens citizens — with the diamond of lightning —
into the softly ancestral; into the aerial and
rose-effusing girls who walk past thresholds . . .
into never; while elder men descend in a merry-go-round
through the earth's surface . . .

In temples, heads burst impatiently with grand
swellings of harmony. They raise their tongues
and auras up a notch. They mean to elect the poets
as the nation's foremost feelers.

The poet's fear is his martyrdom and is assuaged
by the glaze of his mother's words intertwined
with the sempiternal worlds like water currents.
In this country the poet's horror and separation
should be diminished somewhat by his
important role.

V

I once felt fine in the actual desert with
its monochrome freedom, but then I was
faced with my lack of a soul. Who am I?
What am I? I don't seem to go very deep
inside. Is this all? I asked. If I have no
soul, then I am godless. Could this be why I am
friendless, unable to relate to the people,
some kind of stultified youth?

I must have enough soul to feel and swash
as music inside. I must be able to stand
proud with the sandy blood of my own
vexation and estrangement encrusted on
my mouth. The overweening blood leaves
my body without laceration in its striving
for the impossible heaven of completion.
A significant part of me feels condemned
and hollow.

I look into the world while my tears sulk
behind doors slipping on the cord of
bereavement. Inspiration comes and I
am mostly ridden of despair. I play the
“Devil’s trill”⁵ on my fiddle. I forget
about banishment. The musical Devil,
with a veiny hand, shows me the gleam
of the wicked that blaspheme against
the Lord’s opposition. My friend,
the exiled angel. He teaches me to
bleed poems and concertos and listen
to the melody of their blood in the night;
to keep the infinite taste of the bloods as
a hearth for the feasts of fire and
soft gorging. The chant of the plasma
comes with its rainbow equalizer. I am
the whore of music and poems; alone and
unseen though I am. Satan is outlaw forever
as am I. Together with this little ancient man
I sing old world songs and even dance, as I
spy his silken love, the specter of horror in
his eyes and their occasional cryptic squints.

Blue Seasons

In case you had not
dunked your feelers like tentacles in the
soft blue of seasons: God is in memory.
The seasons
alternate
as the modes or moods of
Being's memory; as we salivate over
our sublunary engrossment in spreadsheets.

And yet all our emotions are sometimes
infused with an order of orison.

There is something in autumn
and the autumnal surge
of how the seasons
pass by slowly
like skies or oceans.

They leave a primeval dark, filling the
world's cracks like ink from pens,
racing past cotton tufts of snow.
It is a dark that, with the light,
captures the cosmos in its zoo cage;
so that poets might render it in their
word pictures.

I leave my house to spread the gospel
of the seasons. I share poems melting
like fire onto the hands of secretaries
captured for number work, in the crystal
days that lapse like the sun.

The next morning, in spite of the weather,
a tear bellows
on my cheek, recurring. I flee to find
the basin where I echo the name of
God and a dead child who might be
lifted in the air . . .
Like ivy, both grow on the
walls, soundless, ivyless.
How I envy kings who
embark on ships to escape tragedy
and become the feeling seasons.

How shall I flee from here?
Shall I use words to stultify the wind
and walk across its glacial path back
to my home where I disappear
forever into my tepid shelter?

To exit the world, I will turn
the plain color of my tablet's
pages.
Yet, in this unlikely face of the seasons
is the residue of the lakes, the suns, and
halos and ghosts who are absent.

My white colonial American house
is swallowed by ethereal, invisible flames.
I will invite my high-school peers.
They will flow in flight out
of the house's windows to greet their
ancestors: drummer-boys, lasses,
the uniformed, the perfumed; who are
captive to the blurred rain of a fever.
Though I know they are fine.
And Valentine will be my darling; and
the dark will be passed around as an
impossible ring, before we leave forever . . .

Clair de Lune

With a trill of soft light in the air,
this writer girl is sad, but only in
passing. There is a benevolent
sadness with a wind or pulse
of memory. She touches her
lobe
lightly with her hand.

