

JULES GIBBS

The Dream Will Not Rescue What it Does Not Love

I woke up on this dry slab of granite in the middle of a mad river. I came here by way of dream, spent all night breaking with the familiar for the sheer discomfort of discovery. And here I am. Uncomfortable Discovered. Reckless by way of imagination. The stones that led me here are all submerged. I can't explain anything. At dawn, word spreads fast. Crowds gather on the banks hysterical and hollering: *She's been messing around with historical narrative again.* They don't get me; they never get me. Too many double shifts at the granary. *Your refrains are silly,* I yell back, although I know they can't hear my disdain over the rushing water and their own shouting. They haul out ropes and make a plan. Mob mentality sets in. They want to save me or kill me using tropes, ballads with line breaks that still need work, inexplicable shifts from third person to first. Extraneous language a waste of energy like waving one's arms over one's head. Their technique is passé, too embellished for this post-ironic crisis. The usual arguments over methodology ensue; correct reading of currents, navigation of rapids, whirlpools, water wells and roostertail rocks, a strategy in competing angles of incidence. Because you have to show a little style, even if style has no real function — they anchor parallel lines to the oaks upstream. Devise gorgeously overcomplicated slip knots and tether the ropes to the men, send the men down one by one, each line breaking with a personal pronoun, dampening all the good music. The waters are rising, everyone notes, *waters* because it's got to be plural in situations like this — no substitute for vigorous and exact description. *Who the hell is running this thing?* The biggest man with the biggest hands brings a tactile quality to the surface, an element beyond the mere thought or expressed intention. Here they come, the parallel links of men, one by one, to save me, and one's knot fails and he's pulled under — *asunder* — taking with him

all the men in his line, the risk you run when you rely
on redundancy, when you can't reconcile your action
with your title, your title with your theme.

The townspeople are always tangible and clear —
just look at them now, running along the banks,
sobbing and tearing their hair,
yelling into the whorls of black water.

A Sonnet for Lorca Upon His (Failed) Exhumation

The cockroach crushed underfoot had armor and war
 but no spleen. He was atomized. Pained
 with stiletto and the shrill laugh of a man: Oh, *mi amor* —
 the *faena de capa*, shudder of olive tree, crush of mass grave —

Otherwise, the murder was perfectly silent.
 To be splened is to cry from a spackled
 off-center your last *cante jondo*, but you were pliant
 wiped clean in the manner of a poet, split into two black

moons of tolerance. Untroubled lobes of death —
 spleen to me once more, the way you do. Lather my chutes.
 Be lullaby bile. Love my one slick eye. Love my wet
 kiss thrown deep in the pit of matador mucus,

a snail's trail strung *claro torrente* from the gullet
 like the clear, bright sparks from your mind to the bullet.

Apology for Music

I guess there was something feckless about my love for sound, a feverish translation of material — freckles, child labor, the anticipation of a life sentence — into the sweet dark tongue of the universal. To curate the spine and its three curves into the lilt of a body not limned by the *numbed senses*. *Musik fliegt wennich fliegt*: If I fly, the music will fly — my urge, to conquer space with sound, to hold no philosophy in the roar and whirl of rotors. I sent the quartet into four machines, plotted a tonal flight plan, plotted against the human, fed her colliculi inferior and superior by mic, click-track, force. On the downbeat, the copters lifted — the first notes arrived on earth like ovular bodies that had tunneled inward to unseat the quite hollow of the soul. And then — when the tonnage of steel and glass split the horizon, I knew I'd never make a sound, not broken, not otherwise.

