tangled web



by

Doug Ordunio

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FOREWORD

by the author

The story contained within these pages actually happened. It is a story which ultimately reveals truths about men, women…and love. It is a story also about the internet which in this day constantly reveals its ubiquitous presence in our world, We use it to communicate, to learn, to laugh, to cry, and perhaps to call for help. Each time someone sends another person (known or unknown to them) an e-mail, it is similar to firing a rocket into space and hoping there will be an answer. We are always hopeful that the person who responds is the person we think they are. However, sometimes this is not the case, which is partly the subject of this tale.

It is not suggested that anyone else attempt this. Over the last thirty years I have expressed myself in writing. The events described here were the ultimate test of my abilities. Names and locations have been changed to protect the identities of the parties involved

Doug Ordunio

**EPIPHANY**

Enlightenment arrived

5:10 am—semi-darkness

The bodhi tree an unnecessary prop

A calm zephyr passed through my heart

A rueful autopsy were the words in memory

Nicholas Slonimsky had used to describe his autobiography

No surgical procedure

No saws, scalpels or forceps required

Calmness was the process

Self-observation in a literal sense

Discovery of an entire universe

Only now could I gain entrance to this world of dark and light

A cosmology uncovered in a fashion undraped by Kepler,

Einstein, Crick and Watson

This exhumation erupted

With the horrific first memory of existence

A nightmare permanently scarred into memory

An indelible etching

Of awakening on an operating table at the age of thirty months

A tonsillectomy—standard and simple

Explain that to a baby

Since that moment I alternate between swimming in the world’s ocean

And drowning

In the middle of the Pacific

Cast adrift

No life preserver

At times gigantic waves

Other moments—placid seas

On occasions I am Michael Phelps aglide

The next second—water threatens to fill my lungs

Lacking gills I may not survive

Ultimately the reason for the darkness of the last twenty-five years

The long periods of silence

A psychological buffer zone

Shades my being

Life always a thrill

An emotional roller coaster with headlong dives

High peaks of light

My first experience with Christianity—Sunday school

Age of four

My virginal spirit untainted

Encountered a female presence

Seemingly unsavory unholy

A sensation I had never known impinged upon my soul

Frightened me

Never returned to church until the age of twenty-one

When, through musicianly talents

My gifts welcomed remuneration

All women in my life archetypal

Powerful

Always profoundly touched me psychically

I was powerless in their presence

Hypnotized

Their beauty stunning

Some should stand in a garden

Others—pillars of the Parthenon

All bear an individual fragrance

Unlike any other woman

Remember two beautiful cousins from Texas

When I was a child I embarrassed them

Loved to smell their feet

Pheromones raping me

Succumbing to my own indulgences

Susan the evening engineer in radio

Worked in a closed environment

Every six or eight weeks

Her aroma invaded the workplace

I would tell her

She was unaware

No one else could detect it

Not menstruation

A special gift from her to me

Now I am surrounded by them

Bringing me meals

Ministering with drugs or care in the middle of the night

This is a paradise which I must escape

All of them continue as my personal obsessions

Most of their images persist

A mental gallery

I understand why Eve was responsible for the rejection from Eden

The forbidden fruit which she carried

Not an apple (as the Beatles showed on their record labels)

As the astute Germans would say

Pflaume (\* meaning “plum”)

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**HOT**

Ursula unstable unsettled

volatile coseismal shaky precarious reactive

alluring beguiling seductive but watch out for her bad side in addition

radioactive hot molten in the worst way atomic pizza sticking to the roof of your mouth

I’m afraid that keloids will form on my hands face tongue fingers

anywhere I touched her secret marinades

they have a half-life of fifty years in the memory

like long-tipped steel darts errant flying needles arrows like those that impaled Sebastian

remain embedded lodged buried integrated interred with angled barbs

tearing the flesh, ripping the soul, disemboweling the viscera upon removal

disfigured in permanence displayed to the world

so that everyone will realize this ugliness

how long will it take for her residue to vanish? measured in betabecquerels? terabecquerels?

the results worse than an icy radium enema administered in a large uncomfortable syringe by a hatchet-faced nurse on a stormy night

will I be consumed by aplastic anemia just like Marie

no, Ursula is much worse than radium

hundreds and thousands of years may pass with inexorable slowness like a tortoise in low gear

images sensations pleasures tingling will remain coursing through my spine

similar to the Zahir of Borges, she is eternal, unforgettable

a beacon blindingly blasting through time

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**My Madeleine (as in the writing of Marcel Proust)**

It began one brightened morning

As I sat struggling with coffee

An attempt to recall with precision

Details of a previous evening

The first sip I consumed of the thick black hot liquid

Invoked a vision of Evan

Yesterday evening’s dinner I wordlessly prepared

Filet of shark stuffed with a mousse of salmon and asparagus

Preceded by a French 75

Escargots baked inside a puff pastry

Accompanied by a rich Corton de Charlemagne

Grapes plucked from that tiny French vineyard

A gift from Aunt Beatrice, a woman of late 70s

Her treasured possession for four decades

A label slightly worn—turned slightly brown and gray

The appearance of being a venerable beverage

Opened it one hour in advance

To allow its fragrance to embody the room

The greatest white burgundy

As Evan arrived adorned in cravat

Thick coat tweed pants

Greeted by the dark spiciness contained in the bottle

Escaped as a turbaned genie adept in great magic

Who traveled on a flying carpet woven in Persia

A byzantine maze of color

Resembled the tender love we felt for each other

Our lives in imitation of the complex patterns

Our embrace a brief prelude

He lit the white candles to encompass this repast

Then grasped the vessel within a white towel

Administering it gently into crystal glasses

We sat without words

A European dinner

Tasted in silence

The aroma of the food

Chosen carefully

To remind Evan of what awaited

Beneath my long dress

What he once called a warm wet hand

Finally the meal ended abruptly

The span of time too long

There was urgency in our movements

The napkins tossed haphazardly

Forks and knives cast upon plates

Wine glasses half-empty

As though guests had abandoned their places

Rushing out to other domains

Grab your coat

Get your hat—Leave your worries on the doorstep

Gold dust at our feet

As a pair of smiles crept toward the canopied bed

The caress of flannel sheets

As bodies searched for each other

In partial darkness

Trembled with the expectancy

Of initial caresses

Begun in a fumbling desperate squeezing

Hands on shoulders

Hands on waist

Hands on thighs that trembled

My body opened as a flower to the morning sun

Dripping with dew

Evan was a plow

I desired longingly

Cleaving the soil of my South 40

Leaving furrows uncovered

Making me ripe for foods

Burst forth in plenty

Two finally one

The beast with two backs

An elegant fragile humping

A carnival of animals

Almost inter-species love

Tempo increases

Fear it might end

(But there is always a new beginning)

Strain to both arrive in the station

ETA? Simultaneous

My eyes plunge into Evan’s

Embrace his neck

I don’t care anymore

Out of control

Sweating like pigs

Covered in mud

Tails are curling

I curse like a sailor on shore leave

Anything to raise the electricity

Thundering flowing sparking

Bodies plugged into a 220 outlet

The aching eternity of my sex and his sex

Unity with God

Somewhere in space

Suddenly risen

We become star-children

A vast supernova

And then…the afterglow

Residual convulsions

Incandescent heat

Laughter and sheepish grins

We were such naughty children

Let’s do it again

And again…and again

Endless rapture

In eternal remembrance

An LP record playing for all time

This exotic erotic romantic ballad

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**You are probably curious why this book begins with three poems. After all, the general way that a book is begun in the 21st century is to start with a “hook.” This is a very large hook that might have attracted a big fish.**

**I will try to explain what these three pieces mean to me and by implication, to you. The first piece, Epiphany, is a meditation upon some of the joys and agonies of my early life. I was blessed (or cursed you might think) with a crystalline memory. How else would a child of about 30 months be able to recall the horrifying experience of a tonsillectomy?**

**The second poem, HOT, focuses upon the lasting effect that a woman might have upon a man’s mind, something with resonances and echoes which last more than merely the fleeting moments (when one compares them to an entire life) of a casual but intense affair.**

**The third poem, My Madeleine (which by its title is an oblique reference to the famous recollection of the dipping of a madeleine {a French cookie} into a cup of tea)—alludes to an act which stimulates the recollections which form the major journey in Swann’s Way, the first volume of Remembrances of Lost Time by Marcel Proust.**

**These poems are a subtle way of pointing the direction of the rest of this rather provocative story, a story that begins at the end of September 2008, when an unfortunate accident changed my life.**

**I had suffered for the last few years with stasis dermatitis, a condition that can cause lesions to form on the calves and feet. One of the best treatments for it, which was actually working (slowly) for me, was to have my legs wrapped in compression bandages from my knee to my foot. This meant that I was unable to take showers because I couldn’t get the bandages wet. I was forced to “sponge bathe” thoroughly each morning. When I finally lost my job programming music for airlines in 2005, ostensibly because I was the second oldest employee of the department, (Had they fired the eldest, he could have sued for age discrimination), I lost my health insurance, meaning no trips to the podiatrist for bandages.**

 **The accident was a simple one. When I was climbing the stairs in my apartment to go to bed one night, I arrived at the top step. Due to the weakness in my legs at that point, I fell backward and did a double somersault that put me down on the living room floor. I should have broken my neck or worse, but I survived, surprisingly without any broken bones. After spending eight days in the Glendale Adventist Medical Center (oddly enough the same hospital where I was born, when it was the Glendale Sanitarium), I was ignominiously discharged by the attending physician. I shook my head in disbelief and resigned myself to returning home. Everything was OK for the first day, but on the morning of the second day, I fell in the living room (not injuriously) and was unable to get up. Back to the hospital I went, spending about 5 hours in an examination room before I was sent to a nursing home.**

 **I had never been in a hospital situation before, so this was a shock. The last 24 years of my life were spent in virtual isolation. The first couple of months in my new residence I was just stunned. Christmas came and went as did New Years. Watched endless movies on the AMC channel—at least 50 or 60, from “Hannibal” directed by Ridley Scott (at least 4 times) to the old Marilyn Monroe classic “Let’s Make Love.” Was taking pain killers in excessive amounts after the morning I woke up and felt like someone was sticking a knife into my knee. Got the laptop computer just at the beginning of 2009, and began to chronicle what seemed like an endless stay on January 24. Feverishly began to write poems in order to stay sane. Just before Valentine’s Day, I got a strange idea which I began to put into motion.**

 **I wanted to see how good a writer I was. Since I was a member of a writer’s website, I asked myself if it were possible for me to create a female persona who could convincingly create poetry just for women. It was my plan to make it so that only women could read most of my creations. Men would be permitted to examine a select few. In essence then I was writing twice the number, so I could keep both creators current. I gave my female the name of Berenice Phillips, put up a graphic of a picture of actress Joan Crawford from back in the silent era when she starred in the haunting 1927 film, The Unknown (opposite Lon Chaney, Sr.).**

 **Perhaps the thing which is most inexplicable to me (and the realization only hit me as I write these words) is that for a period of time I turned into a woman (obviously not in a physical sense, but) psychologically. There was a purity of heart with which I pursued this course. There was no intent to hurt anyone. What I discovered was a Pandora’s Box of emotion, and like the mythological woman, I found at the bottom of the box…hope.**

**My words spoke for themselves and, dare I say it, I have a strong sense that a number of the women enjoyed my writings. Were they solely attracted because they thought…I was a woman?**

**I began with a fairly conservative poem that would not ruffle any feathers.**

**Movements**

What is my spirit’s direction?

Up

Down

Cartwheels

Ellipses

Parabolas

Circles

Heaven

Hell

Purgatory

Where is my equator?

Are my polar icecaps melting?

Am I a victim of global warming?

Will my beaches be flooded

Drowned

Immersed?

Will I be melted by the sun?

Frozen by the moon?

Perhaps a fugitive from the solar system…

Flying outward bound

To conquer new Universes

Or perhaps be swallowed

In a black hole

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***It posed some interesting questions, but otherwise was rather simple. A few days later, I put together something as my male self.***

**A Field of Flowers**

long to lie

in this bed of flowers

where roses carnations and orchids

stand in abundance

their bouquets blended

in an intricate potpourri

mesmerizes the senses

leaves me stunned

glassy-eyed

heavy-lidded

drowning in fragrance

their collective effect

to cast me unattended

addled incoherent

in a veiled trance

from which i can only

emerge by learning to speak

as a child forms its initial

foray into language

lie here until I am sated

overcome

unconscious

barely breathing

do not revive me

abandon me to this floral evil

***This one elicited an interesting comment from a woman who said that she never thought she would read a poem in which a man referred to “potpourri.” (???) After this came a piece written by Berenice which might appeal to someone who was overtly lesbian, although it could equally draw out the emotions of a woman who had not yet come out of the closet.***

**A Glow**

I a little older

She a bit shy

I a tad bolder

She three years younger

I a few pounds heavier

She built like a young boy

I voluptuous

Her chest two rosebuds

My nipples grew long between her lips

She a young baby

I vibrated between my legs

She replaced her fingers with her mouth

I did the same

The glories of loving discovery

Two

Lying in fields of flowers

Summer sun

Golden bodies bathed in sweat

Baking in beauty

Holding hands

Aglow

***I might not have been thinking too clearly since I had unconsciously repeated the phrase “field of flowers.” Then came a piece which, written once again by “Phillips” could be construed as a mixed message which could be taken as aimed at either persuasion.***

**A meeting**

As the anonymous poet once wrote:

Four arms, two necks, one wreathing

Two pairs of lips, one breathing

Our tongues entwined

Salivas mixed

A thick heavenly cocktail

We shared

You who had savored me

Enjoyed my goodness

A gentle bite that entered the back of my skull

Searched into infinite space

I who had tasted you

Explored you at great length

An invitation to the clear liquids

That preceded your storm

Divine transport

For a few minutes

The blessed substance of dreams

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***Then came a poem which described what might have been a common experience of early adolescence.***

**High School Dance**

Girls’ Gym

Saturday night

Very inappropriate place for

Cramming hundreds of teenagers

And fast music

Embarrassing armpits

BO

Walls were wet with sweat

Freezing outside (of course)

Run to his car

Hop in

Within five minutes

Windows are steamed

People passing by

Cannot observe the groping

Disrobing

My tits like moist baubles

A stiff prick at attention

His car has bad shocks

All that can be seen

The car bucking like a bronco

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***Two poems came next which were unabashedly sexual in nature.***

**Mike Hunt**

Always enjoyed Mike’s company

Friendly

Forgiving

A pleasure to know

Throughout my life

A constant friend

A peaceful sort generally

Sometimes demanding

Wanted my attention 24/7

Hated to ignore him

But sometimes other priorities

Invaded my life

School

Studies

Introduced him to several boyfriends

Immediately

They took to his way with words

His intelligence

The sound of his gentle voice

A juicy individual

At times they attended to him more

Than my attractive face

Shapely upper body

They liked to speak to him softly

In semi-darkness

Tell him secrets

That never caressed my ear

Quite a guy Mike

He helps me quite a bit

I love him

Treat him with respect

Buy him toys to enjoy

He’ll always love me back

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***This poem was designed to appeal to both women who loved men as well as women who loved women.***

**Connie Lingus**

Most times a man

Must be experienced

All I need is five seconds

To know if he can talk the talk

Can be helpful if he is bi-lingual

White man may speak with forked tongue

All the better

Wish he would utter sweet nothings to my innards

Perhaps handle me like a bowling ball

I’ll blow the pins out of my alley

Cause the wax on the lanes to curl

Spout out words like “Fuck” or “Shit”

May say anything when out of control

Women are a different matter

That determined look moves in waves

Over their countenance

Might bite her lower lip subtly

Smile before she begins

It will be a slow climb up a steep mountain

A steady acceleration

As she ascends the heights I’ll address her as “Baby”

“Sweetheart”, “Darling”

Urging her like a delicate and gentle mare

Want to help us reach the peak together

So we can stand at the summit in victory

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***Then, a poem which described in reverse an early love affair that occurred when I was 19, and she was 26.***

**Early Love**

We started by going to a park

Late afternoon

Making out in my car

Then evenings parked on a dark street

Southwest of Wright’s Hollyhock house

Until 3 am

Front seat of a Triumph Herald

Small cramped uncomfortable

But there was still pleasure

Finally brave enough to take me home

Small apartment where he and his mother lived

He had the bedroom

She slept on the couch

His bedroom filled with his books, thousands of records

He was consumed by art

Evidently not consumed by me

For weeks he could not get it up

Tried and tried

Wanted to be understanding

Frustration reared its head

I loved him

Always performed my best

Finally felt completely fucked

Glorious

His cock plunged into me

As he walked about

I impaled

Often depart at 5:00 am

Descend the rickety wooden stairs

Ultimately he would not marry

I cried

It was for the best

I loved too much

He would go on to have many lovers

Many lessons learned

With a good teacher

In early love

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***Next came an ingenious piece in which a woman passes before a mirror in a dimly-lit room and observes that her naked body looks almost like a face.***

**“FACE” OF A WOMAN**

The fire white-hot

Flickered wavered in the dark

Alone in the house

Returning to bed

Bearing a glass of white wine

Rich buttery to the taste

Burnt toast and asparagus to the nose

A bizarre combo

My reflection in the full-length mirror

Could barely see it

A face on the front of my body

A secret visage

Never comprehended until now

Aureoles

Two eyes

Perhaps large and dark

Maybe pale and subtle

The nipples

Hardened they are two jutting pupils

Perhaps soft and inviting

The navel

A nose

Dark deep mysterious

Maybe an “outie”

Cute childlike

Eve never had one (if you thought about it)

Below a vertical mouth

A bearded clam?

