

SevenSieteSept

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Calesius C.B.

Cover illustration by the author

Scare

I

Simultaneously and whiplash-fast
Fuzz chills across my nuque
And giggles in a chorus choke off my gorge;
For we are on high plains near Olduvai
And judged for reverie, I'm jolted by hyenas' bay.
Death might decline today if, more than desperation,
I spew speed.

But

II

Neck follows with its less-than-owlish spin.
Up down the smooth hard vein the travellers are light;
Beige autumn coats our southern spread
Warm-pelted by a pebbled rain
Under just a tongue of breeze. And
There the girls prance from a door;
Safety in the city is once again assured –

A given good prompting no reflection.

But then relief is only relative.

Ascent from Mihai Bravu, Bucharest

White pillars split the middle of a polished, metal sky,
Brown panels back a draughtsman's stars and geometric bars;
Earth's truest colours
Over and including benches' scarlet strike.

Up up next to the district dark of auto-hospitals
(Not where patients cure themselves
But where cars' broken joints are soothed),
Well-cloaked but not that dim so as
To hide three distant home-slab mounts.

Nostalgia's hammer-sickle pilgrimage?
Long legs lift on to yellowed halls
And panels made to buzz old marriages and naps;
Iron carriages for childish fun
Crouch low in snow-blend mud out back. That's all.
I've come to neighbours unawares.

Renard's glimpse, on the occasion of his tenth birthday

So he wakes to an exceptional sharpness of things:

Tang, decay and mouse heads;

In his nose last season's poplar shed;

Crow-flash on retina's edge.

Then... like maroon shadows down the sky's soft face

Gargantuan

Rush deep and troubling tones inside

That prompt wild dread and harrowing doubt,

Grim insight, vertigo, a

Scene of separation stark to closure absolutely cold...

Before approximation of his parents' scent and shape:

Unfathomable delight.

Beyond fox's habitual grasp.

For just one instant cut.

Objectives of an Enlightened man

We begin, conceding everything to science, but...

This shall be no retreat.

Rather, a daring slip aside.

Using reason, we'll make a case

For the community's sweet cause;

Sulphur and orange fire needn't be our earthly doom.

Nous n'avons pas, par nature,

Cette soif de l'or *si sèche* et sans vertu –

Learning will love us all the days of our lives.

A sacred tree: no corolla of mystification

But a post to toast abundance

And the never-ceasing mystery

Only some of whose loose ends
Can in time be tied
By patient women and their men.

Though over there's the pit.

There'll be assemblies, real sort,
Cacophony and clash,
Not those quick-strangled in stiff shirts

If first ventriloquized by General March.
Why not?
Permit the full development

Of souls heretofore stunted by disease,
Salubrious for hearts
Who in debate have pushed

Or in a chat about plants nuclear and bombs
Felt true. Expel the clogging fats
And strengthen our meek whole!

So cheeks take on a pinkly bright
And hominids' cool skin is smoothed,
Our covering that's grown so nice from scrag.

Of course, there yawns the pit.

Old Strauss (that's Leo) and his men might shout:
And what of greatness?
Or of excellence?

This challenge we must take
With a swallow of sobriety
Even if the question's put with barbs.

Though of course, there growls the pit.

With certain types of excellence we can dispense
Or better, turn into a sublimate:
They're anguish by the truck.

E.g. young Alexander, Caesar ought to stay
In Macedonia and Rome,
Honing skills in composition and stick ball.

Adolf jeune?
Send him to Academy to sketch and
Swivel in his joy.

Buy Trotsky his own rag review;
Drain off Vlad's endless energy
Into the academic grid.

For after all, brilliance in the crimson bath's to scorn,
Admitting that it glistens in its way
And has been known to realize good, collaterally.

But what about the excellence of Beauty and deep Thought?
And can the few have place inside
The muchedumbre's din?

Again, trail Reason's string.

The garden needs its artist and its botanist

Plus those strong arms that smooth out soil while their owners sing.

So the glorious are as special as the challenged

And the purest, spurning praise fiduciary,

Will treat blue skies

Like a magnet to their smiles.

Though of course there yawns the pit,

Just there.

Its maw brown-fat,

Too dense to see inside,

Extended 'cross the road.

Courage. Redemption

(If we strive to hold the line)

Mightn't leave more than fifty behind.

Note to Black after his article

The erudite man restored
(For now at least, at least for now)
And given goals afresh in Gulag
Planned by liberalism's guardians
Catches himself thinking on Islam.
Civilization, after all, must be secured
 Again.

Where to paint the line between the healthy
And the rotten parts of that old culture scattered wide?
Somehow to catch on one side
Those prepared to live above, released,
Awash in often blinding shine
But free at least from falsehoods
Shared out angrily by shadow-kin.

But wait.
Perhaps the problem is two-fold

And not primarily about Enlightenment
But love and cruelty, wicked and good.
Followed by the doozy of them all:
The line would have to run right over
Human souls and tissue individual,
That is, through hordes who on both halves reside.

Consider how young Deutscher Bund grew up,
That well-schooled European boy,
Plus that bright Georgian lad once set on seminary
Turned sharply to modernity.
Then think of Colonel Russ,
Confederation's box-jawed sentinel:
Reporters ripping into him, the column crowd excoriating
 His apparent sub-humanity,
And thereby missing points enthusiastically –
Even as they titillate and tease
The crowd excited and repelled
(Its members most astute quite conscious of the mirror brandished
By the clean-cut “monster” as he spews remorse
And sends his wife that aching note of love).

Oceans and streams

Madrid to Athens, written a report
On what's Olympically been spent
After a book of poems to Thrace is sent
(en inglés in fact)
As someone's sister huge with child
Totters through Toronto's Chinatown
So that she brushes with her gown
A bin of sea-life powder-dry
Imported by a man whose great grandmother (back by four)
Was a court official's jade-eyed friend.

Verse lost and found?

The parameters of a poem
Its rubber-walled idea, or plan
If once firm
Is jelly, liquid, bubbled into air

There was: knowledge all-encompassing
Dispersion or diffusion of a self
Most likely wider than biology allows
(And before the molecules had settled in the stomachs of
earthworms);

A glance, not exactly back
But circumfluent
Pausing at a son's young glowing face
In almost pure agape
Minus green obsession so particular;

Spring light that polishes steel cliffs –
Rinsed already by the rain –
Repeated well across a milk and berries hemisphere
Covering our heads in fact
And musically, in old Rumpel's golden spun;

And an ancient armchair in a public reading room
Old books and Sino cheeks
That all recall the readers' anxious, fun-drenched youth

But a poem??

To a nose raced past a space
Where shaved grass bathed
And petals soaked their skins
A puff of watermelon rose