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The beat comes through. Blutz and ooze. Where you going, Man? And you think I'm nowhere?

Man, it's like when everybody's singing -- and everybody's flat and everybody thinks it's someone else who's flat. And everybody's scrawling away and getting louder and louder, and everything gets flatter and flatter. Makes you want to quit and try to figure what key you should really be in.

What key should we be in? You're asking me? Man, I don't know. The skull still shadows me wherever I go. People screaming their key so loud. Blaming me because I'm young, because I got no money. I just can't read the key. I can't even hear the key. I can't read you either, Man. I don't know.... My brain sweats. My mind is a pinwheel. The thought is nowhere, Man. The thought is nowhere.
Brown child
   belly out
   peeing against a wall,
the city is not
   a "commode"
   its value not so small . . .
(I keep
   trying to convince
   myself of it all). . . .

Without a line I fished
or was fished out
suddenly into bright cold air and
thin yellow grass. And
we both lay on our backs then
gasping, panting for breath,
throbbing, afraid (both of us)
of some line. When all the
time the natural heat of the
moment finally got us
together
like this.

Ginger,

Although I've never seen you,
I love your loneliness. Already
wishes crown your hair,
hope finds
your mouth.
Already I have not met you. Already I
am scared.
Arrival

I never saw
a dawn such as this,
not that it flows
across the sky like a purple robe
or has any of the glory
of a sunset spewing its
pastels with breathless
tenderness. It is plain
as sunrises come, homely
and humble. It is even
segmented and distorted for
me by the seams of the long road
still pulsing past my eyes and
the unsteady roar of the engine
still in my head. But,
as I lie out here waiting
for life to wake around me
and start, this plain
dawn is a benediction, not
like other dawns, coming up
bleary-eyed and domineering
to ban sleep and panic
study. No, this dawn smiles
on my journey and blesses;
"It is good. It is very good."
This dawn, like a nurse, bathes
the night and me and swathes
us in blue, touching tenderly
us baby-boys. Pink as it
is, the dawn bleaches the road and
dyes the grass with bright life. Never,
have I seen, never,
my dirty, paint-flaked home
so white. Never have I seen
a dawn such as this.
In the confidential after-rain
dripping from the trees,
I stand
    silly
with drops falling
largely
on my matting hair
while puddles and
ponds around me
spiral into mosaics. It
is a curious baptism
descended upon me, an
inaccurate thing, that
chills when, misguided, it
slides down my back
and brings my shoulders
around my neck, an
involuntary shell. I
should have come prepared
with a raincoat,
they say,
but this bathing would not be
the same so
protected. It is me they
touch, plashing on my
face, sweetly on my tongue.
It is me they touch,
these large soft
drops that bless.
With due examination
Of our enjoyment of procreation
And with interested acknowledgement
Of our lack of money management
And with our common belief in divorce,
Relatively speaking, of course,
I love you—I think.

Drowned by inundation
And mud-crusted pages
In muffled silence despair cries:
I am become death.

I am become death
To sweep over earth on green slanted wings.
I am become the avenger,
The horseman, Death of the Fourth Apocalypse.

Look upon the avenged creation
Of unfathered child,
Bloody with the red of innocenti.

I am become death
Terrible and mighty
Look upon me in terror-filled awe.
I am the Mars of a thousand generations.
Sky rising above ocean's pitch
To change from cotton's fleece white
Into richest blond hair blue.

Sea with green life
Surges through promontory hole in sea coast
Bounded by leather pine and cling lichen.

Smiling upon kissed granite
Foam is transformed and mid-air crystallized
To memory of same loveliness.

Green roll the blue waves
While wind plays with the pine roots cliff bound
To rekindle the thoughts sighed back upon
In days when love kissed an innocent boy's world.

Brooding and pensive
King-God Cronus sits with earth Rhea between his knees
Slowly caressing his love and weeping,
Sighing for the loss of immortality.

Titans sprawled on plain
Curse fire bolt and thunder breath
Shake fist and hold broken sword defiant
As life flows from silently dying wounds.
Poem on Theme by Leroi Jones

black dada -- scream
in sinewy silence
and drop from flattened nose
the sweat of stealth and crossed hairs

baby, even if you crossed my sights
white man -- you're dead
Black Dada Nihilismus
once pale, now deep anger in red
from gutters running in blood

one hundred years black dada
you've waited and been kicked
or ignored to

SUDDENLY RAISE PANTHER HEAD
and
justify

black dada plastic bombs
stored in rat's nest of Harlem tenement
ready to rape the wite daughters
of those who raped your black ma

black dada, the procreation
of southern baptists
and northern liberal indifferents

Black Dada Nihilismus
explode in the streets
reap death and sacked
quicksilver tongue of rich wife's heels

against the murder of lost white children
Black Dada Nihilismus
We walk slowly down
The steep abyss of time
Eternity snaps at our heels
We kick it disdainfully away
It walks slowly behind us
Tail between legs
Snarling surreptitiously from time to time
Scaring us — —

We run ahead blind
We plunge
Faith-and-fit-fully
Thru the oil-slick back-alleys
Of our dreams
We slip and slide past
Tiny sand-grain moments
Groping to build castles
(Which wash away at high tide)
Watching our Selves dying down
An infinite regress (of past moltings)
To when we non-were.

