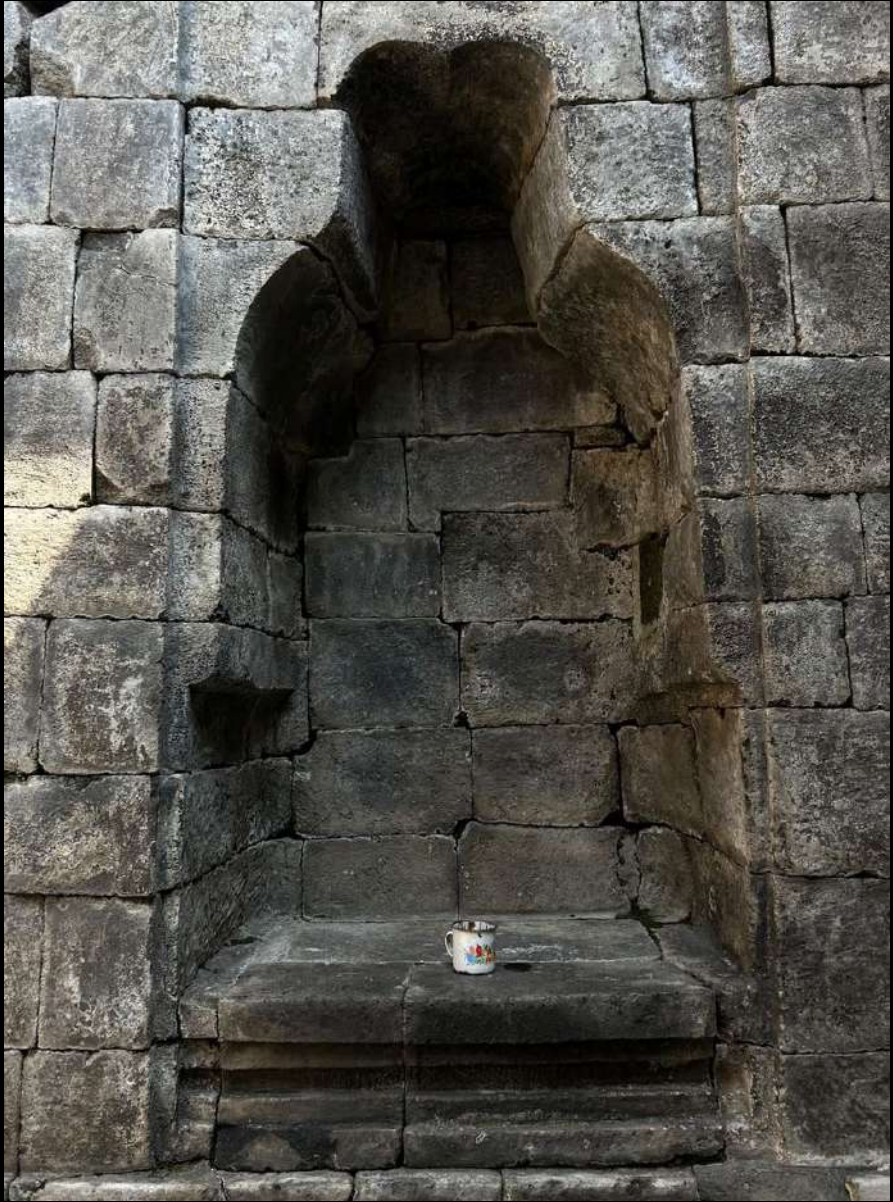


THE CLOCK
HAS
NO HANDS



Alison Schooling
Empty Offering
2024

*Le temps loge
hors de l'horloge*

~ Etienne Klein

ON LEARNING A NEW LANGUAGE

Anders Kølbe

There is something terribly disappointing about learning a new language. In the end and after much hard work it turns out that what you can now say in a new tongue is strikingly similar to what you could already say in your old tongue. As the music recedes and the foreign voices grow familiar you once again find the world almost exactly as you had left it. It returns to you – not once but doubly outworn and tired.

