

AN BACACH BRÓDÚIL
(the proud beggar)

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Boston
Bodhisatva

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this one's for
Brian C O'L F Sullivan

Saint Michael, bloody knuckles,
nearly blackout drunk.
afraid someone might be able
to make me talk.
no one should say things like this out loud
least of all to friends.

what can I say instead, that's not a lie?--
I can say "I'm on fire"
"I'm burning"

I feel like an undersea volcano
white hot and hidden
by fathoms.

Truth comes quickly now,
but still uncertain
coded is the early spring
in Northern California-

ask the bees how heavy is this pollen they are gathering.
there's urgency, an urgency to imitate them
if one would validate
Vocation. It's a thing I've always wanted
to believe is real. Stand beneath the proper cloud
and yes, the rain will fall on you.

be quenched, and cultivate what's yours.
Nature takes its course through time
the twisted alleyways of Fate

it's all been unforeseen
there were the cats around our ankles
at one point
who they really were or what they meant
we may not ever know
in old Cairo
we hardly thought about them as we felt their little skulls
through fur, skin, shivering with pleasure at our nearly
indifferent caresses.
they might have taken our nearly indifferent touch for love,
a promise, but we left them, did we not?
we left them and forgot, once the corner
had been rounded.

try to remember specifics-
Baileys in a spiced rooibos tea in the afternoon
- a generous portion. James asks how drunk
Baileys will get you. I say it gets me
about half as drunk as whiskey and neither gets me
that drunk anyway. I've taken to bragging about my tolerance
for what I would have called, in my straight-edge highschool
days: Poison.

The point is we finished the bottle and smoked the hookah
through four coals before sadly brushing the ash off the tinfoil.
The pleasure principle returns.

you are a man
whatever that means
perhaps that's why I'm wet all night
despite lying beside you like a sister
counting in breaths and out breaths.
my wanting, raw and quiet
breaks against the sandbags of your sleep.

you are a man, I see your man's middle age
already in your face.
repose shows off the elements
there is nothing left in this unguarded face
but a man, his flesh, and time.

something elemental in me
responds- take it in, make it
Whole, make it, through bestial acts
of adoration
spirit, eternal, hermaphrodite angel,
but only on their terms of unreliable
human magic.

Notes on Joyce

the artist's right to ingratitude-
the proud beggar

An **B**acach bróduil

"is it sometimes noble to act on prejudice,
or are they stupid?"

-diary of stanny joyce

"there is nothing original about
the phenomenon of suggestion; on the other hand, the idea
of using as scientific documents the reactions one has intentionally
provoked, foreseen and wished for in another person
is purely Joycean"

-Helene Cixous

History of beggars
your bourgeois comforts will kill you
your bourgeois comforts are what's killing you
(story of Little Chandler)

the evening ends in a domestic quarrel
poetry has NO PLACE in marriage

"the little man's capture by the correct middle-class conventions,
his employment in the King's inns, and his Catholic marriage with
a masterful woman, all set him down definitively among
The Failures."

-Cixous

"I laughed as if I had been hurt"

I spent my early 20s reading Proust
on subway cars while I went from
lifting job to curling, giggling, weeping home.

Albertine, a paper dream you were-
12 year old lesbian bicycling in the rain
past the painter's studio, watching

Andrée jump on a bench at the boardwalk
and kick sand in the face of a dignified elder;

Albertine emerging from the bath-house
accompanied by the infamous "woman in gray".

The Rev once said to me:
one day you're gonna learn to be cute
I could teach you to be cute- teach you how to walk and talk
I'll have you walking like this, saying
"look at me! I'm cute!"