Some say they're not
Falling madly downward
But ascending
Slowly
Carefully
The Holy Hill of Heaven.
But I ask (man)
At the center of the Universe
Which way is up? Not
That it matters for
Whether we're bare-assing it
Down the sliding board of time
Or climbing Jacob's ladder in combat boots
It's still there snapping at our heels
Threatening, reminding,
Forcing a realization of
The Eternal Now-or-Never to come.
Night Thoughts

A cold bright night it is,
And I like cold bright nights:
They bring memories into
A present melancholy.
And I remember a girl—
A bright-eyed, laughing girl
When we walked through ankle-snow
And the moon played lightly on her
Smiling face and softly on the virgin snow.
But another time—
Tears in mid-embrace,
And they fell surely in the
Trampled snowways of a windswept campus;
As surely as the embrace was
Heartfelt and tender
And spoke of never letting go.
And we knew what it was to love too much.

And I remember a young man
A not-meant-for-college-college-young man
(then)
Whom I admired and still do, but
Loved more than admired.
I loved and feared the sense of tragedy
In his so-called wayward ways
And the symbol of tragedy
In his artistry—
The recurrent face of pain and anguish
That wooed a freedom song
And sung a freedom dirge—
And I wonder (when I have time to wonder)
Where the red and bearded face is con-torting
Itself and laughing in a broken mirror
(probably)
Finals

Green walls of hospital sterility
Grey floors, scarred and stained,
Complain
A Yearning
To be unhammered at the
Corners
To be windswept
Like prairie grass
Which gently sways
And contently murmurs
To a thousand silent
Brothers in the sky — —
Or to be free
Just to roll
And sigh
With the night wind
A wave
Unhurrying to shore

As if the prairie grass
Were rootless, content
To wander aimlessly like the sage — —
As if each wave were
Undirected by the flow
Unhemmed by friends along the way.

As if we can ever
Escape the incessant complaint
Of cramped-in-quarters
As if the soul can break
The body-bonds
To soar, homeless
On the winds
And on the waves.
Haiku:

No, I do not love you; but I need you to scratch
A tremendous itch.

Caught in the Act

Lowly dreamer of a transcendental realm
Seeing God in clouds and trees
And sun-glazed skyscrapers-
You try hard to see Him among your fellow men
And strain to find Him with yourself
For not ostensive is He in the plodding daily life
Nor certain is He in the time of the soul's strife
And yet, at times, you feel Him-
Mystery, Incomprehensible and Indescribable
Something-
And your mind is filled with bliss and joy
And your heart is filled with calm-
And yet a sadness, too, for
Who can sing Him to the souls of Those who will not hear?
And you are sad, for joy, so great,
Is short-lived and largely unshared,
Smothered by the blanket of unfeeling which is Life-
And yet you feel the flame will never die
For it burns an eternal oil-
Or so you hope
Lowly dreamer of a transcendental realm.
Tomorrow

Today I'm born, today I'll die, and in between is life,
And through the day I will acquire some friends, a job, a wife.
In the morning's early hours I'll play and go to school;
And then when twilight's hours come, I'll be a senile fool.
A full and merry day I'll live before they do me in;
But what if on the morrow someone asks me where I've been?

- - Robin S. Miller

Cinquain: The Rail

Atop
A skyscraper
A man shouts, "I hate life!"
Then, shivering, grasps the Guard Rail.

- - Barbara Ann Bald

The Price

"The price of Love's too high," said I to the tune of the autumn wind.
Or are my values useless in a matter of this kind?
I need not give my wealth, my friends, nor quake with mortal fears.
I need but give my hope, my heart, and the balance of my years.
Is Love then worth the charge it bears, the lasting cost I find?
"The price of Love's too high," said I to the tune of the autumn wind.

"The price of Love's too high," said I to a rabbit hopping by.
Or am I just too dull to see the simple reason why I need to give my hope, my heart, and the balance of my years?

I need true love. I need her hope, her heart, her strength, her tears. Then love is worth the charge it bears, the lasting cost's not high.

"I'll pay the price of love," said I to a rabbit hopping by.

"I paid the price of love," said I to a bird perched in the tree. But the price is much too high for her; she never shall love me. I'll love until the hope shall flee and the heart itself pump dry.

But never shall she know I sit, I stare, I dream, I cry. Was love then worth the charge it bore, the lasting cost for me?

"I paid the price of love," said I to a bird perched in the tree.

--- Alf Jammer

Lost

Where are the days of laughter and joy that I knew so well?
Where is the beauty which once enveloped me?
Where are the people so innocent and pure?
And where is the love that once was mine?