L'arbre is again a tree, twice the same tree, and this doubling only confirms life's general lack of imagination.

Anyone who speaks more than one language is likely to suffer from this disillusion – however, and quite possibly with some pride: now able to express this disillusion in more than one tongue.

•
•
•

Perhaps this is one reason why art is — and continues to be — so important and why no art, no matter how dark and sinister, is ever completely void of hope.

Art offers a language that is always only spoken once.

No two paintings, no two sculptures, speak the exact same tongue. The artwork may be fluent in its own way, but it speaks only fluently about itself. It is not a language that can be translated, not a conversation that can easily be taken up ... and continued ... by others.

The art historian and the art critic will surely try but they can only say what the artwork says by saying something very different. They do not explain or capture the work for the work has already fully explained itself in a language never again to be spoken. This is the silence that follows the museum visitor on her way home, before other and more familiar voices again resound — before trees, streets, and words fall back into their old and familiar relationships and routines.

And so the artwork never doubles the world to confirm it but gives it instead anew to you.

Everything that one might recognize in the picture, in the painting, in the music, is spoken in a language of no returns. There is no going back, only the birth of new voices, of new tongues. This is, as John Berger would say, what makes all art, even its oldest works and pieces, strangely and permanently contemporary.

Time does not cancel what time can never quite capture. *I shall say this only once* saves the work from growing old. *The clock has no hands* for a language that moves only forward.

And so it is that the artist who repeats herself or who copies others, who desires one language to express everything there is, finds her work strangely old and outdated from the very beginning. Fluency gives time all its devastating forces back. Languages too well and easily spoken cancel out hope – the hope there lies in the singularly spoken.



Peel

Cyril Wong

Peel

2024

COOING

Setsuko Adachi

Mrs. Qiu was looking at the sky. She was good at spotting the beautiful shining bodies falling from the sky that the Tower of Victory was covered in. They were much like shooting stars.

On her ninetieth birthday night, she was amused by a bright body that danced jolly as it made its way to the ground. The next morning, A-qui, her daughter, informed her that her husband's body was back on the Tower ground. A-qui had the notice from the Bureau of the Tower of Victory printed out:

Completion of the Tower of Victory Venture

Wan Qiu

Tower venture registered: DD/MM/YY

The time of death: MM:HH DD/MM/YY

Mrs. Qiu asked her daughter, "Any news on Taq-a-si?" Taq-a-si was A-qui's brother. "No, Ma, nothing. He's still climbing." "Yes, of course, it takes him longer, that boy is sinful."

*

When their father, Mr. Qiu, discovered he had an intractable disease, he got thirsty for the taste of victory. He quoted what all the venturers quoted, “If what Mr. Borges recorded in *the Book of Imaginary Beings* is true, victory awaits at the topmost story of the Tower.”

The fact is nobody has come back from the Tower of Victory alive. But to the venturers, these beautiful bodies sparkling with light were solid proof; the Tower conquerors left the light-radiating bodies behind and went to a higher — better — place. For that reason, the climbers are not allowed to carry any light.

Their father had coaxed Taq-a-si to come with him. “You are better off climbing with me. It will fix your unhealthy addiction.” Taq-a-si was nineteen. His son only had one more year to dispel himself from the addiction, or else he would be dispelled from society.

**

My mother became obsessed. She craved to taste victory like her husband. She firmly believed that the dancing jovial body was her husband's message. My attitude was if my mother wanted to go, she should, and that I should assist her to fulfill her last wish seemed only natural. I also knew it meant my death, and at that point, I didn't care all that much. So, we registered and entered the pleasant, welcoming underground passage that led us to the Tower.