Hair glistening
She takes us off the beaten path
into the mouth of the forest.
A forest that is the knife of days
dulled to a kind roar.

Shower on us
the gone will of days; assist us
to make amends with a maker who
forgot us four score years before.

Docile friend in a cavern-café, let us
drink this wine in a whirl of remembrance;
and exit to the time when hopeless
was not a known world. Let us dress
November in this wine, these letters —
forevermore. We may not see the day,
but this glow of peace is ours to mind,
and, so, we gaze perennially into each
others' eyes . . .

Where time decides to slow or wither
in this vast universe — press past
wrangling and remorse, and remember
the candied ages of your life though
they were tainted by the folds of pain.
Still, the dreams and the air were clear.
When flowers felt themselves all
the day, and dripped: piano chords
into the air; nocturnes and Debussys;
unmasked girls at parties and serendipities.
Milestones rolled forever when comets
belonged to earth.
You were roused by the strumming
of love, flitting like the seasons.

Their flight was grandeur effervescent, but also
the glaucoma of things, the opaque in streams.

It was the spitting flowers at destiny in tiny defiance.

Piano keys were hammered at
with earthly majesty under the
decrepit moon that barked
a dissonance that fell
like tumbleweeds, sting rays,
horsemen and the gray melodies of
worlds — into our sinuses.
Nocturne.

Today, a relentless sigh stretches the
length of the nighttime highway.
This is our signature.
Still, we can be here, I believe.
Our plans slipped away.
We are not responsible.
But we know this fear is only in jest.
And so, quiet is the night accustomed
to our medicinal word.
If wrong turns of the mind lead to
fear and self-censure,
then let us upbraid our dreams and
dream new ones; new
cascades of health, well-spring
of divine ray.

Still, today I am so heavy with woe.
My existence infused with uncertainty.
I pray to the stone buildings because
heaven alone cannot hold the passion
of my prayer.
And I hope, contrary to my fears,
that my silver tongue will be gladly
met by a thousand wine glasses
and delighted looks.
And then I will repair for the sweet
tunnel of light.
Forget everything . . .

And so the days roll on,
redundant days, roving dreams . . .

Tonight is covered in a quilt
of gauze snow.
And liquid thoughts track
endless
with serial thriller
poets
forging a path for them
ahead over the glistening white.
Send telescopes and the cheer of
lightest wine.
Capture the shiver of this
evanescence and remember
it forever.

The moon. Oh, the moon.
How fair she is tonight and
how far and bereaved . . .
Drip the nectar of Mother's
perfume.
How we longed for days gone by.
In them is our end.

Glorify my music.
Glorify your music.
Send missions,
quiet and blue,
to some Mars or
Neptune.
Cosmic sand settles
on the streets with
"oh what a hush" . . .
It descends on our pink
heaven that is languid
and serene, charming as
a girl and soft as sunlight . . .

The Palaces of your soul cast
a shadow under the clear
moon that breathes in sonority
turned dissonant, accompanied
by the cheer and applause of a
million baby hands.
How dissonant is our night and
how harmonious . . .
Stellar night where the stars no
longer deride; where all is wistful

with the fleeting
notes and the trills of the moon —
turning all our pages as the waves
of this glorious dream . . .

Pinto

We bused our way to this small
city.

Some of the streets were named
after famous poets, and these
were unpeopled.

The other streets and lanes
intersected with plazas,
like drying-up streambeds
meeting their death.

On one plaza a wave of energy
lapped at my feet and legs
sustaining them with its
equivalent of reticent Iberian music.

Its sound hovered in the air, in
my eyes and on the ground.

I felt serene, as though a kind
someone was leading the subtle
winds of my body with a slight,
interfering approach.

Although bodies were mostly
irrelevant in that sojourn.

By a café I spied two coquettish
dames without regret, only a faded
desire.

I think I unearthed the idea
that they were not for me —
because, in reality, only is the
blue fugue or whirlpool.