Or perhaps it is sparkling clean

Showing lips that are hungry

On either side

Thighs

Two loving arms that might embrace

A back snugly

A head

Such is a woman’s other face

The one hidden by clothes

Secret

Only displayed to a few select

The chosen

***The comments about that poem, coming from women, completely agreed with my hypothesis.***

***Then came two pieces which were not very sexual in nature, the first one not aimed specifically at one sex. The second engaged my continual interest in astronomy.***

**Journeys**

Let us take a trip

On a Möbius strip

We may find divinity

In such infinity

Fly faster than sound

On a merry-go-round

Let us take a fling

Try to grab the brass ring

We might find each other

Or locate another

Experience bliss

When we meet in a kiss

Or find we’re the bearer

Of panic and terror

The sooner to part

When we can’t find a heart

We both might ask why

Does a tear fill the eye

When it suddenly seems

That we can’t fulfill dreams…

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**Heavens and Depths**

The orbs

Spin in perfect spheres

Burn with Elysian silence

Unheard by human ears

Revolving

With celestial magic

Advance in slow procession

Some explode with violence so tragic

The Crab

For over nine centuries

Expands outward

1500 kilometers per second

Yet inexorable snail-like

Encroaches on its surroundings

Does it move like its earthbound brethren?

Appearing to move backwards

But really forwards

It emulates humans throughout

Our brief existence

Two steps forward

One step backward

Eternally the same errors

By every society

Back and forth

To and fro

Positive and negative

The fish at the bottom of the Marianas Trench

Survivors who avoid

Contact topside

Blind deaf dumb

But alive…

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***After this, I concocted an unusual poem that reflected one of my favorite films, the Charles Laughton version of “The Hunchback of Notre Dame.”***

### The Sacrifice of Quasimodo

What did the bell-ringer of Notre Dame give up?
Those whom he loved—
He gave up Emmanuel
Angélique Françoise,
Denise David
And the others
Gave a sense back to God
He could feel the low F-sharp of the largest
Its resonance escaped him

Still there was Esmeralda
A beauty whose simple elegance
Vibrated his being
Shook his firm foundation

Born Agnes and kidnapped as a child
Quasimodo left in her place
To be abandoned at Notre Dame
Was she cannibalized by the Gypsies?
Learned to dance
Played the tambourine
And what of my sacrifice?
The dimensions of my soul
Excised—Ruined by unfortunate choice
Dissolved into shadows that fade
And finally disappear

Like phantom limbs felt by amputees
Their apparent reality deceives me
Makes me feel whole
Knowing I am not
What do I miss?

The touch of loving hands
The knowledge of a tender heart
The warmth of a sunset
The chill of a winter snow
I lie upon the frozen land
Making angels
As I try to feel…once more

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***Meanwhile I was continuing in my infirm state and I wrote a poem about one of the truly angelic people I met during my nursing home stay.***

**Carmen**

The first angel who appeared

Sweet tender

Black eyes from Honduras

Revealed that they refer to her people as “Catrachas”

Anointing me with warm water

Mixed with sweet-smelling soap

Carefully cleaning me

Making me pure again

I longed for the touch of this lamb

She uttered honest things

As though we were lovers.

Said that her husband was always saying

“Obra las piernas!”

Repeatedly she had to tell him that she was tired

From her wearisome work

Were I a bird

I would have nested carefully in her hair

Investing it with peace and joy

Mia cariña, mia novia

Mia bonita muñeca

***The final phrases, in Spanish, are endearing terms, ending with “my pretty doll.” Carmen is easily the most sensitive person I met in the nursing home. My memory is very strong of when she came to me on Christmas Day 2008 and hugged me. It was the first touch of another person I had felt in years; it was something I welcomed warmly. I can still feel the sensation of the young woman putting her head on my shoulder. Another indelible etching.***

***Of course, there were many people I could observe (or at least hear) in neighboring rooms.***

**NEIGHBORS**

Alonso in Room 24

Always sounds like he is moaning when he speaks

Upper body covered with very inartistic tattoos

Must have been a friend who helped to decorate his body

In a drunken stupor in Guadalajara

Zeke—gray-haired

Ancient

Seated in a wheelchair

He walks the halls

Whenever he tries to stand

Usually at the locked emergency door

Desperate to escape these confines

An alarm attached to his back sounds

Everyone can hear it

At worst he sets off the fire alarm on the door

Initiating a flurry of activity as they try to silence it

Leslie down the hall

Who screams unintelligibly

Is someone making love to her?

Or is she being strangled?

One of her roommates is silent

Despite her racket

Calmly ignores her

The other is a quiet Asian woman who occasionally waves at me

From her wheelchair

Carries a doll of Tweety with her

To which she murmurs at night

The far hallway is where reside

Those mute creatures

Who lie in the hallways during the day

Those whom I refer to as “The Dead”

I see their solemn faces staring off into space

Who do they see?

Who do they imagine is held in their gaze?

Untold visions

Mental photographs of those long departed

Or are they looking at nothing?

Leaving us to ponder the objects within their eyes’ grasp.

***Many times through this period, images of all aspects of my life flowed through me, and once again, the image of my first childhood memory made its presence known.***

**DELUGE**

In the middle of this incarceration

I am flooded

By a kaleidoscope of images from my life

The earliest beginnings of life when I awakened

On an operating table at age 2½ during a tonsillectomy

To vomiting when I was first taken to school

(Already I had an unconscious fear of other humans)

To my first experience of going to church

And being frightened by a woman

From whom I sensed, by her appearance,

Unsavory and bizarre thoughts and desires

(seemingly unsettling for an ecclesiastical atmosphere)

To childhood crushes on my kindergarten teacher

a young girl from the neighborhood

teenager from Flagstaff, Arizona who was the niece of a neighbor

first snowfall I experienced

realization that my parents had divorced when I was eighteen months old

alcoholism which almost captured my mother as I grew up

Her numerous and unfamiliar boyfriends

Hearing her strange cries from the living room

As a faceless man tried to bring her to orgasm

(I thought someone was trying to kill her since I had no knowledge of sex)

Elementary school and the perfection of my grades (except I couldn’t keep a neat desk)

Junior high school and my first more serious crushes (which I still didn’t understand)

High school—my wholesale rejection of my friends

My discovery of the contrapuntal music of JS Bach

My appreciation of his immense talent,

Glenn Gould

UCLA and my failure as a chemistry major

My rejection there for a lack of academic scholarship

Getting to know my true mentor Paul Mayo and how I surpassed him with my obsessions with music

A career in radio, professional singing, creativity for the major commercial airlines

And the rest of my myriad careers

Today I sit in a hospital gown

On the edge of an uncomfortable bed

Trying to understand why I am here

My friends (who it seems) are too busy with their lives

They are small mammals concerned with their own survival

I try to fathom this seemingly bottomless pool into which I have fallen

Dreaming of living

(and loving) again

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***Three times in my life between 1968 and 1981, I had separate experiences of another woman which had an unusual similarity and I expressed this in the following three poems which form a triptych.***

**A Trinity of Unions**

**I--Bird From The Heavens**

Jill

Small avian-like

Perched early one morning on a cushioned bench

Pig-tailed looking befuddled

Large brown eyes spoke weighty tomes

Was it confusion or ecstasy?

Told a breathless tale of a boyfriend

Earlier injected her with methedrine

She flew at the speed of sound

As I, motionless, observed

Intrigued by this tiny creature

Referred to herself as the Earth Mother

Bloomed with knowledge beyond her tender years

Had a false tooth

Thrust out tauntingly (on occasion)

Turned herself into a witch from Macbeth

Dressed in black drenched in planets and comets

Topped by a peaked hat

Rubbing oily hands over a steaming cauldron

Strange magic personified

Eventually met her female soulmate-friend Kathy

Another Wiccan presence

Kathy drove us late one afternoon

Her Trans-Am, a gasoline-powered rocket

Climbed the on-ramp onto the South 405

Arrived on the beach in Santa Monica

The salt air and smells of the endless Pacific

Embodied a greeting to our lungs and bodies

The ocean began to speak in a language almost like English

But not quite

Charmed us in a rustling voice

Casting star-shaped patterns across the glittering sand

While small birds scattered in myriad geometrical shapes

Carried by stick-like legs

Mystified by the experience

Was it truly the voice of God?

Without warning

My thoughts suddenly welded with Jill

I was hers; she was mine

Joined in an eternal moment

A mystical late afternoon fusion of love

As a sunset blazed

Embraced us in a coat of warmth

Gull’s cries echoed from above

Waves spoke in quiet sibilants

The water intoned a peaceful aria

Her tawny locks now unfettered

Long beauteous

Brown softness against the sky

In a brief space of ten minutes

We were conjoined entwined

Blessed with the holiness of this sacred union

Years later she ventured to Haight-Ashbury

A love child adorned in flowers and beads

Final touchdown in New England

To ultimately give birth to Soyala

A living celebration of a Hopi festival

Late one night in a log cabin

During a snowstorm in Vermont

Completed her life’s metamorphosis

Evolved into a professional midwife

A loving usher

Hundreds of newborns cradled in her tenderness

The memory of the brief parcel of time we shared

Continues to haunt me

After four decades

Our love remains

Undimmed by the passage of life

**II—An Intimate Silence**

Playing Satie’s Venomous Obstacles

Broken-down upright

Some keys absent

The appearance of bad dental care

Unnecessary ones for this music

Athletes running laps on the track below

Haunted luminous green eyes peered in wonder

Through the chicken wire

Embedded in glass

What is that?

Said a face surrounded by a pageboy

My explanation followed

Discovered a budding pianist

Who drew lyric sounds from the keyboard

An accompanist

For my best friend

The voice teacher

Then came the fateful opening of a door

Soon a date was planned

Nervously awaited

As the appointed evening arrived

Looking formal

Actually wearing a tie

Enjoyed the performance

But curiosity

Was killing me about the end of the evening

After the recital

In a quiet car before her house

The crickets chirped in the night

I touched her subtle breast

That doesn’t bother you

Does it?

You don’t hear me stopping you—the reply

A passionate kiss followed

Many afternoons of kisses, caresses, gropings,

Tastings, and mutual love

Unusual for a Catholic girl

Barely eighteen but already a woman

Jenice

Appeared

Evolved

Matured

Her adult qualities shocking in one so delicate so young

A flower bloomed blossomed

Her hair grew long

Photographed her amid trees and bushes

The road seemingly emerged from her head

As though a well-traveled path of thoughts flowed from her mind

Watched a tall sprinkler as it cast rainbows

In circles through the air

For at least two hours

As bodies shook with intensity

Filmed her as she sat before mausoleum crypts

Stoic beatific profile

Gaze approached heavenward

Two years later

We sat clothed in my bedroom

Found ourselves enveloped in our mutual gaze

Suddenly—as we looked enrapt

Through our pupils

The liquidity of the aqueous humors

Into bottomless darkness

Two souls unified

Complete harmony

Felt once again like the moment with Jill

Déjà vu

Although we later parted

Amidst late adolescent confusion

The memory remains of the moment

When two beings clutched their intimacy

Without physicality

Without words

In intimate silence

**III--Valerie**

Equine she was

Willowy

Blonde mane

A smile a permanent feature

Perhaps in fantasy she sported a tail

Buffeted in a wind at full gallop

Pacific Valerie

She belonged to another

But no matter

Frequent bottles of white wine

Occasional meals

Consumed privately

A pleasure to bask in her unbridled spirit

A fanatic of polo

Which she termed “war on horseback”

Owned a horse

Would ride with ocean breezes

A phantasmagorical union of Woman and Pegasus

One late afternoon

Waited for a table in Malibu

Sat with her back to a wall of weathered wood

Chatting quietly

Our imaginations engaged

Souls inexplicably intertwined

Enmeshed

We were momentary lovers

Our bodies embracing

On a distant planet far from Earth

Our spirits communed in a universe of other heavenly bodies

Fleetingly thoughts of Jill and Jenice

In rapid succession

Now a third visitation

Magnified importance

Searched for the meaning

Valerie a bookend to this sacred collection

Jill the other

Jenice the sacred bond

After a few years

Valerie had vanished into ether

Consumed by Hodgkin’s Disease

Latter days drifted in a wheelchair

Mine the unwitting duty—the bearer of news of her death

To her lover

Though her mother gave thanks to me

For giving Valerie the site of her final resting place

When we visited a cemetery

The top of a sun-drenched hill

An unmarked spot

Where she can prance in eternal dressage

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***Talking about this cemetery brought back to my mind another erotic memory of the past.***

**Memory of a mausoleum**

Outside

Overcast day

Chilly

The floor within the vast room

Hexagonal tiles of white marble

Resemble the business room of a mortuary

The individuals ensconced within gray flecked with gold

Espy the solemn stone bench at the very center of the room

Their names emblazoned in gold lettering

Announce invisible presences

Voiceless behind walls

Silent observers of this clandestine romance

A scene as peaceful as the mortality to which they had fallen

Her mouth tasted sweet as we embraced

Our tongues searching to comprehend our secrets

Our hands lost in caresses

Seeking

Finally I discovered her moist center

She yielded

Spreading her lower limbs

Inviting me as a warm leather glove

Her flesh transformed to scarlet as she panted

Hips thrust uncontrollably

Independent of her will

Stared into that dim space

Our eyes locked without a key

Her gaze frightened but dared to continue

A new delightful adventure

Captured in the memory of those spirits whose remains

Lay behind the flowers’ decoration look

Blooms left by the living who would never have imagined

This erotic spectacle

***A heterosexual poem written by Berenice.***

**Rhapsody**

Boisterous bountiful bliss-whipped

How I love love

Want it to travel so arms are a-tingle

Body aglow

With passionate blushing

The lady in red

Wear it proudly like a badge of honor

A never-ending rush

I want to feel forever

How I love love

Bathing in it

Surounded by large bubbles

Beauteous fragrances

Maybe a glass of merlot

The old merlot

Thick heavy

Turned your mouth and teeth a dark red

So people would laugh

Slightly high

How I love love

Boundless immensity

Thriving on it

Luxuriant sensations

Ah, how I love love

Its density wrapping cloaking me

On my tummy

Getting fucked so I can’t see your face

Anonymity for a few minutes

How I love

Love

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***A detailed piece that talked about how the mythological woman Pandora was created, again indulging my interests in mythology.***

**Building a Mystery (The creation of Pandora)**

Aphrodite

Her beauty donated to the cause

She who evolved from the horror

Severed genitals of Cronus

Thrown into the sea

She rose from the sea foam

Become the ideal for all women

Would her sensuous qualities cause

Strife and jealousy to spring forth,

Interrupt the peace between the gods,

A “holy” war?