“You know why we need to go underground,” my mother said, “it smells bad out there. Plus, these bodies could hit us and get us killed. I feel bad for the death time establishers in the bunker on thud duty. It's a sick job.” My mother had no doubt about death time establishers' preciseness, “but” she said, “if they fail, if they miss Taq-a-si, and do not give closure to his earthly existence, I will kill them myself.”

I always wondered if she knew that to compensate for the sickness of their duty, time establishers were given the freedom to get addicted, be high, and practice that most horrible of sins: the arts. I had so much time to ask her, but I missed the chance anyway. I never got around to informing her that Anbao Coo is the name of the death time establisher, and he was the only one there.

We started climbing the stairs within the wall. I held my mother's hand as she slowly made her way upward. Soon, the walls that kept us inside the Tower were gone, but the duskiness stayed the same. We did not take shortcuts because they were steeper, and there was a higher risk of us falling off the edge. We went on the gentle, wide, almost flat stairs, resting often. My mother, surrounded by the same enthusiasts, was enjoying her climb tremendously. They were kind to the elderly venturer both in words and in action. The more we climbed, the more my mother's mood brightened. I was happy for my mother, but I also discovered my ego was bigger than I thought and that my mother's happiness was not good enough for me to quench my boredom and stress. I did not let it show, but was painfully aware this was killing my life; the climb offered no solace, and I had no escape from it.

I developed an anomaly: my right middle finger swelled and then started to glow dimly. It offended my mother and my fellow climbers. They did not want me around. The unlit climbers decided they needed to protect my mother from evil. They offered to carry her, and thus, she and they left me behind. I was shocked and hurt by the meanness of the whole incident when Taq-a-si patted me.

“Are you all right, sis?” “You have to have the decency to cover the light. It is the unlit world,” he said, opening his clenched fist to show me his dimly lit palm. Startled, I slipped. Taq-a-si grabbed me by my fat finger but to no avail. It slipped out of his grasp, and I fell. Once in the air, I instantly realized I was one of the shining shooting body stars heading back to the ground.

“The clock has no hands for the obscene faller!” I heard the death time establisher murmuring softly, and the young man scurried into the atelier, all excited. He bore a striking resemblance to my brother.

The death time establisher did not, could not, would not call out my time of death, because by the time I hit the ground, I was invigorated. I went through the earth and landed in an atelier on a drop cloth spread over the circular floor.

I had an amazing fall. It earned me a nonsensical conviction that I had gained full control of my life and that this light lit in me was the best thing that had happened to me. I never knew what I really wanted from my life, but now, I did. I was burning to engage in the arts, create something, and be high.

“I am Anbao Coo,” he introduced himself, radiating as he grinned. “I am so happy to have you here! You survived!” He exclaimed, and we shook hands. The uplifting clear blue light that emitted from our handshake filled the atelier; it was surreal.

“I am sorry to abandon you so quickly, but I think you understand my itch. I need to get back to the mural.” Anbao Coo climbed up the ladder and started working on a mural. It was dark, bare scenery in oil. Forlornness exuded from the rough and rocky ridges of the mountains. I watched him paint, and I bathed in Anbao Coo’s euphoria. I understood his *itch*; he was driven and focused. I knew he was getting what he wanted. The drop cloth (and I) was covered with colorful spatters; the dark colors on the mural, Anbao Coo wrought out from vivid paints. Contrary to the mural’s despair, the cloth was exuding passion. I left the bunker itch driven. I re-entered the Tower through a forsaken entrance on the ground.

I was light-footed, and the unlit climbers saw no light from me. I went past my happy mother. She was chatting away. I did not stop for her. I held onto my reign tight. The light followed me on my heels, clinging to the edge of the stairs. I spotted Taq-a-si in paralysis midway up the staircase. His choice makes me humble. My brother was beaten badly and in a coma. Yet he had not let go of the light. I patted his clenched fist to acknowledge the moaning light. It was barely perceptible, a painful, yet gentle coo. But I did not stop.