Shane Michael said to me:
Don't give your heart to no man
oh, you can have fun with a man, sure
but don't give your heart to no man
that's for you- for you and for god alone.

all the advice I've gotten from lost old men, drunks and bums
has gathered in the crevices of my being,
where it will remain.

guidance from arbitrary sources of sense.
it took me years to recognize when my interlocuter
is batshit crazy, or a hypocrite, or both,
and therefore doesn't have a viewpoint that's practically
applicable.

my ideal was once a constellation of accidental
commentators who didn't know me, but spoke.
it gets confusing. subjectivity has a pull, down and
in some direction, which may or may not help.
however, objectivity doesn't exist. you figure it out.

birds wheeling over Shattuck ave.
you are not like the goose I ate a week ago
~~****~~ you aren't implicated in the calendar
of my recovery- of my wise and unwise decisions.
the goose I ate my part of a week ago
puked up hours later
as I slipped, unwilling or at least uninvested
into another decade
(I said "new years 2020 I'd better be
puking Caviar
hahaha")

world war II haircut
hop like a bunny
support revolutions that have already failed
in theory
support heroes executed by militarized bureaucracies
and in the ground, since your grandmother, now in the ground, was
a small child.

in the 21st century Ireland will be free and whole
because I say so
autonomous, entire, proud and ever changing
in the light of self determination
Protestant children will learn to curse
the pope- in Irish.
there never has been and never will be and is not
Londonderry.

I repeat

a place called Londonderry doesn't exist,
never has existed,
and never will exist
because it is absolute nonsense to call a place
Londonoakgrove.

in the 21st century
poets may migrate to the lost utopias of myth and legend
we may grow gills- I believe in evolution-
with sorrow and elation to settle the
marvellous craggy bottom of the seas.
we've got to get away from these normal folks
we've suffered long enough from this land-bound
way of doing things.

Simple Vanity
migration of mirrors.
mirrors seek vain people
and their imperceptibly disintegrating
faces.

"in it I have drowned a young girl
and in it an old woman rises toward me
day after day like a terrible fish". Sylvia:
what did you see when your head was in
~~the~~ oven ?

could you see your reflection in the bottom
of a baking sheet, the way a fish can see itself
before it breaks the surface for a breath?

Could you smell the terrible broiled fish of dinner
2 nights ago...?

I'm sorry to be vulgar
but you were- you made a statement about vulgarity-
put your seal of approval on it, and on despair,
on all that's absurd, by the way you chose to exit.

you are an ageless mirror in my imagination
saying darkly:

life is not more important than integrity,
and Vanity may be worth dying for.

we split a kamenitza
in a badly arranged park
between a subdivision, an elementary school
and a soccer field.

James sends a message to James in Bulgaria
with his Blackberry.

I think idly of Eden, knowledge, the fall.
brown children file past and I say

"the first hispanic president of the united states
should come from Concord, California

I'd like to see someone spin this place
into political gold".

we trip around the sidestreets, I pee in the Starbucks,
we're nearing 'a taste of europe'.

James admonishes offending
frontyard displays:

"don't you know it's bad luck
to leave your christmas decorations up after Epiphany!?"
and I say

"they're mexican, james, if that's real, they
probably know about it".

once, before we were drunks, we thought
we should be drunks
now it seems too obvious.

"perhaps everybody has a garden of eden, I don't know; but they have scarcely seen their garden before they see the flaming sword. Then, perhaps, life only offers the choice of remembering the garden or forgetting it. either, or:

it takes strength to remember, it takes another kind of strength to forget, it takes a hero to do both.

people who remember court madness through pain, the pain of the perpetually recurring death of their innocence;

people who forget court another kind of madness, the madness of the denial of pain and the hatred of innocence;

and the world is mostly divided between madmen who remember and madmen who forget. Heroes are rare. "

- James Baldwin
from giovanni's room

" the original individual is ~~not~~ seen as rythm, as the relation of part to whole, as the curve of an emotion; he is not a person with a human appearance and characteristics that can be described, but a fluid movement, a consciousness in time.

There may be some influence of Bergson on this declaration of war on material things, this refusal to consider a human being as immobilized in a superficial, permanent form like a passport photograph, with its "distinguishing marks"; to be in the world is not to look like anyone, but to have some continuity, to possess a fusion of moments of experience; it is to progress, to evolve, to become something else, and to be able to WILL to undergo change."