Not—because she was married to Hephaestus

The heavens and the world were safe

Hermes

Fleet of feet

With wingéd shoes

The patron of boundaries

Mercury—Changeable erratic

A bee dancing from flower to flower

Bringer of dreams

Librarian of fantasy

Filled with fox-like cunning

An escort of the departed

But a guide to travelers by night

Demeter

Goddess of grain and fertility

She who nourishes the earth

Flowers open

Trees grow

Preserves marriage

Keeps this sacred bond

From dissolution

Preventing anger deceit

Extra-marital lust

Athena

Goddess of intelligence

An intelligent dressmaker

Teacher of needlework and weaving

Grey eyes

Logician, strategist

Sharp!

Shaper of political arts,

Reasoning planning and foresight

A special deity

Apollo

Teacher of the lyre

Superior musical talent

Knows how to haunt those

Who are sensitive

Especially women

A pop star who revels in sound

Probably handsome

Finally chased after Daphne

But she changed into a laurel tree

Poor Apollo

Couldn’t seal the deal

But at least he could reside in a nice

Shaded place

From all of these gods sprang Pandora

A divinely crafted woman

Alluring desirous

Could move like a gazelle

Potentially one of the great

A bold and wily female

Manually dexterous

Great singer

With a great teacher

Poseidon gave her a pearl necklace

Making her even more attractive

Steaming

Possessed of hotness

The sea god also said she would never drown

Superior swimmer

Like a beautiful fish without the smell

Then the god Zeus added his two cents

Made her human

Mischievous idle

Constantly doing her nails

Hermes entrusted the vessel, the box or the pithos

Never open this gift

Hera added the final touch

A dash of curiosity

One day she opened the box

All of the evils, ills, diseases

Things that man had never known

Unleashed on mankind

A dire moment

Pandora remorseful

Seeing the error of her ways

Suicidal

Saddened

Everyone hated her

Glancing a last time

Into the dark box

There was one thing left

At the bottom

Like a winning lottery ticket…Hope

***Then I wrote something (as Berenice) which was just plain silly.***

**^#%@\*$&#?!?(\*&&\*\*$ \* (Marks)**

Let’s argue over a !

A misplaced ?

A few “ that have no meaning

And an ‘ in the wrong location

How about a lowly ampersand

That doesn’t represent a conjunction?

There’s a reason in printing parlance

That they call a ! a “bang”

It’s a gunshot commanding attention

What of the ellipsis…dribbling along

To interrupt…the flow?

The guillemets that sometimes indicate speech

The caret ^ which cannot be eaten

The pilcrow which shows you where a paragraph goes

Brackets [ or { or (parenthetical marks)

It makes the head spin when all we seek is a little.

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***A poem which equivocated once again the effects that love can have upon a woman (written by Berenice)***

**Scars**

The remnants of lovers

Scar my skin

Hide beneath long sleeves

Cover parts of legs

Draped in paisley

Sometimes the subject of an evening exam

Privately

Accompanied by rich cabernet

A fruity blood

Many are small

Minute marks

The makers probably not cognizant

Of trails and paths they left

A quarter moon memory of Martin

Brief affair

Back seat of his ’68 Mustang

Once when Mom wasn’t home

In her bed

Where sometimes I overhear

Nights of love

Of which I never inquire

The longest one

Nearly a straight line

From waist to knee

Two years in lust with Will

At most an inch wide

The flesh slightly raised

A little puffy

Sometimes it catches on panty hose

An inopportune run

Middle of a potentially passionate evening

No bright lights

Don’t want to explain

Tonight

Maybe over a morning Earl Grey

Buttered croissant

Perhaps not till a hurried note

Scribbled on a bus

Out of town

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***A creation about the community of women.***

**The Huddle**

When we cluster

And murmur together

Profess affection

Touch a cheek

With the back of a friendly hand

Smile and the smile is returned

I witness the power of love

Manifest around me

I want to shake myself

Pinch my arm

Awaken from this dream

Somehow I know

It is not real

But it is…

The world can be such an unfriendly place

Beset with unexpected sadness

People that position themselves

To take advantage

Yes

It may be true

We are animals

But we can ascend like gods

Fill in the blanks

Promulgate wholeness

Tenderness

Forget the surrounding badness

Develop a fondness

For life

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***A philosophical piece that showed the serious side of Berenice.***

**The Slow Age**

A coldness in the air

Worse than the chill of winter frost

Slows the movement of arms, of legs

Fingers are affected

The world snowbound

Even bundled bodies barely respond

Circulation slowed

Blood the consistency of thick syrup

Approaching absolute zero

Cessation of all molecular movement

Who has pulled the switch

To put the world in a deep freeze?

Perhaps it was a darker more sinister hand

Not God

Who wields the controls

Maybe this was done to save the world

To put both good and evil in a sleeping state

All mankind

All flora and fauna at rest

Until the sun will show its face again in benevolence

Not shame

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 ***I reflected upon a 1984 journey I had made to Olympia, Washington.***

**Oregon Coast**

Espied a picture

A baby seal asleep on a beach

Of the Oregon Coast

Quiet and delicate

Cute unharmed

At peace with the world

An area abounding

With stone monoliths

Just offshore

Remember a visit there

Driving up to Coos Bay

Five in the morning

Fog just lifting

Sunrise on a cool day

Stopped at a prominent point

To snap the charms

Of rocks and beach

Alighted from the car

After a few minutes

Felt as if being watched

I turned about to face the hillsides

On the east

Thirty sheep dotting the steep slope

Oversized cotton balls

Stopped mid-munch in the morning graze

In unison

Regarding me with serious looks

Indifference

Thought I should move on

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***A poem which was a take-off of a poem written by another online female writer, except I used a different day of the week in the title. In addition it refers to the games that some people play on the internet.***

**Bored on a Sunday Night**

My computer hums on the desk

As I do sometimes when sucking my favorite lollipop
Utter silence between the walls

The phone doesn’t ring

It’s off the hook

Does anyone care?
Decide to have some fun.
Fire up the webcam

Finished the bottle of wine

Let’s open another

Decide to give them

An extreme close-up

Something only my gynecologist would see

Within two minutes

A hundred e-mails

With photos

I have my choice

The phones are fairly local

Within 30 minutes??

Bored on a Sunday night

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***Here is a poem truly difficult for me to relate. Although Berenice supposedly wrote this, it was actually about a totally crazy relationship I had with an enigmatic lady I met quite by accident but with whom I experienced many psychic unities that seemed to happen repeatedly over this “12 week” relationship. All of it is related in reverse as a woman commenting on a man.***

**Laboratory**

I remember the book Nine and a Half Weeks

How turned on I became

After the impressions of this brief and strange affair

Wherein the woman becomes broken

Loses her sensitivity to anything but pain

I had to find out for myself

Started slowly

Met a guy by chance

Music a common bond

Said he would give me a tape of something I didn’t own

Gave him my business card

A month went by—nothing

Gave up inside—He had seemed right

Then

He called

Heart jumped

Apologized and said I would receive the tape in a week

Put on my calm seductive voice

Waited for five hours

Phone rang again

First words out of my mouth—

What took you so long to call back?

Silence

He didn’t want to give me the wrong impression—

And that is???

Made a date in two days

He was distant forty miles away

Put on my slinkiest dress cut up the thigh

He arrived looked about

Told him I was obsessed with science-fiction

He had read some—not much.

Went out to dinner

Could hardly wait till we got home

We looked deeply at each other

His expression a bit bewildered

Could see he had never met anyone like me

Thought I was going to lose him

I told him to do with me as I liked.

Couldn’t be much more forward

First position him standing me lying on my desk

Second missionary

Third dog-style

Fourth me on top

Second date

More common ground—The Mendelssohn Octet

Stayed in bed for two days

Exhausted him

Asked if he had read Nine and a Half Weeks

Within two days—purchased a copy

He was intrigued

Then…once upon a time

On a dark and stormy night

Decided to experiment

Pulled out colorful scarves

Tie me up

He complied

On my back

Wrists bound together

Knees bent back

Ankles tied together

Wrists and ankles one now

I was ready

Next time he appeared at the door

Large bag in his arms

Produced a small straw basket

Inside a metal chain with sizable links

Warmed in his car

Almost hot on the fingers

“See what you can do with this”

Uncoiled a six foot chain

Then inserted some links

Pulled it taut over my stomach

Stimulating

I was ready again

More daring now

A small chain with a lock to enclose my neck

And a long leather leash

Wore them together

I looked like a pet

Ready once more

Then I told him to whip me with the leash.

He was reluctant

But he did—back of my thighs

My ass

Raising welts which I touched softly

I was in lust

Then I asked him to piss on me

Give me a warm golden shower

He arrived with huge sheets of silver mylar

To enwrap the bed

He said he didn’t know if he could

Bring a six-pack—that oughta do it

After three beers decided he was ready

Put it on my tits

Dirty unclean sexy

Then I did the same to him as he fucked me

We were turning into animals

Wanted him to pour oils on me

Kept going more quickly

Like speeding on the freeway

Then the tears

My emotions a terrifying roller coaster

Getting depressed

Couldn’t speak to him on the phone

Like I was dead

Then came my question…

Where will it end?

Didn’t want to know

Had to avoid him

Incessant phone calls

Answered by machine

Love letters that begged to continue

Told my shrink

My existence was fading

He recommended shock treatments

Will it work?

Probably

So I got zapped

Memories vanished

Saw him once more

I remembered his face

But his cock unfamiliar

Had to move finally

Did not trust myself

A step closer to the pit

Needed to step back

Breathe deep

Regain composure

Pull my being together

Live

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***The ancient Scythians would often celebrate their victories by scalping the vanquished. Often as the poem explains, they would soften them by rubbing with their hands, use them as rather durable napkins, and hang their collections of scalps on their horses to transport them. Berenice wrote the following about this grisly practice.***

**The Napkin**

Scythian man

Wiping his face

Looking about with innocence

Odd brown napkin

Caught my eye

Looking closer

Appeared to have a hair upon it

Was about to say something

Distracted by a beauty

At the next table

Drawn back to the man

Unusual voice

Speaking Iranian

My eyes followed

Mesmerized

As he started to leave

Tablemate whispered

He probably softened it

By rubbing on his hands

A question mark upon my face

Let’s watch

As he mounts his horse

See there on the reins

I saw more napkins

A raised eyebrow from

The tall man at my table

A collection of scalps

Looked much more closely

Ran out the back

To hide my haste

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***Arabella was a woman with whom I had a casual relationship as a man. In the next poem I was able to express (as a feminine person) the way I truly felt without her knowing it***

**ARABELLA**

A singular joy

A rich contralto voice

Echoes like an underground lake

In unseen caverns

Hidden from eyes that pry

Fingers that apply a foreign touch

I so want to hold her

Comfort the silent tears

That issue from closed and moistened eyes

Pressed against my shoulder

Touch her hand in peace

During the traversal of the road

Whose end remains unregarded

Its point of termination blind invisible

Yet I am frightened

Because within her I feel a power

That might consume me

Render me helpless

Staring into violet-tinged space

Beyond which lies a private darkness

Lost in her depths

A mysterious fun-house ride

That might evoke alarm

Alternately with laughter of insanity

Balanced on a precipice

I cling to Arabella

Lest I fall into deep chasms

Within my spirit

From which only she

Can rescue my resolve

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***Once again indulging my interest in extra-terrestrial matters, came a poem about thos travelers through the heavens—comets. This was expecially timely due to the appearance of Comet Lulin.***

**Thoughts on Comets**

Fair-weather friends of the solar system

They pass and disappear

Slowly

Having the appearance of paint

Dripping down a cosmic wall

A giant tear from the eyes of God

Some are more like people

Flying backwards like Lulin

“Comet Lulin is getting higher in the early-morning hours”

 Said one online authority

What is Lulin taking?

A new type of acid

From the exuded remains of Timothy Leary

Psychic psilocybin

Orbital opium

Magical marijuana

When it gets near the sun

It develops a coma

Passes out

Like it’s dead

I guess no physicality

Like comas in humans

Actually a tail

Lulin has a disconnected tail

Like me…Ever so horny

After HE stopped touching me

But I was talking about heavenly bodies

(There it goes again…)

Oh, Zubenelgenubi!!!

Guess that’s more acceptable than Fuck!

Most comets don’t come around for years

As do some men

Show up one morning

“Hi baby! Wanna have sex?”

Lulin is a non-periodic comet

No menses

No bleeding across the heavens

No Kotex or Tampax

Some Chinese think comets are bad luck

Like daughters-in-law

They say “Oh my God! My son married a comet!”

I’ll be watching for Lulin

Just to say “hi”

Maybe I’ll give him that idiotic gesture

“The Rose Queen wave”

Which really means “I could care less”

Maybe someday a Tournament of Roses queen will go for it…

Screw up her arm and hand forever

Become a physical cripple

“I was just showing you all how happy I am”

No commercial endorsements in the offing.

Think I’ll get myself

A coronal mass ejection

Then take a nap

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***Next was a poem based on a quote from the famed Lebanese writer Kahlil Gibran.***

**Pondering Kahlil Gibran**

*“For what is it to die*

*But to stand naked in the wind*

*And melt into the sun?”*

A resplendent question

Drifted in and out of me

Like tides throughout my life

A dissolution into the air

How would that feel?

I guess much like a transformation

Into The Invisible Woman

Clothes and accoutrements fall away

Leaving me unclothed but unseen

Ultimate freedom

To become one with the Light of Lights

Burn for thousand of centuries

Unrelenting warmth

At the end

Evolution into a red giant

Perimeter expanding

To engulf and absorb planets

An ultimate power in the universe

A transcendental God

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***A poem about a woman making love to another woman***

**Her**

When I spread my legs for her, she looked longingly

down the flanks of my thighs trying to think about what her

head would feel like when my skin encircled her ears

as though she wore a set of headphones on

tuned specifically to me.

I wanted to feel her tongue flicking its magic on

my clit and driving me crazy—up one wall and down the other

she speaks in that voice a foreign accent

I want to die because that is the sound that talks to me

when the lights are out and the breeze is warm

a fleeting spirit with winged feet

floating like swift Hermes

dancing on my soul

-----------------------------------------

***This poem evoked an absolutely OUTRAGEOUS comment from a female reader, which was posted where anyone could read it. I gulped at bit at the audacity.***

Mmmm, all it needs? Her sharp red nails drawn delicately teasingly down the inside the softest flesh of your thighs, digging driving you crazy into your knee pits, feeling your abandonment to pleasure, torturing your a-hole with a single finger playing with your entrance opening and closing like a rosebud in reponse as her lizard like tongue flicks in and out of your dripping cave, clamping down to suck your honeydew, her nose prodding your swollen clit flooded with sensation and passion while in your brain lightning bolts of electricty drive you out of your head, your nipples standing to attention straining to flicked and teased. competing for attention with your ear lobes which need to be stimulated as she plays the telephone game with you digging her wet little fingertips in your ears reciting poetry. A juddering shuddering through your spine and release of animal energy as she sets the beast in you free.

Or something of that order.

***I guess she liked it…not much to say after that.***

***That caused me to a a bit more brazen in my expressions, and out came:***

**Synonymously Speaking**

(an exploration of a few words for the most intimate part of a female body)

She called it her twat

Bush quim or cooze

Knowing that there was little to lose

Hair pie and pussy

Slit gash or hoo-hoo

Folks would opine she was probably cuckoo(?!)