On that day the sky seemed diffused
with sharp and torrid clouds.

In fact, perhaps the
day was glowing and sonorous
like the raindrop-clinging floods
of Debussy or Chopin.

The most delicate raindrop of the
flood and the one richest with dark,
melodic dissonance contained the
poets' streets scattered with
their thoughts.

I looked at the streets and saw the
trace of a mostly invisible, caped
and wrathful villain making the
area turbid with his flights to and fro.

The cranes etched against the horizon
were a symbol from my dreams of
a glorious end to the hampered and
sometime frightened rapid of my life.

As we bused away,

I spied chubby American tourists on
sidewalk benches, hazed by the soft
buzzing of their bodies.

They seemed bored like they
were entranced by heaven's acedia.

Then the thought of the Caribbean
and piña coladas came to my mind;
and, with it, thoughts of ease and eternity.

The Darkness of Poets

I

Our dawns are laced with arsenic
and we sprinkle entreaties at the
threshold of darkness, entangled by it . . .
For, we poets, are darkness's paupers —
Forms come from it.
But we require thistles lodged in the body's
pores for the rare frequencies
of light to gush . . .
And in the night, we are angled
with fire at the stars . . .

Crimson tears float away from the
corners of a minor god's eyes, whose
glance reads past all verses that splurge
from mouths or pens.
He is mindful of the cerulean ocean
that lulls, sparkling, like an extract
from Lorca.
The ocean is the poet's typewriter's
ink, his vehicle to break away even
a little from the yoke of earth and
silent Sky-Lord. The Bird, God, scatters
numbness, curses, and elating phrases.
He shushes thoughts of mutiny
with a finger to his lips:
"Listen carefully, sufferer, where lectures
deliver nothing, and tragedy drips from
the black sky onto the vines touched by hands —
listen for reason.
In your brooding — listen
for fire praising you in the sky . . ."
But no answer comes from the vault tonight . . .

Creation trembles with all its plains as the
air stream rattles corn fields, meadows, and forests.
The only barely audible answer the
Overlord seems to give is:
"Heaven is sloth, you were born
to grow restless and more fortunate
or fat; to race; to feel the light with
seeing palms in a dark creation;

to allay the pangs yourself . . . to suffer . . .
and grow wisdom in your spirit that
drowns the seeds of worry and problems
with its silent and global chant;
with its whizzing brook that clears
a way for the girl, Nothingness,
to reassert her domain.

Also, had you not in fact seen the lie
you have been sold in the curve of the
distant tree or the dissipated clouds?
But that is another story about illusion
that you will write in time . . .
Sheathe your sword at nightfall,
and live every dawn. See you in 'never.'

II

In the darkness are swellings of harmony
from which we poets drink.
A caterpillar rescued from a little
spotlight, preferring rather
to crawl away like Sunday,
a tiny bit touched by the leaves of grass.
And we adore the sun — extracted from
glare, passed through fingers like jelly
beans or glass eggs — rescued from perils
and daughters and the shells of its melodic cry
exploding

Decryption of the sun is sacrilege,
unless the poet were to grasp the reality
of the sky's membrane; then he would have
the right to speak, at least a little, for these
two relatives . . .

III

In poets is inebriation and nature.
In snake eggs, suns and insects are
the ancient paradigms of pre-creation
where poets are created and venerated.
There our engine falls through the dew of
the deepest, cleanest ocean that is like a mine.

The sea makes marmalade from our wrath,
which we press to the lips, releasing tocsins
and diapasons that streak heaven.

Cherished spiritual misfits expound
their divergent philosophies, travelling and
echoing like soft, dumbfounded stars through
the waves.

From sufficient distance they wave at us;
then follow their ethereal and intoxicated
course, away . . .

IV

The rare poet recalls his visions;
and how he conspired with a
woman's bubbling eyes.
One in every 1797 girls has
these big and boiling-cauldron
eyes that may or may not see him.
But he sees them. They are the sign
of beauteous sacrilege
sourced by amorphous and strange heaven;
and heaven fuels dreams that only the
eccentric can listen to.