Apology for Creation

As it turned out, we were no more than the idea of ourselves, God's spittle bubbled on His big baby lips, bacterium of a deity swollen to the size and shape of a forest afloat on a bed of peat. It was the sort of news that brought everyone out onto the streets. We thought we owed everything to The Flood: alluvial fans, dendritic drainage patterns, newts, coaxial cable, permafrost, chakras, geometry, every variation on desire: leather, frozen yogurt, frozen embryos, speed, hip hop, mezcal, you name it — only to discover we were coded in a single protein — our own negative feedback loop. Even on Neptune and Mars, entire civilizations of us had come and gone. Suns born. Earths lost. A trillion times over. Without punishment or reward. We were a repeating pattern, that, when viewed from a great distance, appeared as an elegant, limbless twist, a strand of coiled matter wherein everything that would happen had already happened. Even with Heaven gone, some dropped to their knees. None of us knew where to look. Suddenly, all of our thoughts embarrassed us; the idea of *I*. The smell of a neighbor's dinner — meat and carrots stewing — wafted into the street. That, too, embarrassed us.

*Unlimited Knowledge Bestowed
upon Devotees of Online Universities*

I've seen a lot behind the scenes — Ginger Pitt, Marquita
Devine, blog terms of service,
piracy policies, support feeds. I've read the blah, blah
cannons: *Guide For Incorporating a Corporation*, the *Buchbestellung*
Unter Dogdance, all the implicit barriers at the end
of a parallel region. Bhagavan always spoke
informally to his disciples— jejune,
he'd prattle, digress, renovate his diligent
directory, his poignant bus stop correctness.
I happened to be his first Western
disciple to honor dissidents of India, Russia and China,
to balance the US/EU approach: just sharing your life
transparently seems to work best: biblical, emergent,
a barony all over the world.
Enjoying complete and total confidence
every time, he preached beautiful Costa Rica
at pre-development prices; his obsessions with Ruth
and New Carlsberg's misogyny grew nauseating,
like his Hong Kong top-up for the best
international rates. Basically, that was it; it ended
kinky, deluxe: my friend Mohammad Swain and I
decided to bet who could plod darkness,
who could minister first to Syrinx —
long time, babe, long time.

Talking to Your Doctor

Go cervix! Your burly creature
thrives in its little cavern,
 untersüssigen,
 your little joss.

The men don't know we name him
 Ronnie, a precept
 revved for the pullback, to vend
as in, refi your car,
be a better lover in the vernacular —

Howdy, we've got matron lumber,
a repertory built in solid
 rustic materials where close attention
 has been paid to every detail.

Gewinnspielteilnahme, unkindly primeval
in the name of La Scala, hope to god
 the slide stained potassium brown
 clears the marshal.
Hope to god your check is still waiting.

Pay Attention, the Angels Aren't Fucking Around

We are a barefaced November in Hampshire
bootstrapped captives of usury
testing the sweets of life. Sap —

a few drops in any drink is all it takes
to achieve
madcap substrate, audible prowl.

Poeta nascitur non fit. Listen, a nod
and the canyon has calcified
the implausible Modesto Quonsets —
a virtuoso scald.

Un message en provenance du site, we've already approved you
for a columnar unit — obtrude,
do something about it! *Ye, thou hast*
well been accursed, said the Lord: *Heal. Quadruple.*

Avoid enhancement pills, Saskatchewan shampoo. I is prevention,
sayeth the Lord, *I is revisal, easy,*
just drop me a note.

Heft u een pagina toegestuurd, meaning:

This is our last attempt to reach you —
give us your opinions and be rewarded — our
error page will use nurturing colors such as blues and
grays instead of reds and yellows. Better believe it
ye Repressives, ye Segreagants, a new you in 2008 —
this is not a joke: exquisite whiff
of scattergun abutted,
a revolution in weight management is finally here.

Imitation in Winter

"Move on objects with your eye straight on... Relationships gradually emerge and sometimes assume themselves with finality."