The name she liked best of course

Was simply cunt

For when she said it too loudly in mixed company

People would turn and stare wondering who the hell

Said what most feel is one of the most offensive

Utterances in the English language

But someone would inevitably

Give her a thumbs-up

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***A rather odd piece…appeared next.***

**The Divinity Of Love**

The soft fluttering

Angels wings in noiseless motion

The creatures hover placidly

Embossing my consciousness

Marking my psyche

With heaven’s pleasantries

Haloes administer a gentle glow

Mobile circular boundaries

Heavenly lights

Illuminate the runway ahead

Cutting through miasmas

Fog smoke other vaporous exhalations

To guide me in this unending quest

For love peace

The joyous exhumation

Of my sleeping awareness

Dozing in her arms

My head at rest

Upon her tranquil bosom

The utterances of a madman

Sometimes precede my sleep

Laughing insanely

At times a greeting in the morning

Harsh unloving

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***At this point, things began to become a little scary. I guess I demonstrated to the women that I had a certain degree of maturity in my words. Although my posted bio had claimed I was in my mid-20s, the e-mails I began to receive had a certain confessional quality. Some of them were expressed with a high degree of desperation which was completely unexpected by me. A very lovely young lady whose posted photo showed her to be a darling petite woman had been writing some fairly strong and emotionsl poetry about relationships. When I sent her a private e-mail about these matters, she filled in the blanks.***

Care-bear,

I'm not actually sure where to even begin. I'm in love with a guy from a different state. Talk about hopeless? We've done things, very sexual things, over a web-cam. Now, I'm starting to feel dirty. It’s my little secret.

On top of that, his ex girlfriend is in the picture - even though she’s eight months pregnant with another man’s child. She’s a whore…that’s stupid, what am I? On top of that, she’s still dating the other guy, but they are still close. She isn't sure the relationship is going to last with her boyfriend. If she breaks up with him, I bet anything she’s going after the guy that I'm in love with.

Ugh! Mein Gott, mein lieber Gott! She is such a selfish bitch, a manipulator you wouldn’t believe. She also knows that I am in love with him, but it isn't like she really gives a rat’s ass about it. I really thought she was my friend. She had no problem with it when he and I started up, since she is taken and supposedly in love with her boyfriend. Now that she knows that I'm going there to see him, and a few of my other friends, she is acting up.

I do not know what to do. I love him. It just hurts so terribly much.

~Baby Doll

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

***I reacted by sending BD this.***

Baby,

It sounds as though any future relationship with him will be fruitless because of the complexity of all that is going on. I know that the webcam thing can be very hot, but it is not something you really need at the present. You need love and personal attention. He seems too distracted. I could be wrong but you might be wise to just stop communicating with him. It will probably be very tough, but there will be worse effects on your psyche if you don’t end it. I don’t know if you read my poem Laboratory but it talks about a relationship that spins out of control and the woman is the ultimate victim. The guy is on the sidelines.

Think about it seriously and dispassionately before moving further into potentially dark places.

C-Bear

***A day or so later, BD sent me this.***

Care,

I'm going myself to a place where I no longer care, about him, about anything. I’m scared that I won’t ever be able to feel again. I want this pain to stop, so I'll cut out this bleeding heart and just become excessively sexual - with no emotional ties whatsoever.

Baby Doll

***This note demanded a response, perhaps pointing another direction for het. My e-mail went like this.***

Baby,

That is not the solution either. It is merely just another rabbit-hole to fall down.

First, I must ask how old you are. Be honest!

Secondly, you need to give yourself time alone. Yes, alone, but not in a depressive way. You just need time away from ALL relationships so you can get a proper perspective on love and the rest of the world.

You just need time away from these intense dramas. In order to survive this, you need to be like a stone skipping across a pond, and NOT sinking into the water. At present, you are not able to stay over the water adequately.

I went through a period when I loved that craziness, but that's just what it is--craziness. The world is in a strange place--probably brought about by the insanity of GW Bush. He didn't help the process at all. That would really be in your best interest.

It's also necessary to talk with someone about these issues--an impartial observer--someone besides me. I certainly can lend a sympathetic ear. But you need someone you can communicate with ANY time, not just when you happen to get online.

You are potentially a sweet and lovely woman. You need to preserve this.

Please continue to let me know how things are going.

Care-Bear

***I didn’t hear from this lady again. I pray that she solved the problem. I think I gave her a correct assessment, but who can say?***

***I’ve often pondered suicide, but I’m pretty much of a chicken. I want to see how it all turns out, for better or worse. Still, being in the hospital situation caused me to think about it. Ergo, the next poem.***

**Exits**

Keep examining the hands

Wonder which would be the least painful method

For allowing my essence to flow outward

Would it be a squirting

Or slow like molasses?

I am probably too afraid to take the idea seriously

It is an occasional diversion

During these long waking hours

I continually dream of walking

Walking to that secret spot in Descanso Gardens

(a place originally owned by a man named Verdugo)

*The Spanish word for “executioner”*

The place inside of a giant stand of camellias where my lover and I used to neck

And give pleasure to each other

Invisible to those who walked on the dirt path a few feet away

Walking through the buildings and gravesites at Forest Lawn

A place I once loved for its serene atmosphere

The place where I presided over my mother’s funeral service

And made the relatives laugh

When I played audio of her recollections which I had documented

*Her* exit was a celebration

During the subsequent lunch a martini glass flew off the bar and landed on its base before us.

“I guess Mom wants a drink” was my response.

The gathered laughed nervously

But they fell silent when the identical thing happened a few minutes later.

All of us are waiting to have the FINAL word

Will we be given the chance for that last hurrah?

***The anecdote—a true and intimidating experience. I took it all in stride. After all, I wanted to be a funeral director at one time I know about the entire process, and I loved the TV series “Six Feet Under.” Perhaps watched all the episodes three times. An amazing creation!***

***The craziness continued during my enforced incarceration. I describe the apparent way things happen.***

**RANDOMNESS**

The one aspect of this place I despise most

One day the “housekeeper” arrives at 7:30

(before breakfast)

The next day it is 8:15

Cleanser from a spray bottle

Mopping with some acrid smelling solution

She looks much too serious

For a young lady in her 20s

One day students come in to inquire and gawk

Take vitals

Some days with an electronic sphygmomanometer

Some days with the old manual kind

(Using a cuff and a stethoscope)

Some days hauling one on wheels with an enormous dial

(I feel like I’m on the now-defunct quiz show “Beat the Clock”)

Some days with thermometers on a plastic strip

Some days with a battery-operated one

(I asked why they don’t take rectal temperatures)

Remark elicited a frown

You never know who will come in the middle of the night

Leaving the door open

To allow the bright light outside to flood the room

A few weeks ago

Awakened at 4:30 in the morning

Blonde woman arriving

To announce she was going to take my blood

(Didn’t notice the cell phone between her chin and shoulder)

All I heard was her words “I feel like I’m going to pass out”

I instantly said “Maybe you don’t want to be doing this now!?”

Imagining an unintentional embolism

She came in again a few days later

An early morning vampire

To extract blood from my roommate

I asked “What’s your name?”

She replied “Mercy.”

I said, “Can I get some of that?”

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

***One of my next poems was the following which, when I (as my real self) posted it on another writing website, received an EXCELLENT rating from one of the most critical writers there—one who had gone ballistic and flamed other poets due to what she perceived as unfair criticism about her own work.***

**OBSESSIONS**

As I recline in my current solitary world

Pictures continue to rise from my depths

Reminiscent of those orchids painted by O’Keeffe

So feminine

The two of us realized the same beauty

A womanly point of infinity

A forest where one could lose oneself

A chalice brimming with goodness

Surrounded by a vestibule of variegated colors

Where one can drink of ecstasy

Instill shivers

Moans gasps guttural sounds

Vibrations that quicken the pulse

Could I extend my tongue into that private space

Kiss the holy of holies

See a smile bloom upon a gentle face

Eyes closed as she thrusts herself into blackness

Where only the distant body feels

Extends its senses to become One

In a place beyond the physical world

On a plane filled with sensation

Electric charges through the spine

Impossible to describe

Except with a sultry glance

A squint of the eyes

Perhaps a knowing wink

Maybe just an intense stare

A face expressive of Teresa sculpted by Bernini

Open-mouthed

Ecstatic

In private I look at my collection

Some dry and perfect

Others covered with thick viscosity

Having an appearance of imploring

To be united with its counterpart

Seeming merry or perhaps a sullen pout

A wordless invitation

Capped by the man in a boat

Whatever its designation in English

In German, Scheide, the scabbard used to protect a sword

In Spanish one could say abertura, cuchillada, tajo

It is a paradise

That begs for endless love

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

***Another observation about hospital existence came out in the following—a piece that inspired my musical side.***

**THE DEMENTED**

A dense polyphonic chorus

The crazies are singing tonight

Might have haunted Gabrieli

Had he been within the galleries of St. Marks Venice

At midnight

The man who barks and alternately laughs

In consistent counterpoint with the man who yells

“Die! Die! Die!” at the top of his lungs

Carol above in her shrill soprano

Underlined by a cantus firmus from the man in the distance

Screaming “Heyyyyy! Ho” in a lyric tenor

The TV has been spitting its white noise

Midst a flurry of comforting snow on the screen

Soon I will try to drown them out with Robbie Robertson

Singing Fallen Angel

The paean to Richard Manuel

Who committed suicide years ago

Could I steal like a pirate in the night

I would silence them one by one

Bringing peace to the darkness

The inmates are taking over the asylum

Perhaps they will distribute

Shots brimming with “truzcina”

At the coming of the dawn

That we can toast over a parting glass

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

***“Truzcina” is the Polish word for “poison.” If you recall the movie “Schindler’s List” this was the label on the bottle of the clear solution that the doctors and nurses were administering to the patients before the Nazis arrive—the people who could not be evacuated or moved—their demise a kind form of euthanasia.***

***\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_***

***Several relationships in the nursing home turned a bit weird. One day a young lady came in to deal with my roommate. (I haven’t dealt with him yet, but in due time.) Since I was in a supine position, I raised the curtain between us to see who it was. A haughty young woman in her late 20s addressed me, saying “I don’t appreciate you doing that.”***

***“Why is that?”***

***“Because you’re like all men.”***

***“What does that mean?”***

***“You’re looking at my ass,” she said matter-of-factly.***

***I replied, “Honey…I’m not looking at your ass.” She had rather beautiful features, and inspired me to write:***

**Brigitte**

Bright

Shining as the moon on a cloudless night

Light as the door she opens

Flooding the room in brilliance

She greets me with a radiant morning smile

Elegant beams embrace me

With love

With her boundless heart

The bliss she emits with honesty

She hungers for fulfillment

Which God brings to her in part

Sometimes I see Brigitte’s wings

Golden and white feathers

To cloak her in majesty

There is only the subtle fragrance

Of a wild and devilish soul

Which would never be admitted to me

Since I am held at a distance just beyond her reach

Brigitte is also a cat

Softly padded feet

Whose claws rarely appear

In order not to mar her gentleness

She curls up on the floor

Her long tail winds about her

Purrs in wondrous harmonies

Evoking late evenings

Dark streets

The soul of a wanderer

Whose journey will last a lifetime

But this is just a fantasy

Perhaps bear children

She will remain with her mate of choice for many years

Caring for him in his latter days

As she has cared for the others

Throughout the unforgiving days

In off-white hallways

Neatly polished floors

Acres of endless sheets and towels

Thousands of rubber gloves

The barrier between her hands

And the inherent warmth or coldness

Of the flesh she touches

Our earth blessed by Brigitte

Bringing shafts of light into a world of darkness

*\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*

***Oddly enough she enjoyed my poem which I sent to her. Within a few weeks, she stopped speaking to me. (??) When I asked why did she suddenly turn silent, the answer was simple: I had dis-respected her. I searched to try and find the reason. It could have been the drugs. (I will never know.) I am told the employees are warned not to get too close to the patients, at least emotionally. I guess it’s safer. I would NEVER last in a place like this—too much to tug at the heart strings.***

***Around this time, Berenice decided to turn into a bit of a flake. In a public forum post, she put up a notice in which she questioned the legitimacy of the site. The reasons didn’t make a lot of sense. Berenice’s claim was that since the people who ran the site were in a European country, and the computer servers where the site was located were halfway around the world, the owner of the site must have something to hide. Basically she sounded like an immature woman. As this was a writer’s turf, they came out in force. This posting stimulated a negative response by everyone concerned. For several days insanity reigned. No need to go into all of it—some of it was plain stupid, a bit of it was clever, but Berenice took the brunt of it all. I couldn’t believe what I had spawned. It seemed rather surrealistic.***

***The one thing it brought out was dear Arabella who defended me with a post of her own, which in paraphrase expressed these ideas.***

***Arabella, however, did not make it out of this unscathed as many people took her to task for her defense of Berenice’s actions. To paraphrase some of her later public comments:***

By all means Levitz16, (username of another writer) let mob mentality rule. After all it's a democracy. We have EARNED our god-given right to verbally attack, spindle and mutilate another, especially when they’re surrounded by a heat pack of penguins, a choir of ridiculous petty and sharp pointed tongues!

God you're right!!! Let’s hunt down everyone on these forums who have said something stupid and climb down their throats! Maybe they don’t deserve to live!

***Arabella also offered an assessment of my work as a woman when she noted****:* She's a very gifted writer and I like reading her work. ***I thank Arabella for her perceptive remark. You’ve read a considerable amount of Berenice’s writing so far. Think of your own feelings.***

***Arabella, of course, said much more. She was agitated and dead-on with her remarks. This comtinued for a few days. How unkind were the other writers to Arabella? They disagreed with her vehemently…and she parried every thrust. One thing I can acknowledge is that she truly loved my writing.***

***Behind the scenes, there were other confusing situations to confront my addled mind.***

***A beautiful and haunting creature with coal black hair and probably 5’10” tall arrived as a writer. She said she was from the South Pacific. She looked Polynesian; her name was Lucinda. She immediately gravitated toward my writing as Berenice. So I posted something that might entice impure thoughts from her. I had mentioned in an e-mail to her written as a woman that she looked as though she had long stems (meaning “legs”, of course). Thus I created:***

**Stems**

When I think of legs?

Long slender ones

Try to envision their meeting place

The juncture

Do they meet in a dense and mysterious crossing

Or a barren land devoid of plant life

Curving in dunes of pale skin?

A place for a hand to lose itself

In a private inundation

Imagine kissing them from boot to bonnet

Stem to stern

Researching each toe

Every inch of the gentle ankle

The calf and back of the knee

The muscular upper leg

Then there are the larger ones

Slightly plump perhaps

But no less shapely

They though have a special property

Especially the thighs

A comforting place to keep the ears warm

On frosty days

***This seemed to attract her and she sent a positive message. However, little did I know the effect that the following poem would have.***

**L.**

The black nimbus that hovers over you

A delicate curtain that envelops my head

Creates a private haven

Where we can become lost

Attuned to each other

Strings of a harp

Experiment

Change the pedals

Alter the harmony we feel

Kindness of your face

Richness of your mouth

Awakens in me the flutter of birds

The calls of loons

Over a motionless lake

As you regard me

Within the soft hum

Of this soundless silence

Our lips meet a quiet kiss

Then you mouth the words “I love you”

I mouth the words “Me too”

Our heads touch

As angels might momentarily do

In a brief and glorious acknowledgment of their grace

Then you move upward

Pause poised motionless

Crouched over my mouth

Eyes stare down in wonder

Lowering yourself so I can reach you

With lips and tongue

Nourish myself on your goodness

Your back slightly arched

I cup your breasts

As though tuning a shortwave radio

In search of a distant station

Your body the antenna

Sensing the stars

I am sending a signal aloft with my head

Hope that an extra-terrestrial woman

Will interpret this sacred message

I transmit through you to her

***Within minutes after posting that piece, Lucinda disappeared completely, removing every trace of herself. I was sorry to see her go because my words must have had a profound effect. I was rather amazed at the power they wielded.***

***I was totally surprised when several days later, a mysterious picture of two calves wearing black heels appeared as another new writer who was, coincidentally, from the same geographical area. This person also reacted with good comments.***

***I decided to put up a poem that would allay her fears, ifthis indeed were her in disguise***

**To L in friendship**

Come back my dearest

Darling dear

So we can be lost

In pastures at play if it be our whim

Your handsome cloak was tossed

I want to kiss your fragrant head

Tousle your hair

Whisper in your ear

Speak of pleasures

Delights that we can feel

Murmur to you of dreams

***Soon I was sent an e-mail which opened up the way I had touched this creature.***

FR: DarkPistil
TO: Care-bear

Subject: You

Hi CB,

I realise you know who I am and when I saw your poem , To L In Friendship, I just had to tell you the truth.