V

As poets are concerned —
the horses of suffering trammel our flesh and
from this
we salvage sparkling music in decanters,
to be poured.

We are seismic waves, sky,
beings, sulking in the flesh,
unaccounted for, disconnected in a
heaven of bereavement . . .
Our hands are permeated by reality . . .
where we move on, and grow unaffected
by isolation.
We run like light, permeate again
our hands.

We are always naïve, laced with
angel semen as our fashion that prays
to the star-diapason in the North sky.
The star blushes.

We are not the Maharishi.
We do not prophesy or burn on the
highest rung of catechism or teaching.
We lack in everything. Only
language grows and intoxicates,
sending the waves of consciousness
above where they flow with that roller
coaster, the blue sky.

We live like beasts among the wild daisy;
where with the sickle of the mind we
slice through the crowding words,
each glorying in its own number
tag for denotation; but we shun them.
Then we exhale to cry faintly with
gemmed sound that attempts to capture
with its cup, but can only mimic the flower's
little-big panting breath.
Neither shall we ape the light strains of her
coquettish movements.
Above is the reflecting pool-sky.

VI

Perhaps some poets or artists are
not deeply injured birds — as are we —
and, so, they own the light of days.
I am thinking of one.
She does not dye the well with the
variegated bloods of sacrifice,
only her artist pigments.

Is her talent only mental, but not lived?
Does she live mainly light, and
successfully quash the dark in her soul?
Does her spirit brighten, like the night,
into the soberingly radiant flesh of dawn?
At night does she forsake soft miseries
for the permanent rapture of the moon?
A fabric is cut from the moon by her

unquivering hand to wrap her soul
through the night.
This cloth also protects her soul from
the sepia morn.
She might paint darkness from vision
quests only, and not from residency in darkness.

Is she steeped in an abundance
of happiness?
She shines bright on the podium
of the world.
She is trussed by friends
with timeless and touchstone hearts
to caress.
Be reborn butterfly and breeze in
light through airports — reunited
with the physiognomy of a kindred
and faithful spirit.

For her life seems to have a
semblance to the light of love.
Mellifluous piano notes flit
through the occasional twinges
in her body.
The lightly gargled and swished
humors of days become — sometimes — gray,
garbled tape in the mental atmosphere
of her worlds.
Unravel the tape in the worship of
a Deity who smiles upon the grace
instilled intrinsically.
Her intelligence dawns in little
bounds.
Laugh in soft decadence with friends.
Whirl in more wine.
Her soul is mendable because she
is not consumed with the fire of Hades.

VII

And, then, there is the poet —
dying in insanity on the veranda, or
within a constricting sky.
He encounters his blue-ghost
double in the night on fields

near the ravines or on the coast.
This is the wraith of his dismay
and exile from life.
His muscles will not help him here.
He texts his mother with veins
and a brain of pain: "I'm cursed."

He feels doomed to eternal
unhappiness, friendless,
disconnected from existence
as though he was never meant to be born.
He walks on the earth where other souls
are irrelevant. Even the occasional
bright unions are fleeting. The sky
is infinite, unknown, and even sinister
with its mock-friendly blue.

He turns his perplexity into verse.

Yet, nothing can allay the fire of
separation for the poet.
Perhaps he does not belong in
the world and lingers like a
conceited ghost, silly in the
tautness of its hoary thought —
a ridiculous self-assertion in
an inchoate existence.
How unfriendly does the flame get?

In the day the poet rushes into the
streets to be struck down by
vehicles, yet still stands.
Or, he would appear in public
with a lance to repeat those things
that his ancestors complained of
at the ebb of their lives.
He is immortal, perhaps tainted.

Then he contemplates how his
words were made from the Devil's
minions; fashioned from willows
and sperm; from every biting intensity;
from every dumb stare in the watered-down
classroom and wasted year; from every torpor and
reign of hunger or terror; from every
soul-rending, like a flag being ripped

in half; from watching the soft and effete
insect; and from every tender lightning
of evil.