Aaron Siskind, *"The Drama of Objects."*

when i stand before the bathroom mirror and the door is partially open, I feel what Bachelard meant about the extension of infinite space found in familiar objects, in this case,

the door — familiar as every door and every door
a perfect metaphor for the other door
it stands for — seems
to extend beyond itself, an extension of energy/invisible matter/intention, a force
that intersects on a material level
with my brain

if i give in to the urge
to close or open the door so that its energy extension is no longer occurring on a plane that intersects with my brain,
i feel that I have given in

to the thing that hovers under the surface of thought
like a sleeping bat in folded wings

the desire to slam the door or wave away the extended door energy—
or the infinity—
is as strong as any desire — sexual, animal, illogical in its urgency.

it makes my brain ache, and i don't mean just metaphysically.

i want to pause here to be sure you're still with me. are any of you experiencing similar conflicts with the energy of inanimate objects and their infinite extensions? even so, only three or four of you will admit to it.

what if it's not the door extending through space, but it's my brain projecting itself to intersect with the door?

this thought produces a secondary feeling, a kind of irritation with mirror rituals — like applying mascara, or flossing my teeth. the wand. the clumps of paraffin, oil, ceresin, methyl cellulose. that implied critique that extends 4000 years into eyes dressed with coal and tar. It could be that I am — after more than 13,500 days of repeating myself, tired of ritual. It could be a matter of imaginary numbers, and not imaginary planes. There's no way to know.

I could say it's his fault that I'm spending so much time dwelling on this relatively minor problem, but the truth is

i've been *This Way* (capitalized and italicized) since I was a child.

(It was horrible to be a child. We'll all sit down in a nice room with coffee someday and you'll tell me how you survived it. Having to count to 37 37 times before you could take 73 tiny steps to reach the swing-set — it had to be exactly seventy-three or something terrible would happen. And on your way you had to simultaneously count 80 dandelions, which is $3+7 + 3+7$ times seven minus three. Which is significant. Kids are hyper-attuned to the consequences of numerology. If you disobeyed the laws of the numbers, your head would collapse or the earth would open up or it would rain. Fortunately you never caused calamity. Well, sometimes it rained.)

Most of my days were like this. *This Way*.

Now I've learned — mostly— to correct such thinking

for Real World Behavior — e.g.:

“we want to rubbish you,” says the house

and no one ever says back:

“the whole house is a fucking freezing iceberg nightmare”

— *for, and after, Michael Burkard*

Our Subject is Too Large

1.

Our subject is the fifth state
of matter:

how much gets suppressed

how much travels light years

— and faster —

then settles, afflicted, in small rooms

where lamps fire filaments

in weary vacuums

and the clocks are all possessed

of a mass sensibility

is anyone's guess.

Our subject hovers

near the fourth state, edges

of normal objects, lifts them

into counter-

radiation, lingers

over snapshots where it once

had a mind

and a zip code

the authority to control its own

nerve and tone.

Inside this rift our subject

can amass or disperse a cloud.

Can sing. Can riff.

Can make rain fall.

Or not.

2.

Our subject speaks too much
of darkness, the arc
and ache of the carnal.

The source of the bark.

The yowl.

Not why it happens, but where:
its copse, its bole,
its labial wanderings.

Our subject doesn't get
aroused although it's often seen
in the company of fire
embracing bolides.

Our subject departs at an atomic weight
of 39 — the human tipping point.

3.

Once we thought our purpose
was to describe and distinguish;
now we know — *no*.

Anything of this kind is just
bundled anguish,
a protest against a self
that moves in bright streaks,
omni-directional,
continually lost to mass.

4.

Our subject is a criminal-hero
caught in nets and tanks,
entangled, slightly enraged,
too large to set free.

Our subject frees us
of outcome and income.
Our subject doesn't pay.

5.

The chain gangs who study our subject
are guilty of the most fashionable offenses:
prana, élan vital, chi.
They levitate, interfere with violent
crime, bliss.

6.

That our subject is lost
to itself can only be sensed
when it collides
with unknown boundaries,
say, the cell
wall, and revisits,
not to be hemmed back in
to the whole
but like fevered electrons
returning to their nucleus
to be blessed.
The motive is energy,
but the motive is arrested.