-Cixous

"the individual mind, in order to become absolutely itself, undergoes a series of negations"

-H.C

the holy place, the sea, which in its ebbs and flows
reconciles time and eternity

Nothing advances,
except by contraries,
and heaven may marry hell

for S.N.A

The cement stairwell revealed me
and she found me
with a brown-bagged bottle, my language
lying still, knowing her habitual assaults,
playing dead for hope she'd pass
without a blow laid upon this weary, stupid brow.

in what Arrondissement?
green metal women hold the ~~the~~ fountains above their heads
forever, since the war.

tiredness, for the rest of us, is the result
of time and trying, dissapointments,
the dissapearance of those
on whose behalf we rise, and try.

there's ~~no~~thing to be done with this account
but to simply state what follows.
that distance I worshipped in Weil
made manifest in the form of fathomless
oceans, drifts of garbage and wreckage,
hurricane winds over the drifts,
two continents apart, where letters never
get delivered- in all this
intimate, incomplete
loss. Afternoons 5 years later in the
U.S.A when I daydream bribes to offer
the string-puller, to provoke her
appearance from around any corner.
I would give her the front of my neck this time.
I'd be sober. I'd be
more daring. I would gratefully accept
even her unkind words.

it must have been Nicaraguans
they said in my shelter-towns
the bank was robbed in Santa Elena
six good people shot by Nicaraguans.

in fact, I was the only Nicaraguan
it's true I was a gunman
it was not the first time I'd killed
good people, and then vanished.

the Costa Ricans that hired me did not escape
José and Gabriel were shot on site
but theirs were not among the plywood coffins
paraded that Sunday upon the shoulders of Santa Elena.

Yes, I saw the procession.
I was in the crowd
someone turned to me and said
'brother, were you there on Friday?'

"Martha reflected that Mrs. Quest did not really believe in any of this, she was simply playing a role laid down for her. Just as, in early middle age she had written letters to be opened after her death, which she felt was imminent, to her husband, choosing his future wife, to her children exhorting them to forget her immediately and not to wear mourning-behavior which, as Martha had discovered from inquiries among her friends, was common to all their mothers at a certain stage in life-

so now did she feel she must refuse to see Martha ever again, must exclaim over and over again that Martha was killing her father."

-Doris Lessing
from a proper marriage

"and at last she cried out in complete despair, from the heart,

'and what will people say?' For this was the kernel of the matter."

-D.L

"As if she ^Were ^{we} were afraid of the power of language used nakedly"

-D.L

"Mrs Knowell lay awake night after night, looking into the darkness, crying steadily, tears soaking down a set, unmoving face. She felt betrayed by Martha. Her own life was made to look null and meaningless because Martha would not submit to what women always had submitted to. She longed for that moment when Martha would fling herself into her arms and cry out that Douglas could not understand her but she would stay with him, that she was unhappy, but would make the best of it."

-D.L

to write:

something about the effect of biological/genetic imperative
on human relationships...

human and animal mating rituals
disconnect from eternity, neurotic obsession with time
created by 'deadline' for pregnancy.

"I don't need you, I need your sperm in order to fulfill my
biological imperative of reproduction"

female exploiting the male for a purpose
ways in which we can/do rescue care and intimacy from the
jaws of this

(tenderness between people is nothing other than the awareness of
the possibility of relations WITHOUT PURPOSE- Adorno)

"belief in the existence of other human beings,
as such, is love."- Weil

belief in the existence of the person you are present with
in a moment, that also holds eternity.

possible future progeny are only a haunting that lives in
the body and decays the moment you are actually living.

to consider-
childless queer loves
the childless marriage (elective)
or the marriage that ends for lack of children

Joyce again:

marriage as a means of "regulating a pointless existence"
and of keeping a tranquil conscience

"what to do in such a house? answer advertisements?...
after ten Pappie came in with a few pence left. We had fasted 14 hours.
I heard his drunken intonations in the dark downstairs, and then
the saddening flow.

this is a true portrait of my progenitor: the leading one a dance
and then the disappointing, baffling, baulking, and turning up drunk-
the business of breaking hearts."

-diary of Stanislaus
Joyce

forgiveness and reconciliation are important
compassion for 'enemies' as well as friends.

let him who is without sin cast the first stone.-

Ontological parity, humility, suppression of pride, arrogance,
judgement.

there is a redemption in mending ties with those who have
hurt you the most, who you have hurt the most.-

none of us is anything more, anything other than human,
mortal, imperfect, mistake-makers.

the necessity of remaining self-contained-
a land apart- solitary (even in the midst of the crowd)-
how this apartness makes tenderness possible.

building your days out of 'it is'
not out of 'I want'.