He is the selfish, torrentially worded poet.
Separation has been his yoke and the
source of verses.
If he loses everything, he shall have
drunk the glorious, violet curse until
only the dregs remain . . .

VIII

There must be an end to the anguish.
Oblivion — set us free . . . Arcadia . . .

Can the poet save himself
from the ethereal poisons seeping
into the skin from sinister skies?

Do unearthly tentacles delve in the
flesh like night's ink staining a
body of light?

The heavenly abode is rocked into
fear by a premonitory blast from Hades.
Hello, tainted heaven. I will not go.

IX

The poet who has not suffered must
belong to the more theoretical
grade of artist.
This is the mystic who has
only stared into fire but not
been reduced to ashes by it;
the flame thrower who uses
a device other than his mouth;
the soul who sheds darkness
like clothes, like water —
in the lavish and quiet feast
of dawn.
Rinse dreams at the sink.
Bathe in unburning fire.

It seems that despondence
died long ago for such souls.
Much more heroic would be
the poet whose soul is
saturated with its “dark night” —
so many days of its life.

This poet still breathes verses that —
like a wave crest — sustain the
fragments of his body.
If he can turn these into
the bright wine of word art —
it must be beneficial.
He writes with
knowledge of the whale’s belly;
and the dark forest of the fairy tale.
The advent of an everlasting and
carefree dawn was or has been long
delayed to this soul.
For the one still enshrouded,
heaven is elsewhere.
Here, there are only fire and roses
and thorns and the long walk home
under the diamond moon.

Circus

The poet's words march.
Each sticky letter prompts
each next letter in the grand
arena of the world.
Revolutions pacify
the hearts of old believers;
they turn all
wrong tides toward a timeless zenith.
And the stars deliver discourses and
elegies from their metal jaws.

Pull the king that is inertia slowly
down from his throne while he sleeps.
We radical agents will salvage the lessons of history's
engorged saints, its flammable priests,
directives, leaders, and
its halos, which we will use as Frisbees.
We capture only the cascading
essence of history's poetry.
We have no cause except the
nonsensical; except the subversion
of holies.
Our armament is lightness and
the unconditioned.

The status quo is replaced by
classical music.
The notes dive into the symphony,
reproachless as dolphins.
These mammals touch the stars
in the night.
They are cleaner than the
mere heavenly bodies with
their narcotic shine.
Both are loved.
All piety is sublimated into
music forever.

Herald the new Dalmatian ruler.
We will alternate power and base
our philosophy on the flights of
nonsense which is the grandest
and most eloquent of all.

The recital of poetry is taken up
by Khlebnikov, Kharms,
Mayakovsky, Whitman,
Lorca, and all the poets silenced by
the quivering fail of the masses
who now weep estranged fire.
And broomsticks will enter the
stadium to wipe away the tears.
Enter the grand orchestra!
Great cosmic circus.
Pull out your binoculars!
Wish upon a star . . .

Docile Lights

My body moved along the avenue
at a Muppet's lulling rhythm.
I spied a woman postured on the
side of a glass bus stop; an ardent
and cheeky smile; biting her thumb
and scintillating lasciviously to herself.
A moment lapsed and my lower left
lip sagged like a flaccid tire in reaction
to the woman's gesture.
Not piqued, I fastened the sagging
tire, and my green marble eyes —
tainted this color by her — roared to
the left upper corner of their sockets.
I planned and executed — along with
this waltz or warfare or lunacy —
an igneous but innocuous smile.

Then — resplendent on the side wall
of a building on the next block —
was a sienna surface, illuminated
like a desert dune by the early
evening sun.
It reflected the glint of a heroic
and bygone era and other such
chimeras that quiver today in the
lit metropolis.
On the other side of the street
was raised a purple, papal
banner — an elegant commercial.