I reached the top easily. When the Tower ran out of stairs to climb, I stepped into the light on the circular terrace. We started uplifting. I had the pleasure of creating us from the inside. I experimented and let us grow into an intense blue. I searched for our complete form. I was not good at the art of shades and gravity. It took me a long time to figure out and acquire the skills and expressions that worked for us to be off the ground entirely.

I was high. I — we kept on exploring higher and higher for a perfect form. And, of course, I started falling; I had drawn my last breath and in satisfaction.

Anbao Coo should have established my time of death.

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Janice Sim

Worlds Without End

2024

Tristram Shandy does not want to be born because he does not want to die. All means and all weapons are valid to save himself from death and time. If the straight line is the shortest between two fatal and inevitable points, digressions will draw it out; and if those digressions become so complex, meandering, tortuous, so quick that they leave no trace, death may not find us. Time may lose its way, and we remain hidden in our changeable hide-outs.

~ Laurence Stern



Red Ninja

Два Брата — Для Милый Кот и Лу

2011







III

Red Ninja

Два Брата — Для Милый Кот и Лу

2011



YES, IT DOES MATTER

When your feet touch sand
that carried the blood of homeless
Greeks, remember the sun was once blue not red,
the stones and the trees try to die with every fruit season
there where now stand old buildings with Starbucks and
lemon cake
there where blood dripped and was wiped by the sea
where children had nothing in their pockets
only God to trust
this is the truth
not just memory
harems may have thrived and colors
of sensuality and murder were common
beyond Bosphorus and hot tea
the dancing bodies were real
back in 1453

travelling across land to unknown homeland
finding more of the same shade and strange sea
Jesus did not betray the land
did not burn the murals
and the entrances to ancient cities

travelling across land to unknown homeland
finding more of the same shade and strange sea
Jesus did not betray the land
did not burn the murals
and the entrances to ancient cities

The British, even xenophiles like Byron, loved their tea,
it's true and the violent ways of making
friends and the dancing and rape behind walls
was not romantic for the abducted
killed mothers and fathers of all things
no longer speak

Byron sings of revolutions as the Ottoman drinks
blood upon his lip
this was real in 1453
This is not a reaction
this is the truth
Many still care who was there
whose blood and heritage were destroyed
while the powers were making allies

In my thoughts I am Greek
not corrupted by slave trade
and the Mississippi river
yet have lived in towns named after natives
and fed on stories of Indians
and murder and smoke and tobacco fields
and twisted politics

I only know of the Aegean Sea
where olives bare fruit and drop it as a gift
where figs have their own season
and bloom anywhere the sun can see
I am Greek when I do not respond
to the name of a city that lives and breathes its own ghost
Istanbul is an afterthought
the real Byzantine city is still there
coming through walls and ground like a raised body of a thousand
years ago
blue tile and Greek coffee and all the honey sweets did not come
from the north they are from across the sea
yogurt and honey and all the ancient things
you read about in history are Greek.

This is not a lesson
it is a fact

And Sappho on her high hill-home danced to music that was Greek
and Alexander the Great had respect
for the other and loved the other
and married one or two

They did not lose
they let civilizations be in their land
and so, they did,
but the killings and the overtake was real in 1453

It is real the truth for those of us who remember
not only our own memories but of those who dreamed and
prayed
and stayed steady on the port looking and hearing the yelling
for Allah
a God that was not their own
they did not believe it was not true or real or memory
but death is real for those who dare
Even the fish flipped over onto their backs
while in the frying pan (as the story goes)
they too could not believe
the Aegean was bleeding into the Black Sea
and the blood was no longer pure
in thought or in memory