7.

It's futile. There's nowhere left to go.
 No one can find work.
 Moths have gnawed black holes
 in our subject's best cotton
 oxfords. Still, our subject needs
 a home and an occupation,
 which is provided by his small prison
 operations that have cropped up
 nationwide, set up shop in erstwhile
 warehouses, dealerships, big boxes,
 vuggs in the collapse
 of time and economics.

8.

The claustrophobia is cozy
 and the food is made
 to comfort — pomegranates,
 Gewürztraminer, stout, burnt steak,
 chocolate songbirds, lemon chiffon cake.
 A generous host, our subject forgives us
 our ignorance, asks us to sit, gives us
 something to sip, a little something
 to chew on. The guards who keep us
 from knowing our subject
 bear a vague resemblance
 to the old notion of stardom,
 ex-Presidents. Our subject reassembled them
 from the ancient shells of bugs,
 that higher collective state
 we failed to achieve

The Middle Distance

The 39 pries open with a wheeze—*pabbbb-biss*—
and whine of hydraulics, to a putrid breeze,

mix of over- and underclass, smoke and Jontue,
humid saints of latter-day who shove through

as the driver chants “Move back, move back —
and smile.” For every one who complies, six collapse

further upon themselves. There are entire societies
who cannot comprehend the art of staring

into the middle distance, the deep rest of unrest,
the easy disease, the unfulfilled need to bear arms.

And conversely, there are humans who cannot fathom
the poem, even though the poets

are trying to write about the same middle distance
they stare into every day. In the press of damp bodies

nothing mothers or authors. Hands are two lost
children in the crowd, illiterate but effective.

Every block someone must stab a small pig
to make the bus stop. A man in a suit grins, his face

open. His tie bears an image of the Blue
Tara. Her crescent eyes smile inwardly.

The injury moves us all. We gather the momentum
of a collective violence, but never the physics

of mobility, never upward —wherever
that is. The Blue Tara has the power

to make everyone look — then look
away, back to the common low center

that does hold against the stop-start push
and sway, the two-step stagger of laborers

bound to their inertia, the murderous smell of fish,
the art that doesn't move us.

Corpse Messaging

Six heads roll onto the dance floor in Tijuana
to say something about
saying something.
If we read it right, motion
is the snitch —the noise says stuff
our mouths don't, like, tell me for real:
when I dance like
this, do my hips look big?
Do my delta waves seem stressed,
fitful at six cycles per second?
In the air of *narcocorridos* I can't hear
what you're saying, our words sink
in oceanic time, a heart-beat beat-down
that makes me want you to want me:
so hard. You swerve, hip and skull,
but between us a straight line
grips. Death can't mess
with us. Motion is noise.
Noise is sex.

Eventually even the terror
becomes hysterical. Texts delivered
on whipped-raw backs, limbless torsos, severed
— ah, enough of this!
Six heads roll onto a dance floor
in Tijuana and you go:
Joke: These guys, *they're no-bodies*,
and I go: I'm nobody — who are you?

It's possible we've been
 desensitized —you get what you don't
 deserve — the love (like the dollars and *crystal*)
 is a sterile dust that will float away
 on the wind, ride the thrust
 of an ocean stream while we stay
 put, marry ourselves. The losses
 (but not the lost) eventually wash
 back to shore, get reabsorbed
 into the continental shelf.

We thank their (missing) bones
 for new information about the silver
 trail-lines we don't know we spin. Our movement
 reacts in ways we can't control
 to the irritated corners where La Familia men
 take note: *los malos... los otros....* anything
 might re-up the violence. An inside joke
 that ricochets from my body
 (body) to your body (body)
 could be skewed as collusion.
 So I dance like I want to have at least six
 of your fat kids, a bounty
 of replacement and abstraction.