I'm sorry about disappearing, your poem didn't scare me off. It was beautiful, sensual...it aroused me beyond description.

Not to be crude, but I fantasized about it when alone in my room.

I am more concerned that I may have taken this more to heart than you, as in, I would be prepared to take things a little further. (as far as distances allow of course)

I'm not the goddess in the picture you saw. If I can work up the nerve i'll put full pic of me up, not just my legs.

I'm hoping you can forgive me.

Yours,
Luci

*\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*

FR: Care-bear
To: DarkPistil

Subject: Re: You

Lucinda,

I was so hoping it was really you. I could care less that you are not that alluring woman in the pic. I don't care if you have one leg and are blind in one eye.

It's the connection between spirits that I find most necessary.

We'll take it slowly. You could always send a photo to my e-mail:

Carepackage@gmail.com

Bless you for your return.

CB

***Then she took the playing field to another level when she told me to meet her in a chat room. (At this time I should say that I was a relative greenhorn when it came to chat rooms. Never been to one, so I had no idea how they worked, but I was an eager student, and a pretty quick study when it came to computers). I was about to have online lesbian sex with a woman…***

***To incite me (as a woman) she sent me two or three photos of herself. She was a gorgeous woman wearing a short skirt, sporting her black hair with her legs provocatively crossed and her hands strategically placed. Lucinda looked like a model.***

***She asked for a reciprocal picture of me. What to do??!! I had one B-W shot of a girlfriend looking back over her shoulder with long blond hair. The photo was from 28 years ago, but it still had a contemporary look. I fired it to her. And so it began…***

L: My God—classic beauty! You are stunning.

B: You should talk! YOU are beyond belief.

L: My pantyhose are glistening. Wanta lick??

B: I’m so hungry for you, babe. I could offer you a taste of me…

L: Gladly taken, you beautiful creature. But I want you to get one of your nipples really hard, and then rub it on my clit.

B: Take my left breast. It has a really long nipple. It’s very hard now. As I rub it all over you, my tit’s going to be very wet. I can get it in my mouth so I can taste you.

***Simultaneously, Lucinda sent me two very explicit frontal nude shots of herself. I decided I’d better make it appear as though she had really hooked me.***

L: I want to suck on your clitty until you scream.

B: Use me, you luscious one. I want your face deep inside me.

L: Oh, my hair is drowning in your cum..

B: How many fingers do u have?

L: It’s tuff to type and stroke mt cunt at the same time. My left foot is on the desk now. Pleanty of finguhs.

B: Then use’em

***These exchanges continued for about twenty minutes, after which Lucinda vanished again. It was an unusual conversation to say the least and like nothing I have ever encountered before. I’m certain though that this is a common occurrence. Needless to say, Berenice had made lots of friends. There were perhaps thirty women she could count and possibly more who were devouring her written words, and she gave many fair and honest critiques of the poetry that she read of theirs.***

***Since I had been approached by the young woman from the South Seas, I felt that maybe there were others who might desire me in a similar way. I thought about offering myself. I only approached one woman, but she wasn’t very daring although she had led me to believe that I might have a chance. This was the letter I sent.***

I really am a private person, so it’s difficult for me to speak about myself.

28 years old, 5’10” long brunette hair.

I don’t shave my pussy. Can’t understand why women do that. It’s OK if you do… Can’t understand why guys do that. I’m tempted to ask if they’re going to have an operation. I think there’s a reason why men and women look similar in that area.

I know a great deal about music, primarily classical, but I do have some Usher, Latin stuff, and other pop music on the computer.

Not extremely social. Haven’t really been involved with someone for a long time. Devote most of my energies to writing. I find I have a particular affinity for women’s emotions. Men are usually pretty easy to read.

Anything else I could illuminate? Tell me, and if I’m in the right mood—you never know.

C-Bear

***Then, the moment came that I had been waiting for, something that I could not have planned—when Arabella asked for MY (as Berenice’s) help to adjust one of her poems. Countless times I had made suggestions of my own (as a man) and she would never take them at all. It was always the fact that she didn’t care for my choice of words. Basically it was all an excuse why she would NOT take any of my criticism. However, now, as Berenice, she was inviting it. I was very excited and I thought I’d better go beyond myself.***

***My account of myself was exemplary. I regret that for reasons of copyright I am unable to quote from the poem here, but I can certainly describe what my additions encompassed. Arabella’s poem was about the sensation that some females have when a relationship ends. They are abandoned, alone, in a directionless state. My additions were of a nautical nature, and I made observations that would relate this feeling of aloneness to the feeling one might have aboard an ancient sailing ship which needed to find land.***

***Arabella quickly posted this piece because she was so pleased, and it quickly drew favorable reactions from the writing brethren and sisters of the website. I was ecstatic because I had finally been able to break through the roadblocks that Arabella had always placed in my way when I tried to help her (as a man).***

***Berenice did not want to steal Arabella’s thunder, and so she launched into various poems that utilized alliteration as their primary premise.***

**(P)alliteration**

Peerless Pauline

Perpetrated a plot

To pluck pomegranates

Peaches and plums

Previously pilfered by

Peruvian parrots

Who permitted priests

At a purist’s pulpit

To purloin precious parcels

Of peanuts and pickles

Palliatives of the pandits and pundits

**W(alliteration)**

Worrisome Willie

Wasted on wine

Went where he wasn’t

Whipped up a whirlwind

Waddled and wadded

On wings of a warhead

Watched as he withered

Within a whacked weekend

Whomped up a whopper

Wielded it wisely

Wiggled and wobbled it

For a worried white-haired widow

Worth her weight in widgets

**(F)alliteration**

A flagrant flippant fiery filly

Flaunted flagrant foolishness

For fun

This fairy fancied fishy fuss budgets

Foundering in flaming fissures

Far flung furlongs of famous fungi

***One of the most crucial writings came after receiving an e-mail in which the young woman admitted to being a victim of sexual violence at the hands of a man she casually met during a business trip in the eastern US. This tore me apart and for several days I could only feel this woman’s pain. This caused me to write a poem about this difficult subject.***

**Bad night**

Traveling

Stopped for a break

Dinner as I let the day disappear

Post-prandial anesthesia

Simple hotel bar

Met a guy

OK person

But didn’t care for him much

As I walked away

A sudden glimpse

Being tailed by the unwanted

Walked faster

He caught up

Arrived at my room

Knowing what waited

Took me

By force

Standing up against a wall

I was fucked

But didn’t want to be

Brutalized when I desired peace

He was incredibly ugly now

I felt used

Abused

He left suddenly

Trailing the tails of a black coat

Appearance of an errant bat

Drew a hot bath

Climbed in to wash away

His sweat and stink

I cried

Filling the tub

With a shower of my own tears

***My nerves were at the breaking point. This was extraordinary. Of course, seeing as how I was a man who was pretending to be a woman, it is clearly possible that I was being duped in reverse. I somehow felt there was honesty in this woman. I only had her words upon which to judge, and it seemed quite sincere. Before I knew it, I was in the midst of a crying jag again.***

***My nest poem as Berenice concerned an affect of World War II.***

**Thoughts of a Kamikaze Pilot**

(The following Japanese phrase is where the names of the four sub-units were derived: Unit Shikishima, Unit Yamato, Unit Asahi, Unit Yamazakura. The complete sentence means “*If someone asks about the* Yamato spirit *[Spirit of Old/True Japan] of* Shikishima *[a poetic name for Japan] — it is the flowers of* yamazakura *[mountain* [*cherry blossom*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cherry_blossom)*] that are fragrant in the* Asahi *[rising sun].*)

*Shikishima no Yamato-gokoro wo hito towaba, asahi ni niou yamazakura bana.*

 --Motoori Norinaga

when imperial court asked me

raised both hands

did not want to die a coward

our commander

closed eyes

delayed answer

ten eternal seconds

before he answered

yes—he would lead us

the manual plain

*When you eliminate all thoughts about life/death*

*you will be able to totally disregard your earthly life*

the training brutal

hit in face so many times

family would not know me

began to fear daily clubbing

supposed to scream *“Hissatsu!” (”Sink without fail”)*

at the end

chosen day

awakened early

nervous ready

simple breakfast

hot tea

during preparation

vomited

looked final time

picture of yuki before fuji-san

beautiful skin color of snow

A flood of her returns

do not have the proper knives

*seppuku* not an option

climb to cockpit

comrades silent

they prepare

tears threaten me

taxi to runway

the signal is made

push throttle

gentle push into seat

wheels rise from ground

toward heaven

reach proper altitude

embrace clouds

fifteen minutes left

quiet now

just engine hum

focus

rehearse again and again

contents of my dreams

i played koto

as a child

beauty of the ivory bridges

suspended the strings

where is the justice

in this senseless waste?

Must *Kagu-tsuchi* be appeased?

His birth burned his mother

Will his fire be quenched by death?

target in sight

small dot over blueness

plane urged into steep dive

slowly at first

the engine begins its whine

pitch rises

fuselage shudders

wonder if they have realized

my drop out of sky

What have i become?

Where am i going?

turned into a one-way person

rush to meet destiny

the film going faster

can see men firing anti-aircraft guns

elude their attempts

seconds remain

bitter taste in my mouth

Feel Divine Wind on my tongue

*Okaa-san, Okaa-san…Mommy!*

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

***Then there came another frightening admission which took me a bit by surprise, and when I thought about it, memories of another person in my past hit me as I remembered her telling me of a similar experience. At the time she mentioned it, I had nothing on which to base such activity. Thus was my understanding and further comprehension of a “cutter.”***

**CUTTER**

Like that scene in the movie

Sid Vicious on the bed

Girls in the room

Waiting for a fuck

From the punk star

They have to wait with patience

While he carves Nancy’s name on his chest

With a straight pin

He’s trying to feel

I’m a lost girl

Trying to feel

First time broke a mirror

Found a jagged piece

Would fit in my hand

Covered in gauze

So accidental cutting

Would not enter into the equation

This was intentional

Done with planning

Know it doesn’t make sense

To anyone

Except me

My head

So confused

Jigsaw puzzle on the table

Pieces scattered

Can’t find the edge pieces

Except the ones that can gouge

Slice release induce the flow

Didn’t try really hard

At first just drew it across the flesh

Mark was invisible

This was easy

Tried a little more forcefully

Barely a scratch

Third time determined

Lots of pressure

The mirrored piece descends

Express elevator to hell

Red is beautiful

Almost matches my pants

More relaxed now

I can open more of myself

Beautiful patterns

In the distance there is screaming

I hear sirens

Relaxed now

Closing my eyes

Peaceful Tranquility

***I was thanked by several women who appreciated the fact that this issue was even being talked about at all, and further, it was given a sensitive treatment. Another one sent me an e-mail a few days later that began to explore the real reasons of why this bizarre reasons for this behavior. Basically it was depression caused by frustrations with the world-at-large, severe poverty, as well as a growing sense of the futility of life. The strength of this particular individual had not completely disappeared yet, as expressed in this note.***

Hey Care-bear,

I'm ok right now. Feeling a lot better than i did earlier. i'll manage. Unfortunately this morning i failed myself and did the one thing that causes me the greatest shame. i was so down and life became too overwhelming. i took out my razor and did it. didn't bleed much--the pain was enough. i regret it, of course. I did it once last month, but it was nothing major.

No one could see, but this time i have to be careful about hiding it from everyone.

i had to close my bank account today since i needed the money which meant i couldn't keep my account open. i had to just let it go. I've been unemployed since last October—no jobs in sight. it's really taking a lot out of me to be struggling like this.

i know a lot of people are in the same boat or worse. i do have a dig and myself to feed. I'm at a breaking point which is why i did what i did without thought.

i do want to thank you for understanding about my love stricken problem. it's nice to know that someone gets me in some way. i hope you're doing ok yourself.

it's been a crazy week , who knows if it''ll pass anytime soon.

you're a wonderful person! if i wrote too much i apologize, just had to vent a little bit i guess.

Jean

***Another admission that threatened to tear out my insides. I wondered how much more I could take. I didn’t know but there were probably others whose concerns remained unvoiced.***

***The next morning when I woke up and turned on the computer, all trace of Berenice was gone. She had irritated the owners of the site. They had deleted her completely. I was incensed and I wrote a personal letter to the administrators asking them what the hell they were doing.***

Dear whoever you are,

It has been made patently clear several times in the forums on STET.com, that letters to administrators don't get answered, so I don't even expect an answer myself.

I want to know why my profile and poems were deleted. I have done nothing illegal so the reason for this baffling.

You don't seem to realize that the women who were my readers found my work very nurturing and they gave me extremely positive responses. Basically due to your cavalier attitude, you have pulled the rug out from under these tender individuals.

Your action was completely ill timed. Some of the women have been through horrifying experiences. What will they do now, now that the person who made a difference with their lives is gone?

What I want to know is will you reinstate me. Obviously there is nothing I can do if you won't like promise you that I will tell as many people as I can about your unjust actions. I'm sure that this was probably due to the "SHAM” forum post. Since for you to have deleted the entire post would raise unwanted flags, you simply erased the author.

I want but do not expect an answer from you, At least an answer that makes any sense.

Sincerely,

Berenice Phillips

***Due to the fact that it was relatively easy to enter and exit the site, I created a new persona with a different name, from which I could continue my crusade for women. Of course, all the e-mails from women had been deleted, well over 100. That was an unfortunate omission on my part, since I should have transferred everything to my hard drive. I would not make that mistake again. As I began to post poems, I put up some of my former material with Latin names, so it would not be obvious. Then I laboriously began to re-contact the readers I had lost. Slowly, I was getting them back.***

***My next posted offering as Berenice had a somewhat tragic feel.***

**Sine Nomine**

Untold unspoken

No words inside

Unfound unloved

A roiling tide

Unarmored unguarded

Exquisite virgin

Unearthed untasted

A woman no margin

Unfrocked undressed

Her body a twitch

Unraveled uncovered

Thrown into a ditch

Unblessed undone

A young bride unwed

Unwrapped and unclean

A mantrap now dead

***Another poem addressed to a woman (unspecified)***

**UFO**

I don’t know who she is

She doesn’t have a name

I only comprehend her by the touch

Feathery welcome

My hands upon her

Like a blind person reading Braille

She is wordless

Only breathing softly

Exudes heat and a pungent redolence

Which makes me inhale deeply

So excited

So aroused

Her black angelic presence

Brings about dark ideas

Want her to stay

But processed of a frightening impatience

She flies away

With the secrecy of a dragonfly

Above an algae-covered pond

***Three poems about sexual positions, beginning with:***

**Get Sirius!**

Playwright Anton Chekhov was married to actress Olga Knipper. For many years he referred to her as “his sweet doggy”.

A couple isolated

She in Moscow

He in Yalta

His TB why he couldn’t venture North…often

Olga came south to visit

Three months at a time

Wonder if they ever tried it

Doggy style

Remember my initial run

Something besides missionary

A soft order came

Get on my knees

Did he just want a suck?

Began rubbing it around the outside

A friendly tease

Then he slid in

Like an adept runner stealing a base

Deep and delicious

My body now gasping

He reached around me

Holding my tits

Stimulating the nipples

Grabbing my ass

Pulling me toward him

Deepest ever

Hottest I’d been

Then looked back over my shoulder

Lascivious grin on my mouth

Fuck me harder

Please?

Discovered there’s a term

For that look

Described in the Kama Sutra

Can’t remember it now

Seemed like a natural thing to do

Hope that Anton and Olga

Experimented

Maybe that was why

He called her Sweet Doggy

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**A clock face at 9:00**

What I resembled

One afternoon

Second sex of the day

Let’s try something different

You game?

Why not?

What should I do?