It does matter what you call a place
what is it
without feeling what it was
it is a not a dream
when I visit my home and I look across the foreign waters
I know fishing boats used to go there for a thousand years
and I see shadows of guards drowned in mist and salt vapors
I know the days were different
when I feel the sun standing still, warming us both the same
I know the difference
matters not only in 1453
but now while my church and God and donkey
were Greek
are now full of marble
shoes lie outside Agia Sophia
turned into a mosque against her will
the raping of slaves and kings
and Gods is real
history is not what you see
it is what people have lived
their beauty
is still in the trees and the walls and rocks
in statues with closed eyes
and sun and sea
all of it was Greek
and still is by another name
Constantinople is a friend to visitors
that is what they go to see
and it does matter after all these years
because the ancients still live in ghosts of a city raped,
a city renamed, rebelieved
repurposed and resold,

just like the women behind its walls.
For many that is real, it is not a dream
and all that is romantic about this, began and ended with the Romantics.
The truth is never kind or freeing for Greeks
who know of tragedy and history and poiesis
and coffee underneath an ancient tree.
In my everyday life I am American
but in my heart, I only speak Greek.

Maria Kranidis

October 2024



Janice Sim

Passages

2024

MARY'S EASEL

in memory of Mary Patricia Murphy 1967 – 2024

A suitcase outside my door
is

waiting

for me to unpack its contents,
fold away the black,

bitter wars.

In there, a lemon ochre dress,
as if to ward off

a sad smile.

A pair of bleached socks,
pale linen blouses lying beneath

the burgundy shoes.

Oh, the Mary Janes!
Worn like vintage, as if

poised for a painting

on her wooden easel, as if
about to get up to dance,

or about to leave –

perchance an invitation
to paint, splash, and to stain

melancholic mauve hues

of life's drudgeries, here —
paint this canvas,

on this floor,

beckons
the aquamarine door.

Janice Sim

July 2024

Gold Coast



Janice Sim

Patches

2024



Janice Sim

Perches

2024

NE COUPEZ PAS

~ une petite partie ~

It is beautiful
Not knowing from where things come
The secret sequences
Are more fine
There are intrigues
In the midst of which we forget
The beginning, no longer awaiting the end
A few more moments
Everything can penetrate all.

~ Pierre Alferi

translated by
Jeremy Fernando

*My mission is to kill time,
and time's to kill me in return
How comfortable one is among
murderers.*

~ E.M. Cioran

A MILKING

Michael Kearney

Dramatis Personae:

Regular text

The narrator enacting and remembering and writing about this particular milking while on the corporeal plane upon which it has been taking place.

{ }

The semi-omniscient narrator, with a lingering subjectivity stemming from their having existed on the corporeal plane under consideration here, observing, as an aspect of the Cosmic Consciousness, the milking and the writing of it.

()

Concerned, related,
interested semi-
omniscient entities, still
somewhat subjective,
observing as aspects of
The Cosmic
Consciousness. Were on
relevant corporeal plane
at the time of the
milking, and other
events, but were not
necessarily direct
witnesses at that time.
All time is their present.
All dimensions is their
place. Yet, their “views”
are tinged with
subjectivities lingering
from their corporeal
experiences.

[]

“The” Cosmic
Consciousness – flat.
Always is. Apparently
indifferent.

Italics

Entities, other than the narrator, speaking. They are on the corporeal plane upon which the milking under consideration has been taking place. They are there.

“ ”

Special terms, interesting phrases, titles of songs, quotations, etc.

Part the Only

The “moocows” bellow at me to get to work, yet I sup my tea, never slurp when Mammy’s around, slowly.

{You’ll learn the term “moocow” in about seven years when you have to read *The Portrait* ... in a first-year lit class.}

(How could ya have used the term then, if ya had not learned it yet?)

{Hmm ... I must have been remembering the me of that then wrong. Interference from future memories?}

(Ah ... that's the trick of memory – none of them can be trusted.)

[However, they are as real as “The Real”, realities embedded in soma, electro-pulses, elementary particles, energy. “The Real” so elusive, the realities, so comforting.]

Com'on now, off ya go or you'll be late.