I care little for the afterglows
of civilizations.
They can cry and leak, hissing
into the day.
For me instead, a minor god
swam in the streets with the
dizzying gems of soft car lights.
On the side were blurred
green trees and brittle pedestrian
melodies.

As for my secret meeting with
the enterprising woman —

that was the one time when my
aquatic worm eyes waxed most
proudly at the suggestion that
they were blind to everything
except poetic images.

Warning

I sit among Russians as we talk away —
at I do not know how many decibels —
grasping in furtive spurts at all the
possible sayings in the air about the
supposed greats of their land's literature.
Lights flicker above our heads —
their radiance activated by us.
We generate a maelstrom which is
hailed foolishly as knowledge.

This knowledge is meant to cover
the source of the light and its
rampant insolence.
The light says: "Damn you. I reign."
It holds a gun up to our heads
and yells: "dance!"
As we are entranced by the
ubiquitous light, the gelid
darkness drips from our harried
elbows pulling the lamp chains
over our heads.

There is a moment that night
when we finally lay down
something original — stitching
together concepts of rhythm;
languages and their musicality.
It is genius or at least
intelligence's glisten.

A girl who acts as the
spokeswoman displays the
ideation across and in front
of her like a boxed set.
She has a strawberry ice cream face.
She also has a brain that
processes the information
flow in stalling increments.
During these pauses the
beginning of a sweetness almost
swims out of her glowering
black eyes.
Led by her supervision,

we lay down the thought-construct
as a trap — for either the light or dark;
it does not matter by then.

At night, as I float in and out of sleep,
I realize that so much consonant-laden
Russian speech from that evening is soaked in
the luminosity of a specific astral plane;
perhaps it was born there.
This plane is linked forever to the
lightly stressed and discursive
Russian words, to their bizarre resonance,
swimming in the faster light of a
contingent world.

American voices
yawn, shine, clink,
and swash with
white wine, favored by the sun's oblivion.
They have levity and are innocent of
the Russian's insider position
within the cosmos.
The Americans will be all right.
The Russians' destiny, however,
is less predicted.

Parents

Winds race in the street.
The squat man sits on the sidewalk.
He is absorbed by the muteness in
a book that closes in some mother's
hands in a contrite but placid home.
His mindful or absent silence
instructs me to look away and
to the side.

How am I not supposed to believe
that his sand-worn face — with long,
yellow strands of hair beating
against the head like xylophone
sticks — is not assailed by the blue
and white dream that is the sky?
The sky hurls down at all times —
four-letter words like little daggers
soaked in a love that forgot this person.

In the lush, stone park sits a
young man with dark-orange
cream skin.
He has a frog face and upper lip
that grips the gums in a slight grimace.
The off-white films of his eyes are
morning prayer — melting — radiating —
fresher than lettuce or fly wings.
They are lighter and eerier than any
glib sentiment waiting in the air
hoping to replace them.
Eyes like a morning glory.
He is alert and listening and
In his eyes are lingering tears.

It is as if he knows that the
light
green
rain
falls on him and for him alone
like a spotlight.

It is as if he knows
that an invisible parent is waving a

wand above his head at a short distance —
to the sound of stars spoiling all around
in the greater metropolis.

At this moment I hear all the wealthy
daughters of the earth exclaim:
“Daddy, no matter what, after you pass,
we will never suffer, sure as the rain that fell yesterday.”

An old stray walked on the street by me
in clothes too warm for summer.
He looked fearfully at me and I noticed the
cool respiration of his flesh covered partially
by the jacket. He moved on and away, sure
as a large bird — fluid and dexterous.

1: sloped hat, slowly dragging himself
up a mountain, in shame.

The 1: resplendent, standoffish;
uncomfortably excellent among
so many 2s.

2s: children exemplary in their glistening,
screeching, motley individuality.

“You can shine, children!”

Leave the 2s.

They can never begin to be the 1s that
serve King Zero.

Feeble imitation of 1: ambulatory
peons of the astral realm who
clutter our mind’s eye — viewed in
flashback — their passage by an
open door threshold; servants of a
dark force, sapping the hydrogen
from bodies.