Put your right leg flat

Point your left foot at the ceiling

Hmmm…

Then he got between

A different sensation

I liked it at first

Then he began to kiss my left leg

With seductive passion

His lips on my calf

None had done it before

Moved like a snake

Laved me with a smart tongue

Moving skyward

Up to the ankle

Not missing a spot

Then arrived at the foot

Mouth everywhere

Sucking each toe

Pubic hair curling

Spine was a-tingle

Top of my head exploded

Leaving an agile brain exposed

I laughed and I chuckled

A new ecstasy discovered

He was imaginative

He gets four stars

Along with my love

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Father-Mother**

An interesting Tibetan

Cocktail of words

Yab-Yum

Blend of divine strength

Plus creation

A man in the lotus position

Woman on lap

Synchronized breathing

A give and take

In and out

Eyes holding

Scene from Valley Obscured By Clouds

Bulle Ogier on the receiving end

Of endless pleasure

French blonde

Having sex

Could it be better?

When both look down

To observe

The friction

Her magic mouth

Swallowing him

He in a beatified piercing

Mutual consummation

***A poem by Berenice (which was truly a piece about what I felt was happening to my masculine self)***

**Getting too close**

Almost went away

Almost left the earth

Almost lost my self

Within four other women

Was touched in a way I had never felt

Very scared because

Hands and fingers were never so sweet

As they stroked and probed me

In a fashion

As though I lay on an operating table

Opened up

A Wilkinson retractor pulled open

The incision

So they were gazing at my innards

A closeup inspection

I had seen them naked, torn apart,

Bloody, barely conscious

Yet they were still standing

Surrounding me

And unscathed

They whispered in wordless sentences

Burning my flesh

Until it was dried and crispy

Third degree burns kill off the nerves

So nothing is felt

I awakened

Heart accelerated

Breathing hard

A dream

But the memory remains

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***Then it seemed time for Berenice to break out with a short story. The following was briefly posted.***

**FINAL RESIDENCES**

The blue jays were squawking like crazy; something was afoot. Since most people didn’t speak their language, no one really knew what was going on. Something beautiful and unexpected was about to transpire. The morning was imbued with a feeling of expectancy; the air was charged with friendly ions.

She was new—he had only heard about her—no visual contact yet. The rules were: you couldn’t visit the personal space of another without an invitation. The notice on the bulletin board revealed the essentials—an address he recognized located on the far side of the hill, facing toward the morning sun. He lived in the valley below, studded with shade trees and cheap statuary, most of which had been uncovered at county fairs. It was a place close to the mound where children yelled and played in peaceful frolic. The sound of them rising in the morning evoked pictures from his youth. It caused him to feel eternally young.

Her name was Mary; from that fact, he wondered if she were really untouched by human hands. Rather doubted it. Their meeting almost seemed pre-destined. She was in the midst of a morning walk. Blond, exquisite, a looker! He plotted to intersect her path near the statue of David. (A reproduction of Michelangelo’s statue with a fig leaf—the old master of course was more uninhibited and showed David’s package).

“Aren’t you Mary? I’ve heard you arrived recently,” he spoke with an air of innocence he hoped would cause her to stop.

“Uh…yeah. A few weeks ago. And you are?” She pulled a rose from a nearby bush, casually waving it back and forth in the air. He noticed a large thorn which seemed to have pierced her palm; she was unscathed. The rose was intensely odorous occupying all the air around her.

“John,” he said. “I’m the official greeter here. It would be my pleasure to show you around if you want.”

“Thank you for your offer but I really must be going. Maybe some other time. We’ll see each other again.” Mary walked away rather quickly, leaving John to feel a bit abandoned. His eyes studied her as she disappeared beyond the nearby rise. During his daily nap, he dreamed of Mary, her face, unforgettable and serene. For several days he looked for her to no avail. No matter where he walked through the endless expanses of lawn in the park, there was no sight of her, even though he still could detect the odor of that rose in the air. One morning he looked about; there she was, casually sitting on the rock wall near his home. She was waving another rose.

A broad and winning grin was painted across her face; her stunning perfect and white teeth “Aren’t you going to invite me in?” she asked with a decided air of presumption while an eyebrow curved seductively.

“Sure,” he said thinking the place might be a mess. As he was alone, the usual male clutter had begun to take over. Yet he threw caution to the winds, and he stepped aside to allow her to go first. As she passed him, her fragrance greeted his nostrils again with an enchanting air. He said, “You know you can visit me any time.”

“Thanks,” Mary said. Her gaze was met by thousands of books, neatly shelved around the room. A small step ladder stood before the mahogany towers. John’s heart seemed to pound like that of a small bird. He was trying not to be obvious as he stared at her. Her mouth was agape as she was totally taken by the sight of the endless volumes. She stared about with great curiosity. “My, you look like an avid reader.”

“Yes, always a bookworm,” he said. On the table lay a first edition copy of Hidden Faces by Salvador Dali.

“Dali,” she said. “Always liked his paintings. I loved the pictures I saw of his Spanish home and the gigantic polar bear in the living room, standing on its hind legs and raising a lamp in one paw, giving the appearance of the Statue of Liberty. How’s the book?”

John knew the photo and he momentarily chuckled in his mind. “It’s about a bunch of young decadents in Europe in the mid 1930s.”

“Sounds like I might like it. I’ve always been a bit…decadent myself,” she said inserting a seemingly calculated pause.

“You’re welcome to borrow it…as long as I can see you again,” he said. He searched her face for any expression of negativity. She looked rather coy, pretty and girlish.  It  almost caused him to blush. On her face was also a subtext of devilishness. Mary seemed so immaculate, so pristine, but she was currently preoccupied with the book, turning the pages thoughtfully as she sat at his large desk. He decided to take a chance and gently blew his breath upon her hair as though the god Aeolus were in the room. He knew it would feel like a quiet zephyr on a late afternoon, just enough to catch her attention. In slow-motion she turned to look at him. One of the yellow curls on her head had fallen forward. It now circled one eye as she gazed through it. The smile on her lips grew larger as she reached up to encompass his head. The melding of spirits began; soon they were joined in a unifying mist. This was a totally new experience as he felt their spirits intertwine like strands of the DNA helix. It was a bit disarming. He did not know how long it lasted: minutes, hours, days or weeks. Years? When it was over, finally, the phantasms of their souls pulled apart like tacky glue. They sat looking at each other for an interminable period of time. John asked “Do you want me to walk you home?”

“One thing I’m not afraid of is the dark,” Mary said and was gone, although the image of her smile floated in the air for several minutes like that of the Cheshire cat from Alice in Wonderland.

For days he repeatedly replayed the entire experience with Mary within him. It was a hypnotic feeling that possessed him for hours. Finally he ventured outside, determined to find Mary. She was not far away. Actually, she was playing with the children in their usual spot. As he watched, he could see that she was loved by the kids. Their camaraderie was mutual. Finally she spotted him and waved, excusing herself from the children’s game.

“That really takes me back,” she spoke to John as she neared him.

“I feel the same. I’ve seen them for months and I always notice how imaginative they are. Even in my younger days, I I doubt I would have been able to keep up with them, but now…maybe I could.”

“Just thinking the same thing,” said Mary. “Have any plans for today?”

“No. You?”

“Let’s do something you like,” she said.

“I sense you have an eye for art,” he said, trying to gauge the effect of his words. She nodded a little; her eyes seemed to sparkle. “I know just the place,” he added. “It’s not too far, but it’s good we wore some good walking shoes.” They continued on to a place that was fairly flat, from which they could see buildings that stood at the boundary of the industrial part of the city. Some railroad tracks were visible beyond the chain link fences, and trains could be seen traversing back and forth. Once in awhile, a train’s whistle would punctuate the quiet summer day, lending an atmosphere of longing to the world.

They walked silently around the massive building to the front entrance. Walking up the three steps he grabbed the heavy wrought iron door and opened it. She stepped through and felt the sudden change in temperature. Also there was an odd aroma. Mary’s nose crinkled a bit. The building had begun to be constructed in the 1920s, and the process had been continued for over forty years. The stained glass windows were exquisite and on many of them there were classic poems inscribed. Each floor had its own unusual atmosphere. There was one tomb which had an inspiring statue of the three graces on top of it. They were sexy and naked. Then there was the tomb that had a statue of Saint George on the top. As one stood at the end of the hallway looking toward it, the entire area was bathed in purple light.

John took Mary to a dimly lit columbarium and pointed out one niche that was unlocked. He showed her the contents. There was a small box covered in brown wrapping paper and tied with a strong piece of twine; that box, unmarked, contained the effects of the deceased. The other object inside was a small sheet metal box whose lid had been secured with sealing wax; that box contained the remains and was marked with a label containing the name of who was held inside.

Through twelve stories they walked with John providing a running commentary. When they finally exited it was late afternoon. Mary excused herself, telling John that she would see him soon. Days passed and there was no Mary. Hope was not lost upon John. He knew that she was…somewhere.

 Just as his sadness was growing unbearable, he discovered her at dawn basking in the sunrise on top of the hill; the morning breeze billowed out the sheer flowered dress which adorned her form. She spoke his name in a whisper while she grasped his hand with the benevolence of an old friend. It must have truly been his imagination because she almost felt warm to the touch. He gasped as he noticed the vast marble pillars of varied colors that stood in a circle in the middle of the spacious hall of her home, the daylight reflecting off the gold-leaf ceiling. He was shocked to see his shelves of books were there and his desk with the art deco lamp and the large snow globe containing a miniature model of the Empire State Building.

“But…how?” John said with an expression of vague shock. Mary placed a finger to the side of her nose. She led him to the center of the circle of marble pillars

There was a large circular bed draped in blue satin sheets. She lay down and he stared at her. She removed her dress and he discovered that she had no form. All he could see was that elegant face smiling. He dared to discover the truth so he doffed his own clothes. He too had no form that he could see. Mary said, “Come here.”

He positioned himself so he could look directly into her eyes, and she into his. As he beheld their voluminous green color, John was falling into the blackness within the center. It was an unknown space but he could feel the lovingness that projected from her eyes. In an instant he could see all of her life’s experiences, feeling them flow through him in an oceanic tide. She said, “Now you are free, John, I have seen all of you and you have seen all of me. This is the feeling of being totally naked. Both of us are liberated from this physical prison—the nothingness and purity of existence. Perhaps those Indian yogis knew it as Samadhi, but we now have it for all eternity. It was up to me to bring you this gift.”

John’s spirit was leveled. If he had an actual body at this moment he would have cried like a small child, eyes flooded; he knew that Mary felt identically. Their tears would be cupped in a mountain lake somewhere high above the tree line, where gentle snowfalls drifted to the ground. There was no need for marble pillars or countless volumes of books. John and Mary were now one.

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***If Mr. Allen could make a film called “Love and Death” why not write about it? “The Loved One” by Evelyn Waugh is a prime example.***

***Next came a poem that conveyed appreciation for the female form in an ecclesiastical setting.***

**A visit to the church**

I remember the time

I entered the narthex that lead to the nave

Facing the altar

I first knelt at the rail

Head bowed

Waiting to savor

Her body and blood

Grasped the pyx

In trembling fingers

Opened it

The eucharist lay before me

Innocent pure holy virgin

Like Mary

Raised it to my lips

A taste unexpected

Untried unusual

Caused visions to dance

In elegant patterns

That dazzled me

Kept my eyes closed

To see and feel this miracle

Tingled all over

Felt as though I were rising upward

Vibrations through the spine

Electric galvanic tense

Never wanted it to stop

Enjoyed this taste of forever

Beatific eternity never ending

Almost going to lose consciousness

But I wanted to hold this fragile instant

For all time

Colors of stained glass

Surrounded me in a rich kaleidoscope

Of wonder fascination

This togetherness as one

This blessed union of two souls

Enraptured exaltation

***A piece that was about getting to know a tree.***

**Talk to the Trees**

Branches enfold me

Hide me

A shelter from the world

Arms of the sun diffuse

Create coolness

Protection from summer heat

A living breathing cave of greenness

An umbrella from the rain

A pleasant bumbershoot

Over my head

My hair might frizz

I don’t care

There is joy with the shower

Its wet fingers

Cover my face in merry drops

***A poem that described in an oblique way, the appearance of Arabella.***

**Red Sea**

Absorbing red strands

Flow in a flood

That descends from a head

Surrounds a face with a serene frame

A lingering sunburst

A late afternoon setting

Introduction to night

When passions catch fire

Kindling for the wood

Generate sensuous smiles

Whose embers glow in the dark

As a quiet voice speaks of love

***This was followed by a piece about the “spiritual” dance.***

**Terpsichore Moment**

We hold gentle hands

Some palms that sweat

Others dry

Within a comfortable and sacred engage

In a slow dance

To celebrate our togetherness

Our love

Woven halos about our heads

Though some of us hurt

With souls that are burned and tortured

Though some of us are covered in flesh

With holes and torn tattered places

We all feel our imperfections

We still live another day

To walk the fire pit

Surviving with unscorched feet

Heads held high

In solemn affirmation

That we are One

***A poem that connected the idea of an internet address with sex.***

**HotMale dot Com**

Was in search of a guy

Who could float my boat

Smash a bottle of bubbly on my bow

Send me down the slipway

For an end-on launch

Into dreamland

Didn’t need to be special

Built like John Holmes

Just wanted a guy with an average cock

Submitted a few

To short arm inspection

Like Goldilocks

Trying to find one that was

Just right

Finally the one of my dreams

Nice reddish head

Circumcision a bit sloppy

Appreciated this lack of perfection

Its one eye a bit pouty

Fit nicely in hand

A pleasure to stroke

For my mouth it was perfect

When I finally introduced him to Betty

She thanked me

Praised my choice

We laughed together

Then gave her a nice bubble bath

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***I thought I was being obvious, but I guess the reference to “Betty” implying the brand name for the “pubic hair dye” got past most of the online writers.***

***For a number of days I switched the online profile picture to a graphic of the famous painting Danae***

***by Gustav Klimt. It shows a young lady showing a good deal of thigh, sleeping,. while the shower of gold coins (an embodiment of the god Zeus) falls from the sky and in between her legs. If you know the secret of Klimt’s paintings, which was uncovered in his apartment after his death, you will know what feature of Danae’s body is obscured by the coins. (If you don’t know, look for an online copy of his unfinished painting “The Bride.”)***

***These poems followed in rather quick succession.***

**Begging**

Crawl under my thigh

I want you to see

The woman I most want to be

If you touch me I’ll sigh

And not say a word

I’ll feel all a-twitter just like a bird

Crawl under my thigh

And insert your fingers

For then you will be where my scent always lingers

Then lift your hand high

Be bold take a taste

These private juices we don’t want to waste

Crawl under my thigh

And give me a kiss

This chance for love—please do not dismiss

Do not say good bye

For strange as it seems

This ethereal bliss is part of my dreams

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**Vox Aeterna**

The boredom of middle school

Other diversions necessary

Besides sex drugs hip-hop

Hungry interests needed

For a budding mind

Avoid the potholes

Speed traps of adolescence

Book on Vedantism

A doorway to meditation

Isherwood and Huxley

Essayists that ushered me in

To quiet hallways

Filled with quiet cushions

To sit and occupy oneself

With peaceful contemplation

One question revolved in bright orbit

As the earth around the sun

Rising and setting

As long hours passed

How can I grow?

What water will nourish?

What plant food will supplement?

What soil must I remain in?