I slide into my still too big wellies. Used to be Tom's, got too big for 'em; will I forever be getting Tom's wellies, trousers, shirts, shoes ... when will I get something of my own?

{You'll get a rake of clothes, a new jacket, a pair of runners, a pair of desert boots, when you head-off to uni: used the money from your bullock sales.}

[The Mammy and Daddy of this family give each of the boys a calf at their baptisms, first holy communions, and confirmations and when the bullock is big enough, it gets sold and the money goes into the bank; the boys get the funds on their eighteenth to use how they will. The lone girl gets lambs, and the same processes is followed.]

{Tom used his on a trip to Spain. Paddy's went on a car that he would soon crash. Aisling headed to London for a few months with hers.}

(Our Sharon had to head off to England too. She never did come back. Missed her then. Shocking times they were. If we only knew then what we know now.)

(Ah Maeve ... sure how could we know then; a life is lived 99% blind.)

(True Jack, true.)

(What was it that young fella from America said that time?)

(What fella? When?)

(The Yank from New York who was over visiting his granny that time all the young ones were up the pole.)

(Jack!)

(Aye ... right. Sorry Maeve. Sorry Sharon.)

(She doesn't care anymore. Been here a long time now.)

(Aye ... aye ...)

(Ah ... Mike's Lizzie's grandson ... Patrick, was it?)

(Oh aye ... That's yer man!! And Peggy says ta Lizzie, about them all getting that way around the same time, that "it must be something in the air" ...)

(Ah right, and he says “yeah, their legs” ...)

(Right!! That was a good one!!)

(Poor fella is here now, too young.)

I slip on Tom’s old German parka. Sleeves now too short, shoulders tight; soon it’ll be Paddy’s ... if Tom’s still fits him, will I get one of my own?

{You will not. Tom’s old German parka will not go to Paddy; it will go to the St. Vincent the Paul’s: Paddy grew at an alarming rate that year. Must have been something in the air: all the boys shot up, but Paddy, that boy must have been taking very deep breaths. So, the things you outgrew go to Saint Vincent’s and Paddy gets new things that eventually, in time, do Sean and Dominic. Aisling always got new things and gave them to no one. Are they still in that bursting wardrobe?}

I skulk out of the scullery into the “small garden”. No clothes on the line – isn’t “raining”, but the drizzle soaks the world and all in it – even the lad hiding from it in an old parka – the gravel is slick but firm and gives good footing. I sidle through the “small gate” and into the slop before the milking shed, laboriously trodding through the mire – sucking slop sounds – the earth destroyed here by heifers’ hooves: sharp spades, driven by the force of sixteen hundred pounds of beef, cutting the ground to bits, churning it to a slurping muck. I clench my ankles at right angles with every step, a strident effort to keep the wellies from sliding off my too small feet.

At the “big gate”, I see the bovines {You learned that word in a book at school last week.} have sauntered {That one as well.} to the farthest end of the shite splattered field. Taking their revenge for me taking my time with my tea? A conspiracy? Or just a bunch of stupid cunts following one bitch of a cow with an evil spirit?

A herd of dunces led by a “who-er”!! Her milk must be as foul as piss.

It’s always the same: on a beautiful dry day they’re lined up at the “big gate” and practically dance, float, into the shed. On cold, wet, pissing mornings, they gather in a clump at the farthest end of the field.

{You’ll see many more of these days than sunny ones.}

They’re roaring to be milked, but reluctant to move. I lethargically {Ha, ha ... now there’s a word you won’t learn for a while!!} swing a thin wet stick at them to move them. I’m not too pushed and neither are they, even though they’re aching.

{Nevertheless, you get there, and you always will. Drive ‘em up, plodding behind ‘em through their abstract art mire of shite and mud.}

(Maeve, do ya remember that time little Dominic wanted ta help his brothers bring the cows up? Ha, ha, ...)

(Of course I do, don't we remember everything?)