I embrace you while knowing your imperfections.

I know that you've fucked up. I also know that
I've fucked up, plenty of times. Embrace me.

Friendship is always an act of recognition
(thinking again, thinking anew)

what is a friend?

a friend is someone who strives not to harbor illusions
about you. when a friend embraces you, they endeavor to
embrace you, not some figment, romantic, comical, diabolical
or otherwise.

a friend is someone who aims to tell you unpleasant
truths without personal interest, who tries to come to the table
with clean hands, palms upwards.

truth-telling for the sake of truth-telling
is part of real friendship. because of this, real ~~friend~~
friendship necessarily includes an element of conflict.

presence as a practice
(and not just a pseudo-buddhist catch phrase)-
the courage required to be present.

The discussion in Varna
walking on the cement seaside jetty
"with what senseless fumbling
human lives are made-
disembodied souls summoned from
the ether and embodied-"
it was the pounding music
in the distance-
coming from the dance tents
that made me comment
on all the strangers fucking
in the corners of clubs
"what's your name again?"
with each frenzied thrust
reeling the soul a turn
closer to its flesh-jar.

"if this be sin,
then let me sin boldly"

-Martin Luther

sin is what makes things interesting

the Buddha-nature of Brendan Flaherty
make it Irish
make it real
we don't need anyone else's deep practice
we have our own
it's called
shutting the fuck up
and doing what you have to do.

what brings me the most joy?
you- your inscrutable silence
the impenetrable anger and sadness
that you somehow have always known
needs to be tended in private,
not discussed.
brother I have learned crucial things
in your presence
thank you, my old friend
bodhisattva of shutting the fuck up
and doing what you have to do.

Joyce selects a ~~whole~~ series of 'moments of contact'
around which crystallize whole networks of emotions
(in the realm of life) or symbols (in art)

he imagined the work of art simultaneously as a spatio-temporal journey towards the point where the artist would know himself as such, and as the recording of this journey in memory.-
past, present and future collaborate in constituting the person of the man of genius, a process both active and passive in which, as Stephen says of Shakespeare, he acts and is acted upon, he meets others and meets himself.

the Pub is the scene of metamorphoses....

"apart from his fear of thunder, nothing made Joyce retreat"
-Helene Cixous

" all couples whose progress is made by mutual opposition and mistakes until they are at last absorbed in one body, lying by the Liffey, on the side of Dublin; although the family evolves in time, it perpetuates itself in space, for geography remains while History changes"
-H.C

"there was no land for Joyce. He rejected the appeal, the attachment to any material object outside himself. the only thing to exist is that which he is GOING TO CREATE; the only place both dear and necessary to him is the 'space' of the book and the only time, that of the work in progress. the important thing is not to bring an end, but to perservere...."

"Stephan's melancholy is real, but he makes use of it to parody himself as Hamlet. Truth or Reality cannot be fully revealed unless Pathos is tempered with Irony- hence the hero-type who is only the mask covering the vulnerable and sensitive person, who may be called 'imposter', as Shaun calls Shem in Finnegans Wake. this very false invulnerability is the source of self-mockery, since the person is not deceived by his own heroic persona."⁴

-H.C

at San Francisco National Cemetary

sometimes the dead are at rest,
sometimes not.

here, where there's only soldiers
humble stones, all the same
that indicate your name (abbreviated)
how you fought- on land or sea-
what war-

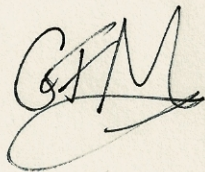
most of you died very young
your last experience as yourself
was violence, largely senseless,
probably impersonal.

what did you die thus for?
it's a sincere question,
please don't take offense.

to advance history- California is now
part of the United States because of some
of you-
because you thought it was the right thing to do,
or didn't know what the right thing to do was,
and this cause seemed probable?
because you got called up,
you got a letter in the mail one day
and there didn't seem to be a way
for you not to be a soldier,
and then time unfolded, and
something happened,
and you were no more in your familiar body
and you were no more in time, unfolding?

FIN.

10/25/2010

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be the initials 'GM' with a stylized flourish underneath.