In order to bloom to blossom

To erupt into vernal magnificence

And as I sat

Within the shelter of subdued silence

A voice verbalized

A welcome answer

Its tone indescribable

Unrecognizable

An emanation from everywhere

And nowhere

The answer arrived

To follow me throughout my existence

“Project spiritual wisdom”

***I had actually heard that voice speak to me when I was but 16. Was I already disturbed mentally? Or merely tuned in?***

***Another poem about women in general.***

**The Gentle Herd**

Their words swollen painful yet loving

Reach me from everywhere

Seep under the door

Warm harmattan

Caresses my body

I can smell them

Distinctive individuality

Holding me in their grasp

As a hammock sways gently

Suspended between the arms of a tree

Their haunting faces

Hungry gazes

Stare out in wait

They yearn for my words

Which I distribute as sweet food

To those unloved

Uncherished

Untouched by the storms of growing

I

A simple creature

Simple wants

They look to me as an idol

Pray that I will remove their pain

They believe in these ideas

Leave them pure

Beauteous

Duplicates of my essence

They will live many more years

Than I

The flame will continue

As a torch passed through generations

Those who seek to touch the skies

We meet as a huge flock

Moving together

Psychic flight

Whither I goest

There will you go also

Where I live

You will live

Where I die

There will I be buried

But our spirits

Float in serenity

***A poem about the famous Swiss graphic artist—***

**My life**

Sometimes my life

A picture by MC Escher

My outside is inside

Back is the front

My up stairs are down

I stare up toward the sky

But I look at level ground

My water is falling

But it’s all moving straight

Sometimes I’m Three Worlds

Partly transparent

Sometimes Flatworms

A symmetry painting

Two hands drawing each other

Ascending and descending

I get so confused I want it to stop

But it moves toward infinity

As it remains a tiny point

Still

Motionless

A dot that is a line

***A bit of writing about the occasional loneliness and hunger of a woman—***

**Hungry Slut**

In an earlier time

Might have been my moniker

Name most girls would hate

I loved it

Might have fucked a snake

If it could stay hard

Constantly overheated

Should have added coolant

Wanted his 60-weight

So my bearings would not burn

Loved his hot brine

All over me

My face and hair

So I was a sticky mess

Unclean

Always was I thirsty

Always parched for love

Always possessed

Of frightening desires

That would awaken me

On lonely dispossessed nights

***The animal described here would not be a substitute for real love. Its appearance was what brought about the poem.***

**Song of the Naked Mole Rat**

The sand puppy

Lives in East Africa

Resembling a penis

That crawls underground

Cold blooded creature

Eyesight is bad

He would not see

The space of my love

He would not watch

My loving gazes

Just feel the warmth

And oozy clamminess of me

***There was one more extreme writer whom I encountered in my journey as a female. That was Libby, who loved to comment about everything. She was a ballsy woman, the like of which I had never met in my real life. Evidently from somewhere in eastern Europe, she had a fondness for the famed distillate of the juniper berry which she frequently talked about in her communications with Berenice.***

***One of the early e-mails progresses as follows, beginning with a rather calm exchange.***

***Libby showed a remarkable maturity when I wrote her the following e-mail.***

Lib,

My, you gave such a complicated answer to my request. I guess that shows that it touched you on some subterranean level, like throwing a stone into a calm body of water and watching the ripples slowly dissipate, maybe cross back and forth over each other stimulating other interactions.

When I was a teenager I first gazed closely at my vagina, fascinated by the appearance and the way certain parts were more stimulating than others. It made me curious about other women’s areas, but I was shy.

Then I finally met a guy who seemed rather intelligent. His dad was a gynecologist and he had access to a speculum, so he brought it over one night and showed me my cervix. We were sitting on the floor of my apartment. He sterilized the device and carefully placed it inside me. I saw! a moment of discovery.

Anyway, I guess I’m still filled with that youthful sense of curiosity. I don’t want to make you uncomfortable, I sense you have a beauty and delicacy of your own. I’ll be gentle.

Love,

Care

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Thanks for getting back Berenice.

I'm sorry you found my mail complicated. Ima complicated person. it goes with the turf.

I may be younger than you but I'm not naieve. I'm not going to go head in to uncharted waters. That's as much for your protection as mine.

I'm very flattered that you asked me.

It just seems a bit sudden, and may I say somewhat rebound, after the disappearance of 'Lucind'.

Ricky Terse wrote his paeaon to me only days after writing 'The Girl with Blue Hair' for Anna Miriam (Ophelia drown). When I wrote him he said he wasn't interested in me cos his current gf is 'blonde'
hahahahha! I felt sleighted, but at least he has being 13 years old on his side. LOL.

I guess we get to know ppl here by their writing and the comments they leave as crits. Sometimes these lead to email exchanges. I have seen and been impressed by your work, and commented on it, but not seen much evidence of what you think of my stuff.

Its just a bit 0 - 60 in 5 seconds for me I guess.

I hope you find what youre looking for. Not convinced that it's me though.

Lib

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

***Then we began comparing the posted pictures of some of the other lady writers.***

***I fired the first shot.***

In no particular order

Stutterstep

R.I.P. (she looks like a delicious little slut)
Peggyluv (childlike)
Mescal Blessing (love to munch on that babe--has the right nose)
Mary Crowther (petite boyish look)

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_--

hahha

you may have noticed that I am covertly trying to seduce all the women who read your poetry from right under your nose. hahaha

Stutterstep has just joined me list. fuckkkkkkkkkkkkkk! If SultrySultan looked like her I wouldnt get outta bed in the morning I would just wait until the whole world came to pay homage and suck my toes.

i think Ive seen some of the others will give them the eye over.

gawdd this feels like so mercenary like Fight Club, know the film? in fact Marla Singer has been one of my previous handles.

so I get Stuutterstep on alternate nights and will trade you mmmm Desi

:-DDDDDDDDDDDDDDDDDDDDDDDDDDD

caveat emptor!
Libb

***I have not yet talked about my roommate. After all, who can afford the luxury of a private room? Certainly not I. I am quite lucky that he is primarily silent. In fact, I am not sure that he even possesses an awareness of me. He is hooked into a Gastrointestinal tube (G-Tube) 24 hours a day. The nursing assistants take care of all his needs. Once in awhile, he is dressed in somewhat normal clothes and hauled out of bed in a hoist. Then he is taken to the dining room. This happens about twiee a week. His physical manifestations are slight. At one point I watched him while asleep and snoring. His feet were trembling rather violently. I hear him sometimes in the middle of the night, whispering in some unknown tongue. At times, while sleeping he speaks in a man’s normal voice. At times, he laughs. It is all a mystery. The only time he really utters anything is occasionally when a nurse comes in to deal with him and doesn’t address him directly. This brings on a horrid string of insults and epithets spoken in a strange guttural voice. It is necessary for me to warn potential students and others on how to deal with him, primarily because I am constantly with him. He does have a name which I can say might be an ancient Aztec name. I did write one poem about him.***

**Ahuaxpitzatzin**

A name that sounds like it arose among the Aztecs

My silent roommate with a misshapen head.

Silent unless he curses in loud Spanish

To the nurses who disturb him

He hit one several weeks ago

When she reacted badly I proclaimed to her

“You’ve been touched by the caress of Ahuaxpitzatzin”

Many years ago there was a famous novel

Girl In A Swing

He is the man in a swing when he is hoisted out of bed

Helpless he hangs in mid-air

As he and the IV which is his feeding tube

Process down the long hall to the dining room

Where he sits mute for a few hours

Closed eyes hiding his thoughts

Sometimes when people enter the room

I ask if they know of the magicians Penn and Teller

I am the effusive Penn

Ahuaxpitzatzin is my silent Teller

I watch over him

He is my child

I am filled with gladness because he does not speak

I provide him with a silent

Dark place to spend his final days

Sometimes I hear him whisper in Spanish in the night

I cannot decipher what he says

I imagine his words are similar to mine

Thinking of past loves

Nights of intoxication

The angry God who has banished us to this foreign place

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

***Lest you think that I was allowing grass to grow under my feet I was still actively writing my own creations as a man. These are a selection of the best from this period of time. First come three poems that were written about Arabella.***

**A (Suite of Three Poems)**

These are poems written with love to the most significant person in my life.

If I shot up a flare
Would it catch your eye?
Would you know who sent the signal?
Would you maybe ask why?
Would you be curious?
And would you stare?
Up into the night sky?
Or would you take flight as a bird?
Staying just out of reach?
So many questions but will you hear?
Will you listen to these whispers that lightly touch your ear?
Would my hand touch your cheek?
With the brush of a feather?
Would my wish go unheard?
Would we meet on the heather?
I want you inside me
For ever and ever

**AA**
The reverie of a warm sweaty embrace
From you
Moist onto my head
In thickened tears
From your origins

The bouquet of your wine
That cannot be bottled or captured
Except in this luxury
Icy seconds
Blissful mysterious
Held within the chamber
Of our whispers

Which will stand in the memory
Landmarks of our lives
Concrete markers
An Ebenezer raised in tribute
To our spirits
-------------------------

**AAA**
Her spirit
Her body
Trembls at my glance
Listens for my touch
Consecrates my soul

Covered in white
She stands over me
The ghostly pale
Waves within God’s breath
Remembrances in my heart
Visions buried deep
Remove the words
From the brain’s ceaseless chatter

She is an aspen
Quaking in a delicious flutter
Perpetual turn-on
State of constant arousal
Always hot unlike the tree
Ceaselessly damp
Passionate effluvia emanate
Stirring a cauldron of love

***Jean left a comment which said:***

absolutely lovely. i enjoyed them all. you've expressed such a wonderful emotion in each of these without losing meaning.

***Arabella also commented but did it in such a way that she did not acknowledge that she was A, in spitte of the fact that I had explained to her previously that she was the subject. I am fairly certain she was a bit embarrassed.***

These are a very beautiful tribute to your friend...just lovely.

***Another unusual poem, written as my true self, arrived as the result of a memory of an event that occurred in the mid 90s, as I sat with two female friends, sharing some wine.***

**THE DEAD FLOWER**

Tonight a visitation from a dearly departed friend

Jody

A pleasing sylph who danced through her life

While her husband followed and two effervescent daughters

Removed from our sight

Not from our hearts

Exceptional perception and intelligence

Her openness and freedom were disarming

One night she sat with Laurie and me

Sharing a delicious wine.

Always I was a sensitive masseuse

Adept at removing kinks.

Laurie sat before me on the floor

Ten or fifteen minutes later had loosened her back

Jody’s turn

She stood and removed her long dress

No bra

She pulled her panties down—stepped out of them

Then lay before me on the coffee table

A sumptuous body of riches that begged for release.

I eyed her pale flesh and stroked it gently

Avoiding carefully the flower that was opened to my hand

Kept my heart at bay

Not bowing my head to sip from the cup

Laurie might have been a willing voyeur

But I resisted tortured myself

For lonely weeks

Forgotten until this instant

When my vulnerability is available

This dead flower

With its stiffened presence

As though pressed in a book

A memory for all time

***A comment came from another online writer Adelina***

Ah, such symbols...
Of death and the macabre...and yet there is beauty.
In the physical and symbolic representation of things.

There are small parts in here that just stuck to my heart
like needles into the makeshift flesh of a voodoo doll.
And yet, it is subtle.

***A meditation on origami***

**Folding**

An Origami Bird

Wings folded with great intricacy

Hundreds of pastel points

Jut outwards like angry arrows

To threaten the hands

That gentle cup

This a false appearance

A look of danger

I am soft

I am fleecy

I am mellow

Search for your soft-spoken fingers

***A brief consideration of Aldous Huxley with allusions to several of his books.***

**Tell Laura**

Sadly a reflection blinded me

So that my vision was clouded

Left me eyeless in Gaza

In a brave new world

Populated by The Genius and The Goddess

Who burned brief candles

To the rising sun

***Then came several haiku.***

Imminent lessons

Gleaned at the master’s footstool

Eternal flames rise

Choices of balance

A slim wire offers little

Dangerous falling

Succulent oysters

Scent of the sea abounding

No treasures reside

Did Goethe utter

before ushered unto death

just one thought: More Light!?

***Since the myth of Danae had been on my mind, a humorous poem about the myth with a title that appeared smutty, but was actually not.***

**A Golden Shower**

Dad itched for a son

might have given his left nut for a son

so he went to a goddamned fortune teller

how reliable are they?

not very…

she gave him bad news

not that his stocks would plummet

or his plane might crash

this was the worst

I

would have a brat

that would bump him off

is that a drag or what?

it’s the shits

so he over-reacted

locked me away in a bronze tower

so I couldn’t play around

like I wanted to do

I was a kid horny and all that

the others were telling me what it was like

I couldn’t wait to get out on the streets

get some action of my own

little piece o’ talent

I didn’t care

knew I was hot

but Zeus the old bastard

knew there was a way to nail me

gave me a golden shower

no, not the kind I dreamt of

not one from a man’s hose

real gold

gold coins

yea he was paying me off

in spades

of course he knocked me up

then one day dad came by my place

gave me the stink eye

you gotta bun in the oven?

not me dad

I shrugged

you little whore

you trollop

you minx

you tart

course I had the kid

what was I gonna do

find a back street bozo with a coat hanger

me and Joan!

no wire hangers ever!!!!!

me and Percy get thrown in a crate

tossed out to sea

like a jack-in-the-box

turn the crank

and pop!

goes little Danae

Poseidon calmed things down

so we didn’t go too far

yesiree! land on Seriphos

get picked up by a cat named Dicked His (I mean Dictys)

we were cool

we were down with it

so he raised me and the kid

Percy thinks he’s a superhero

goes after that gorgon bitch Medusa

off with her head!

then he rescues that fox Andromeda

probably could have had her

so he starts for that place called Argos

then he hears from somebody

he is supposed to kill Gramps

he changes his mind

and goes to Larissa

he gets in the games

whoop! there it is

Percy pops his discus

whomps Gramps up the side of the head

in the crowd

damn! gotta watch those line drives

fuckin’ fortune teller was right

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

***Another funny memory of the confusion a dear friend had with a very famous Greek name.***

**Anonymous Screwing**

first thing i noticed

besides the familiar face

were the hands

that cut through the air

gestured curving

caressing an invisible lover

who stood before her

or was it each and every member

of the gathered who watched

listened with opened mouths

hands that recited epic odes

of love war joy

we could only be silent

observe the performance with reverence

the divine tones

that issued forth

from the timeless voice

the black-rimmed glasses

a distinctive accessory

most ladies would reject

when performing

prefer contacts to specs

Grecian musical urn

filled with endless contents

Keats would have loved her

my friend’s mispronunciation

of the popular name

Anonymous Screwing?

Is that who we’re going to see?

no, it’s Nana…

Nana Mouskouri

she smiled at her faux pas

had to laugh and forgive

***One of my favorite films of all time is Steven Spielberg’s “AI.” Hence a poem about one of the most memorable characters.***

**Bear That Kept The Hair**

remember Teddy

in Artificial Intelligence

the bear who picked

up the lock of Monica’s hair

and kept it

securing saving the precious cargo

until it was needed

to re-animate Mom

for 24 hours

that she could awaken

like a miracle

as though just fallen asleep

David the robot boy pretending it’s all normal

spend a wondrous day together

having illustrious fun

he makes morning coffee

just the way she likes it

at night she goes to sleep

for the last time

David sleeps

the light dims as faithful Teddy

sits down on the bed

and watches…and watches

forever

***My own obsession with unusual words came out in the following piece which alludes to a dry wind that blows from the Mediterranean south over West Africa. (Antafagasta is a city in Chile which is on the Tropic of Capricorn.)***

**Harmattan**

warm exhalation

hovers over twin peaks

inflames essence

whips the spirit

ignites the lips

broadly upturned

fogs the thought

when it passes the equator

dips north of Antafagasta

descends into a crevasse

molten lava

drips inviting

tongue to taste

dangerous honeyed concavity

bottomless absence

wherein I fade

breathless

**Fantasy**

The mind

colorful gorge

where echoes ring

where my inner spirit

runs free

through meadows of

abundant flora

deep canyons

which should have been born

in the painted deserts of Arizona

are flooded

with light sound

and the memories of her

dance graceful waltzes

illuminated by sunsets

rose

crimson

vermillion

and the Indian red of summer

**Netsuke**

for this concocted moment

purple flowers embraced

the solemn bier

which held the

netsuke wrapped

in sleek leather bags

ivory jade trinkets

minute to the eye

tiger’s tooth

walnuts

bamboo

agate

all sacrificed for their beauty

carved in isolation

sometimes a shunga

a display of congress

between a pair

of willing bodies

that writhe like snakes

winding

almost a caduceus

entwined

wrapped in love

***How about a poem about an intelligent but lascivious snail??***

**Tale of a Winkle**

The plump periwinkle

crawled up her thigh

leaving a trail of pleasant

luminescent slime

over her flesh

She gazed at it distractedly

wondering where it would go

when it arrived at the top

Slowly creepingly crept

onward upward

Cognizant of each millimeter’s progress

she tingled shimmered

beneath the silver light

while watching its inexorable

movement northward

Turning to the west it slid

tickling every portal

with its moisture

until it discovered the steaming darkness

it could call home

**Damsel**

Quiet solitary

Eremitic

She waits in thought

Undisturbed

Ponders

Asking what or why

Dream of touching her

To induce a smile or laugh

Desire her to know that she

The recipient of boundless love

Of joy that courses without end

An electric current

Alternating and direct

She within me

I within her

Our blood

Two rivers that flow into one

Two oceans connected

By the isthmus

Of our spirits

***Sati is a Hindu tradition in which a widow throws herself on the funeral pyre of her husband, achieving a Brünnhilde-like self-immolation.***

**Sati**

hand defines

a line descends

beneath

red ink inscription

signature at the close

autograph without value

is the first a brave experiment

prior to

determination?

gesture that will induce

hejira

into nothingness

toward unending

silences

fermatas

grand pauses

where a celestial baton

waits graciously

between

beats two and three

a pretty curve

that moves up

to the right

crossing the center point

then down

toward the ictus

permanent detachment

at day’s close

songbird begins

flightless existence

***This is a variant of an episode in my novel RAILS.***

**Barringer Crater Blues**

Young girl from Paris Texas

I from Brownville Nebraska

We were both hot

Met in a coffee shop in Winslow

Wanta go for a ride?