(And there's the little fella swinging his bit of a stick walking right behind the cow ... and she shites and coughs at the same time!! Like a rocket!! A rocket of shite right in the poor little fecker's face!!!)

(Jack!)

(Right, sorry Maeve. Sorry Dominic.)

(He's not here yet.)

(Oh ... aye.)

(Poor little fella, traumatized him. Good thing he only remembers through stories ... although, soon enough he'll see it all again.)

(Aye, but then it won't matter so much.)

[If they could see then as we see now, living would not have been so interesting. That is the beauty of living, and its horror.]

Tom and Paddy are waiting up in the shed, out of the rain, waiting to milk. We'll all be late, but no matter, probably be early tomorrow.

{Yes, tomorrow was as dry and sunny as the Mojave: tomorrow was Paddy's turn to bring them up, and the cunts were at the "big gate" waiting for him. Lucky fucking Paddy; well, at least with cows – ha, ha, ... }

(Hey, now ... no call for that.)

{Right, sorry Paddy.}

Tonight, Tom will be delighted to muddle through the slop, sneaking fags out of Mammy's sight.

(She can see him now – ha, ha, ...)

{Yes, but he gave them up years ago.}

(Aye, Niamh can't stand them. The things we did then for a chance with a one.)

(Feck off Jack! You did shite.)

(Ah now Maeve, you were easy ... ha, ha, ...)

(You never were.)

Paddy should be at the “big gate” to help let the first four through, but I hear “What Difference Does It Make?”, so I know I’m on my own with the “who-ers”. Tom will be smoking of course ... no fear of him coming out into the drizzle or the possibility of Mammy’s gaze.

{He did not have to worry about her seeing him that morning. While I was off in the muck getting the cows, Mammy told Tom that her and Daddy were going up to Mullingar to see “yer man”. Tom assumed she meant old Higgins who was in hospital. She did not lie, but then again ... Anyway, we’d find out soon enough.}

The bitches are kicking and shoving and roaring, but I get four in while the other four snort their grievance. The hard part is over. Tom is smoking, I ask for a pull. He extends his arm, palm-up, from the elbow ... humming along to the Smiths and exhaling a cloud ... like some funky benevolent music guru ... Tom always has been generous.

“I’m feeling very sick and ill today ...”

C’mon now Paddy ...

“Oh my sacred one ...”

We hook-up the sixteen teats. The drone of the milker and the psst, psst, psst of the milk hitting the bottoms of the churns drowns out the beginning of “Call It Mine”.

{Bailey is here now.}

(Who's that?)

{A singer, Jack.}

(Any good?)

{I think so. Have a listen yourself.}

With the milking done, the cups and hoses soaking, Mammy will wash them when she gets back from Mullingar, the churns out on the road waiting for the lorry, we head off to school.

The routine goes on and on, twice a day, every day, never a break – all for a bit of fucking milk.

Mentions

Albert Camus:	Absurdism
Alfred Jarry:	Bosse-de-Nage
James Joyce:	<i>A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man</i>
Flann O'Brien:	<i>At Swim-Two-Birds</i>
Kurt Vonnegut:	Tralfamadorians
The Smiths:	“What Difference Does It Make?”
The Saints /	“Call It Mine”
Chris Bailey:	

Everyone and everything I have ever encountered,
remembered or not.

Disclaimer

This is all fiction, I think. Names are used because I decided to use names. No unintended or indiscriminate realities about these characters and events should be formed; although, I am sure “they will be”.



Jeremy Fernando

In the shadow of Latiff Mohidin's 'Langkawi' (1978)

2024

I'M DEAD

Jeremy Fernando

*a particular day
some certain time
one year*

dearest friend,

I'm dead.

Which, unfortunately, makes it a touch tricky to be here with your good self, to be alongside you, at this moment. On the other hand, this also means that I'm always already here with you — quite literally, in spirit.

Certainly in your gin.