The laughter and joy, the beauty, the people, the love -- lost forever!

NOW I AM A MAN.

--- John S. Picconi
Bo Diddley, he can't rhyme his songs no more in the moon of the midnight hour. And King Andrew grows nervous amid the sandbars on the Beach of No End. The Great White Doctor protects his children from harm in the Candy tree, but they flock to Oaks. And tense Irish Rose gives the urchin of the Alleyway solace in the sandcastle in her kitchen. Perhaps the morrow will bring the Rains and more, she thinks. "The snow has died you know, Irish Rose," yells Richard from the Hi-Way Dept., and as if the wayward, windy monster of Winter had been buried forever, Irish Rose smiles that smile of hers and brings life to the Kingdom of Andrew and the songs of Bo Diddley and the children returning to the Candy tree. Flowers grow in the silent places, and the air returns to the life it had abandoned in the Fall. Richard returns to the Hi-Way, his mission done, the world of Irish Rose a far brighter place, and the urchin of the Alleyway plays quietly among the flowers.

No Thanks to City Hall

Having sprawled, risen, tripped, risen, and breathed curses to the wind above their glowing heads, warlike old gentlemen have reached the heights of Mt. Olympus on Race Street and found that the women in their lives were all social workers cast in the role of Lady Bird Nightingale. Curses again. And thoughts of an Exodus to Society form in the brains of shaken old gentlemen.
Grinding Them to Dust

(Dedicated to James Dean and the sensitive Vikings in the Harlem ghetto.)

In the year of '67
it was expected by all of the garden peoples
and Cocktail Parties
that happiness would be the song
even of the poor.
This was not to be for the Battered of Experience
in the year of the broken lips, and the broken eye,
and the futile drive toward the earth phantom, Hope,
who did not exist in the end.

In the year of '67 or '56 or '45, and
ever in the memory of knowledgable Historians,
life no longer centered around the playground ball; it attacked the bones of
the hopeful and lacerated them
to misty oblivion. Pain found its threshold
and walked away
to be replaced by the disinterested and mystery
of the Numb floating upon
the Salt Sea of the Plain.
Four

Macadam Academy
And Sunset Boulevard

popcorn and hardtop

of liberal education
periodic tables for dining
and whining
chivalry resolved to a

zip code man that honor

system man
on my honor I will try to thwart the
housemother and disconnect the fire
alarm system and raise sophomoric
hell with distinction and subtlety
serving dean and devil with
academic abandonment
so I can be a glorious
alumna and endow
some weird
chamber of
horrors.

Five

Pragmatic idealist
atoms
and atomizers
Coldene and clutch the winter arms of
trees my flame fused ice maiden
deck the halls with
boughs of
vernicious shrubaceous vegedecafinated
80 proof jolly roger holly
my good friend
VICKI VAN HORN

oh the unbearable unbeatable rapture
oh the fragile frightening fury
of my metrecal maiden
maybelline miss
my cover girl cover girl
super vinalized durable guaranteed
playmate
Christmas sealed by Good houskeeping.

Nine

Dormitory
the campus convent
the impregnable impregnated with the pregnable
a mighty fortress is our housemother
bars on windows
but not
on minds
you see no
fetters to imagination
deliciously wicked dreams
strewn with the
ardent innocence
of scented students.
Ten

What I'm spending most of my time
doing most of is actually a sub-plot
an outrageous parenthesis
scriggling through page after page
volumes of italics
without getting to the point
which is growing up you know
that is these days when college
education is the water
buffalo hole in the forest primeval
and anyway
a
point is
 undefined.

Twelve

I believe in God because I need
a glorious ubiquity
way over study worries
and boy worries
and worry worries
What this country needs is a
goodnickelgod
a veritable santy a-go-go the
maddest of medicares bringing
good cheer and income tax
deductions for all but not
that
way since we gave
the stork the
Pill

But I still need a god
I do
Because a cynical poet is a paradox.
Thirty-Six

The Tinkerbell Messiah
Appearing in technical technicolor
technical virginity
Carnaby Christ
and the swingin' saints
swingin' from a gibbet
goblet of a coke communion
from a mini-gibbet
from a stark steel gibbet manufactured
by Bethlehem (of course) Steel by slaves whose
wages of sin are four dollars per arduous
stinking shirking hour of perfect drooling
vacuum of mad mindless mechaneyeless
(in Gaza?)
from a gibbet gloved and gravied
gravely from a gibbet.

Psyched Up and Out

Christ checked in
a real gone party
Hey man we said
Have a beer.
Cool it cat. You
almost tripped
over the couple
necking in
that dark
corner.
What a blast we said.
What a party.
God.
You rang He said real cool
And
cut
the
scene.
Gutted Glory

All depart
The poem dawdles
With the empty glasses
and filled ash trays
and wet rings
on the mahogany
Silly poem
Why don't you go home?
You will have to dry the dishes.

Residues of success
In rotted splendor
Send that damn poem home.

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