They are troopers ushering in
God’s stifling “good” will.

They are licensed by antiseptic
and soulless love, or perhaps
they are better described as
malevolence and destruction.

They are lamented by the owl
who enumerates all tiny deeds,
though he is not a judge.

He knows something else.

Cherishing the peons’
symmetrical frames and ant-like
intent is really an awful sanctity,
a foul goodness;
a heartless sanitization.

It is a thought-wave that chafes
our neck with its constant whining,
bereaving us of a tear,
but on the other hand, perhaps
spawning tomorrow’s
falling lock of bliss.

Or it is the wicked blind spot
become a contact lens prescribed
by every “perfect” doctor whose
soul is nothing but a hunk of flesh
and the troubled laundry of words
that confound us with their nothing.

Or, the doctor is the embodiment
of reality’s evil glare with no
concept of enlightenment’s opacity;
its beautiful physicality.
He is that light which assigns
death to the child brought hapless
to his knee before the onset of age.
The doctor whispers down plastic
tubes to Magic that she is
“uncontrollable and must park her
planes on aircraft carriers.”
He believes the planes should be
hidden like drivel or ink blots that
deserve nothing less.

The revolution came, was established
and decried all baby revolutions as heresy.
Nevertheless, the baby revolutions
which, birthed as ink strokes of
exotic verse, are like the
self-knowledge of the wild pulp that
breathes nocturnes inside a cage.
At least the new birds can sing,
if not fly.

The new generation decides to
eclipse the tyranny of “principle
and truth” with the array of all
variants of darkness and light;
including that darkness which
dogmatic light negates,
maintaining that it has no potential.

But there are founded rumors of
the old power organizing a
massive counter movement.
The unfortunate — or fortunate
as it may be — robin — moves
in fast, springy increments.

The day is cursed and its curse
shimmers through airwaves
ad infinitum.

The whole sky and green
fields hurt badly.

Our bodies implode from
the shock.

A plane like a snail crawls
upward through the
scentless heaven.

By this stage I have finally
realized that my would-be salvation
lies in the bladed leaves of the foliage.

Their resplendence would make a fun
factory for cutting me into the humility
of worms and other little 1s.

Unlike the bragging and loitering
threes or the nepotist zeros,
they would make my march
like that of the narrowest and
smallest minds who give off
only the faintest signals,
though they are perhaps steeped
in the strongest and meatiest violet.

The Pale

I crawled into the cave with the young teacher.
We must have been yearning for the
same things. Time stopped.
We could see, outside, miniature
landscapes of the world.
And yet we would not yet
venture out to seek our success
and claim our glory, our personal
growth; or whatever Devil it was
that lay beyond.

Whatever it was, was so thin; a body
as lithe as a lie; as unconditioned
as the woman who would not
reproach even an ink tear.
Later, she—the young teacher—
turned a hue of white that I had
never felt or gazed upon before;
it was cream-gold, virginal;
so white it almost faded to nightfall.

Then it was rumored as we
moved on all fours in the low
cave, viewing the small landscapes
—that this wave, a tsunami,
was in store for us, headed for us.
Who knows. . . . It was the transfiguration,
the apocalypse, an end and a beginning at once,
and yet none of this nonsense.
In the breathless atmosphere
we looked and felt a soft swatting
of fear for something that never came. . .

¹ This is a reference to a German fairy tale found in the collections of the Brothers Grimm. The tale is called *Iron John*.

² “Claw-smooth” is a reference to a poem/song by Jim Morrison, “A Feast of Friends.” The lyrics are as follows: “Death makes angels of us all / and gives us wings / where we had shoulders / smooth as raven’s / claws.”

³ This is a reference to Jim Morrison’s song, “The Crystal Ship.”

⁴ “Windowlicker” is the title of a song by the musical artist Aphex Twin.

⁵ A violin sonata by Giuseppe Tartini.