Surprised I said Yeah

I didn’t mean that kind of ride

Peaked my interest

Jumped in my Ford Pickup

She directed

Soon the signs

Barringer Crater

10pm we alight

Scaling down the sides

Hiking across the bottom

Soon we are in the center

She knows precisely where

Bet she’s done this before

Lies down on the ground

Motions for me to join her

Soon making love

Two animals doing the nasty

Spent kicking back

It’s like we were doing it

In God’s eye socket

She says and we could see infinity

From here

You ever thought about the size

Of infinity

When you come that’s as close as I get

To eternity

I can open up

Swallow you so that

We are one creature

It needs to go on and on…

By sunrise back to the truck

We are silent

Ten miles later

That’s as far as we go

She hops out

See ya

She sticks out her thumb

In ten minutes she is gone

Wonder when she’ll do that again

I shake my head

Listen to the engine’s purr

I’m idling too

Then I realize

Never asked her name

***An insane poem about dropping acid in the early 80s***

**Tripping**

The first time

Waited two hours

Before I said

Man you got burned

Gimme the other half

OK…he said slowly

Licked my finger

To make sure the other half a hit

Did not get away

Drop into the carpet

So I didn’t have to get on my knees

Lick the floor

Swallowed the other minute piece

Of yellowish gelatin

Just ingested one dose

Of windowpane

Should have been patient another ten

Should have known

ThenTheFeelingOnAJetGettingPushedBackInTheSeat

TaxiingDownTheRunwayWowWhatIsThisIntenseSpeed

FlyingAlongButStillOnTheGroundMaybe110MphNow

…A pause…catch my breath…what the hell was that?

Like nothing ever before…This can’t be…

AllAtOnceThePlaneInMotionAgainFasterThanBeforeWill

TheWingsComeOffCan’tTellStewardessRunningUpAndDown

TheAisleDumpingFoodSpillingDrinksToiletsOverflowingShitAndUrine

StreamingEverywhereLaughingMarxBrothersComedyScene

PoppingUpAllOverThePlaceWayUpOver200MPHNowCanWeGoAnyFaster

…Another lull…Damn!...This is extreme…to the max…maxed out…Never

known…anything like this…Wonderful tingling up the spine…Some blond that I can’t see…

giving me a massage…she’s good…time seems to be slowing…the universe vibrating

sensual…

ReachinGloriouSatisfyinGPeakMtEverestWayUpYondeRarefieDeliriouSoothEclipsEverlasting

SamadhiPerhapsFindingThatTowerOfBabelWhereICanHearAndUnderstandAlLanguage

AtOnceCanThereBeEverSoSweetSoSweetSecurityNowNowThatTheSunHasVeiledHis

LightAndBidTheWorldGoodnightToTheSoftBedMyBodyIDisposeTumblingEndOverEnd

CollapsingAsTheWorldMixesAndMinglesSoundsQuarterNotesEightNotesFermatasLush

NotesCan’tUntangleThisVastPuzzleThousandsOfPiecesShatteredLikeFragmentsOfGlass

TheirWordsMixedTogetherShakespeareCamusHesseSartreNauseaStrangersSisyphusSteppenwolf

BeingAndNothingnessNoExitHuisClosHellIsOtherPeopleIllegitimiNoCarborundumWreckOfThe

Old97BarreVermontMagneticSpringsOhioVincennesIndianaAntlersOklahomaZoomingWhizzingAll

OverTheCountryMagicActSawingAWomanInHalfPositionedOnAGulliotineHeadFallingIntoABasket

WhereACobraDancesToAnIndianPlayingAPipeThatIsFilledWithOpiumTranscendentalTransfiguration

IfAGiantSequoiaIsCutDownInTheForestAndThereIsNoOneToHearItIsThereOnlySilenceOrJustADialTone

I’mSorryTheNumberYouAreTryingToReachHasBeenDisconnectedForCenturiesCro-MagnonEpicanthus

WouldBeNiceToSeparateAllTheNoiseInMyHeadButICan’tBecauseEverythingFlowsTogetherIntoOneInviolableNecessityThatIsAmplifiedByASirenThatICanHearInMySleepWhichIsInterruptedByWhiteNoiseSpitOur

BySantaClausAtTheNorthPoleAsHeIsTryingToFillHisBagOfGiftsWithBonesVisceraBloodOther

OrgansOffalFromTheToastedBloaterSacher-MasochMarquisDeSadeHuysmannThoreauHawthorne

AlcottEmersonWhereTheFugawiCockMotherfuckerCocksuckerAndTitsBetterNotSayThemOnTelevision

BachVerdiSchumannAllegriBrumelMozartJosquinIvesCowellRugglesMahlerPuccini

And suddenly…things begin…to slow…down…Feeling a bit burned…from the experience…

Tired…Look in the mirror…Pupils still dilated…Getting a few follow-ups…in my vision…but exhaustion

Setting in again…All that is necessary…sleep…zzzzzzzzzzzz

***A trocar is a long hollow metal needle that is used for cavity embalming.***

**Trocar**

a pointed probing

inside

depths

subterranean lakes

stalactites stalagmites

giant teeth threaten

to bare me

reveal my longing

my insatiable

hollow steel tubing

connected to a large glass jar

removing the contents

within me

replacing blood

sweet-smelling perfume inserted

conversion

to a pleasing

handsome

lovable

corpse

***An anamnesis is a reminiscence.***

**Anamnesis**

I remember Mary

bathed in blue phosphorescence

as she tilted her head in the moonlight

smiled with cheeks of stoic elegance

lowered her gaze

as though in a silent prayer to me

folded hands of ivory

gilded beads about her neck

draped in molten chromatic splendor

cast reflections on her skin

beckoned

invited my hand

to softly impart a velvet touch

the ghost of a caress

***Hedera is the vine more commonly known as ivy.***

**Hedera**

Ivy climbs high

creeps close to the ground

bindwood

lovestone

embraces the coldness of rocks

scalloped hazel

small dusty waves

they may feed on the leaves

pretty but

she can kill

if she hugs a tree

may compete for the food

but she may protect if she clings to a wall

a fickle finicky vine

who may be pleasant

if she chooses to align

***Words that consider the color of blue***

**Puzzle**

Her mind

the complexity of a Persian rug

woven on a loom

as big as the world

Myriad colors

interlaced

blues the color of

Bessie Smith

azurite

cerulean blue

cobalt

stagnate

Prussian

colors of infinite ocean

even urine was used

after drinking alcohol

to dye a cloth

blue

surrounded by a blue aura

a spiritual

person who might be in touch with God

***Considering the reality of the promise…***

**A Problem With Promises**

My opinion of promises?

Insincere self-threats

Invite minefields

Hidden underground

One misstep

You are dead

Promises are always lying in wait

To be broken

Resulting in dark clouds of mistrust

The person who makes a promise

Crossing the fingers behind one’s back

A large King’s X

He or she has an out…

Always there can be an apology

I’m sorry I couldn’t make it

I couldn’t be there for you

Sorry I couldn’t see you when you were still alive…

The other person makes the statement of a child

But you PROMISED!?

Stamp a foot…

Pout…

Perhaps pull out a gun in revenge…

Better to be decisive…

Never say I promise

Only say

I WILL!

***Pondering the moon…***

**Gibbous eye of night**

Oh moon

Were it not for the caress

Of your tender touch

There would be no tides

No movement of my waters

No erosion of the beaches

Of my spirit

Kind moon

I would lead a static life

Remain mute

My depths would stay unswayed

Motionless

My vision would be blank and clear

My voice would bear no words

Gracious moon

Be the flinty fragment

To Ignite me with your fiery spirit

A burning match

That I might gleam

With the coldness of your brilliance

And light my path

So I can see the way

***A description of one of the Bloomsbury Group, Lytton Strachey***

**Lytton**

a bleating falsetto

was his voice

more of a piping treble

sometimes

when his brow was furrowed

display of a deep resonance

curious chap

charmed of whisky

beef-steak pie

quite a picture

as he reclined

in an elegant posture

on a sofa

clad in an embroidered silk

dressing gown

snifter of crème de menthe

delicately grasped

in a pale palm

smoked scented cigarettes

whose smoke curled

in elegant spirals about his head

perhaps a wilde halo

hovered

over his head

to be adored by Dora

even in death

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

***Madness was creeping over me, and I didn’t know how to truly disrupt it. I was of two minds: one male and one female. The male was one which felt very familiar. The female was a different matter, for I had never encountered this maze of sensations and emotions. Never had I allowed myself this luxury.***

***This was an unfathomable quandary. Did I allow myself to go into this forbidding place? Or did I shun it all and revert back to my usual self.***

***As always I took the most difficult path. Since, in this hospital setting, I felt comfortable and because I was constantly surrounded by females, I had ample opportunity to observe them and feel their emotions. It was all unbelievably seductive, and the only thing I lacked was…a vagina.***

***I loved the students I would see constantly, and I had made them (as well as some of the staff members) good friends. They felt at ease disclosing to me some of their most private thoughts, which I accepted without question, or asking why. The one whose name was somewhat similar to Madeleine, but not quite, loved my poem (Third poem in book), and when we would see each other gave me a glittering smile. I perceived my touch was deep, and it felt right (in spite of the fact that she was married). Achieving this level of intimacy was a simple matter now. There were only a few people I knew with which this would be impossible, and I would not try to attain this closeness with them due to the outstanding number of roadblocks within them (no doubt erected for my protection as well as theirs).***

***\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_***

***Some selected thoughts from the nursing home…***

***This was the opening poem written ca. January 24, 2009.***

**The Beginning**

Lying on my back

A sorry attempt to find comfort

At least when St. Teresa of Avila was stabbed by the angel

Bearing a flaming golden arrow

She was ecstatic

As sculpted by Bernini

The angel who repeatedly stabs my knee

Is more infernal

I cannot see its face

Though I sense an evil grimace

Makes sleep impossible

For hours in the dark

I induce louder volume from the television

To drown the moans and cries of the anguished

Echoes from the white hallways

When I awaken from sleep

A revival from a state of being dead

Ponderings of non-existence

Inhabit my daytime hours

I would assassinate them if I could but reach them

Those who rob me of nocturnal rest

The man who barks from his large reclining chair

He never sleeps

Resembles Cleopatra floating on a barge in the Nile

As the caretakers push him to different locales

So he gradually disturbs many

The man in the next room who always talks to people

About religion

His incessant chatter from an electric wheelchair

Which he drives rapidly down the floor

Covered with a white sheet

Looks vaguely like Caligula

Shouting commands to those within earshot

The time I pray for

Ten p.m.

Time for my sleeping pill

No awareness that the pill is preceded by four other pills

Privately ingested

The insurance that I will have a few peaceful hours

In the morning

Observe the squirrels and hummingbirds

The latter in miraculous flight

The former in humorous scampers

Their daily business

Oblivious to my agony

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

***I thought about my grandmother’s pet dog which only had three legs***

**BAMBI—VII**

My grandmother’s Chihuahua

A tiny creature with soulful eyes

Hobbled around on three legs for years

As I stumble through the halls with a walker

I wonder what it will be like to walk again

I inquired of someone who knew

How quickly the dog learned again to ambulate

As it was suggested to me

The dog didn’t consider the pain

It merely needed to get to food or water

Necessities of life

It is difficult to defeat the human mind

It struggles to adhere to logic

Rather than view the world through a primitive brain

As Rilke expounds in The Eighth Duino Elegy

The mind of creatures is different

They see the world through a different set of eyes

I always wondered many years ago if wild animals

Had an awareness of zoos

And if so

Could they communicate this idea to others of their kind?

Do the turkeys who are pardoned each year

By the U.S. President

At Thanksgiving

Realize they have been spared?

I have since discovered that the true culprit of Bambi’s ailment

Was not a haphazard closing of a metal gate

Upon an unfortunate limb

The dog was dropped from the hands of another

The real cause of the animal’s ultimate disfigurement.

So like this animal I must continue and survive

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_-**

***I took several years of Spanish but turned my back on it when I was disqualified from a competition at the University of Southern Californa, because I had neglected to sill out a form of which I was unaware>***

**SPANISH SPOKEN HERE**

Here they speak it at a breakneck speed

I imagine using a lot of “street” expressions

They miss the beauty of the spoken word

I hear the language as it might have been spoken

By Lorca

Reading his own Romance Sonámbulo

A leisurely pace

People stared at me when I recited it slowly

Thoughtfully

It was perhaps

A language they had never heard

It is like the German

I think might have been spoken by Rilke

Reciting his Duino Elegies

He probably frightened his contemporaries

Because he forced them to think of life with a serious intent

There are not many who make these considerations

Bring back beauty beauty beauty…as G.M. Hopkins might have said

***\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_***

***There was certainly something laughable about my predicament and I tried very hard to see the humor when I talked about…***

**ANTICS**

The endless pages

Call light in Room 3 please?

Call light in Room 3

When will I wake up to hear

Calling Doctor Howard. Doctor Fine, Doctor Howard?

Started shouting out my own pages…

Prostitutes to Room 2 please

Catholic priest to Room 1

Psychiatrist to Room 24

Offended some students who came in to rub unguents on my legs

When they were finished, I asked, isn’t there going to be a happy ending?

One of them said, “How inappropriate!”

Rehab…a sorry state

As I re-learn to walk

I must laugh

Try to enforce a sense of humor

In this cathedral of souls in limbo

Where we are trapped between heaven and hell

An earthly purgatory

In the darkness

When a nurse enters

Sometimes I illuminate the partially filled urinal

With a bright light from below

Announcing

*La torre de oro*

Or hold the red flash light close to the drawn curtain…

From the other side it gives the flavor

Of a red moon glowing

Frightening those who enter

As though it is a vision from beyond

Sometimes I recite limericks as I walk

A distraction from the pain

Sometimes I recite the prologue to the Canterbury Tales

In Middle English

No one can understand what I say

They look at me with quizzical looks

And question marks cross their countenances

Sometimes I sing songs, none risqué

Adelaide of Beethoven

Serenade from The Student Prince

A wide and varied program

My silent roommate?

The student nurses always pull the curtain “to give him privacy”

They say, “Mr. Rinaldo, how are you today?”

He is silent, so I answer for him in a guttural voice “Estoy bien! Y tu?”

For a few seconds they are fooled.

Then they laugh.

The curtain, when they pull it makes me feel as if I am in a road company

Of The Wizard of Oz

In the shower behind the curtain I held a conversation

Low male voice: Come hear my darling!

High female voice: Get away from me, you nasty man!”

Low male voice: But I desire you, my dear

High female voice: Get out of here! This is for women!

Low male voice: Don’t scream—so is this!!

Cage said, “We are all going slowly nowhere.”

A grave truth in this bizarre place.

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*The e-mail messages that flew back and forth between us before she left (for greener pastures) are reproduced below.*