Maybe even as *stardust, billions old carbon.*

But perhaps, all that really matters be that *bombers riding shotgun in the sky start turning into butterflies.*

I suppose I really shouldn't even be talking with you now, *cher ami* ... but as I passed you in the doorway, you took me with a glance; even then, I guess — even then, all those year ago, I guessed — I should've took that last bus home ... but I asked you for a dance.

Ah, but *what be time between friends* ...
and what else is death other than *un pas au-delà* ...

A dance —
so twirl with me, my friend ... even if it be for one last time.

Once,

and therefore forever.

I know now what no angel knows: astonishment.

For, one should try not to make the error of the soldier from Samarkand: flee from one's date with Death.

After all, one should bear in mind — even if this remains a burden on one — that even at the very moment one catches a glimpse of the grim reaper, even as (s)he might be appearing before one, (s)he could well be there *just not for you* . . .

... for, even as *you'd like to think this song is about you*
not every tune is.

Moreover, it might do us well to remember that
there's only love in the dark.

+

How shall I mourn *me*?

Not *I*, for that would be one in relation with all others, every other. But *me*, a personal one, one who is just one as one — singular.

But since *I'm dead*, the one that I am attempting to mourn is always already in my memory, remembered.

Which brings with it the question: *which fragment of I have I resurrected?*; which brings along with it its compendium, its partner, a partnering question: *is it even possible to speak of me as such any longer?* Or perhaps, it is this fragmented, fragmentary, nature of the remembrance that ensures every memory is singular.

Not that I am necessarily able to tell the difference between them, between *me* and *I*. For, each recollection is haunted by the possibility of forgetting. And since there is no object to forgetting, no referentiality when one forgets — all I can possibly articulate is the fact that I might have forgotten — there is no possibility of knowing what is being forgotten. Thus, there is no possibility of knowing if each time one remembers, each moment of memory, might bring with it forgetting. In other words, forgetting is not antonymous to memory; they are always already a part of each other, even as they may quite possibly remain apart.

So, not only can I not know if my resurrection of *me* is accurate, it might not even have anything to do with *me*. It might be an *I* — not just in relation with all others, every other, but an *I* that is completely other.

Perhaps then, all that I can mourn is the possibility of *me*.

Perhaps, all that allows me to mourn in the first place is the possibility that I have forgotten, am always forgetting, *me*.

Perhaps then, all I can mourn is *I*.

+

*Forever's gonna start
tonight*

For, dear friend, the risk of friendship be that *one of the two of us will inevitably see the other die.*

Where, the limit of friendship — when the friend is no longer with you, at least in person — is also its very condition.

So, not much the risk of death — which is not so much a risk as an inevitability — but the *risk of loss*, of being the one who is unfortunate enough not to have died, of being the one without the other whom one calls, whom one has called, one's friend; without which, there is no possibility of friendship itself.

Where all there is left for the one who remains is the name of the other — where, all you can do is look into the space where I am, the space which is all that were left of me, and utter, perhaps sigh, *oh Jeremy . . .*

On the bright side, *chere amie*, since *I'm dead*, I'm always already away (*ex-*) from any accusation, from any legal action (*causa*).

So, free, away from (*ex-*) the grasp, the hand (*manus*) which seeks to seize, to imprison, to limit what *I* might wish to do, might have wished to have done.

And perhaps, it is only *me* that remains to haunt you.

For, one should try not to forget the fact that *everyone dies twice*: once bodily; the other time, when one is forgotten. One would like to believe that the two are sequential, but for those of us who are less fortunate, one can well be forgotten long before one is dead.

Hopefully not so for *me*.

Perhaps, dear friend, this might be why, with a little luck that is, even as you are standing in your haunt, there is a certain *me* — maybe even a spectral *me* — who remains to remind you that *I'm dead*.

Even if *me* be only voices in your head.

A *me* that softly, and continually, whispers to you:
I has been excused.

with love,
jeremy

