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The Archaeology of Retribution

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TITLE: THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF RETRIBUTION

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ἀρχή

Do you know how big
is my Daddy's heart?
You can measure it,
Right here,
The same size as his fist,
Right here; Left here,
in the middle of my chest.

Arche ([ἀρχή](#)) is a Greek word with primary senses 'beginning', 'origin' or 'first cause' and 'power', 'sovereignty', 'domination' as extended meanings.[1] This list is extended to 'ultimate underlying substance' and 'ultimate undemonstrable principle'.[2] In the language of the archaic period (8th-6th century BC) arche (or archai) designates the source, origin or root of things that exist. If a thing is to be well established or founded, its arche or starting point must be secure, and the most secure foundations are those provided by the gods-the indestructible, immutable and eternal ordering of things. - wikipedia

Ontotheology by Number

for Nikki Giovanni (2009)

Can you tell what kind of man I am by getting a look at my junk?
do you think you can know me by what I am throwing
out here?

But how some archaeologists try and these miners of mind, dividing
the line; digging, and digging
to sneak a peek

I can show you if it pleases you
it will take some time almost as long as
(re)prisoning yourself
into the cave.

Can you know what kind of man I am engaging with me in this moment?
intertwining, analyzing, intertexting
Synthesis

Do you really think you can know me by these flickers of shapes?
I know that you'll try
You will shed your scales and lift your heads so the blindfolds
let in the light

and when you have judged
what is inside of me what will the resolution
be? Will

you never hear the words
from me again, or will you
build a religion from my bones?

Either way, I'll be dead and smiling.

Opposing Goliath

*For who is this uncircumcised Philistine,
that he should defy the armies of the living God?*

(1 Samuel 17:26)

I charge down the arched hall that leads only to him,
past so many squares and unfinished slaves;
he rises, twice Goliath, in feet, meter, or cubit,
with head of Colossus and conquering hands
that grip me like a Kubrickian monolith.

He's too much for the church,
tensed glaring contempt in contrapposto,
the carved garbage marble discarded -
tossed by Agostino and Rossellino;
I gawk, walk, make mumble-some talk

In the room the women come and go
misunderstood by Michelangelo;
the Sistine Chapel is over-full
with overfed transsexuals,
and what were Eliot's feelings for Verdenal?

I want to place at the appropriate distance
another "beloved," hewn from ebony,
a Nubian woman, posed in an underhand
windmill Jennie Finch pitch,
poised to sling her stone at the Philistine.

Engineered to move the human spirit
(a broken mirror remix)

1. last night

I used to imagine the upsidedown chickenfoot

as simply a status symbol - a cover,

 this screaming mechanical daimon,

a stolen white Mercedes 600 SEC,

 proved me wrong, wrong, wrong -

what unbelievable handling,

 turns like a spirit dream, open

going...flying two hundred

a never before seen voodoo monster

with a whispering muffler

dragging down the steep downhill calloused streets

 it's three a.m.

no witnesses left but friends from the group home

 Rob, Tommy, and Sean

sleeping weak from chemicals

 slumped, lop

 sided

but complicit in the hide seats

 blurred trees like black necrotic veins connected

surrounded by an indigo sky

 my skullface reflected in the windshield

chewing gum grinning I apply pressure to the pedal

 it wakes and crushes my foot upwards

I see myself in my coffin

 laughing like a drunk

when my angry heart is finished - near restful

I drive back to my place
I say - *look for me tomorrow*
after my show
and we all crash on couches

2. tomorrow

They never show
there was a crash
pieces flew to the sky
I apply the spiritgum
to keep my face on
hide the daimon
cover the angry white callouses
monstered before in the group home
and the fresh anger of unbelievably dead dreams
status: stolen
going downhill
downturns
steep
three wakes in a week
upwards of two hundred to witness
screaming muffled in indigo couches
the chemical mechanical necrosis
and crushed skulls of drunken friends: Rob, Tommy and Sean
dragged from the upsidedown Mercedes 600 SEC
to open coffins
their lopsided faces, what's left in, still looking for me -
not sleeping, not reflecting, not restful
surrounded by symbolic black petals
and whispered complicity placed in their blurred finish

drives a voodoo chickenfoot into my chewed up heart
I imagine myself never laughing simply again
what we could handle
proved
wrong,
wrong,
wrong.

Vicissitudes

An everchanging

remain...	sculpture:
hands and	people locked
grip barnacled	in a ring,
apart, so I too can	hold hands
to space them further	at the bottom
I want	of the ocean,
becoming great,	anemones grow in
the pressure in my blood	the statues sockets;
to see them,	kelp, algae
and as I dive	and seaweed
embracing,	burrow into
of their communal	stone
	flesh

*“Vicissitudes” is an underwater sculpture installation located
in Grenada, West Indies by Jason DeCaires Taylor.*

Slander

Yo, your mother's a slut!

So, you know her?

the pedestrian slandering of mothers
doesn't work in a group home. We didn't get here
from strong family ties unstrung
Our mother's milk spoiled in the sun

The first days your housemates
want to know *what did you do to get here?* In language,
punctuated by shits and fucks
they bragged about their crimes,
doing time, stealing cars and ice cream trucks,
Knives, guns, the drugs they did, the girls they did,
the lies some agreed upon as truth,
What about you? Nothing. Wide-eyed, they ask me again:
still the same reply: *nothing...*

and I grew from the rumors that others construed
spread like an airborne germ - *the new*
guy - he won't even talk about what he did
But words, words, words I knew, and soon
was talking as hard as anyone
I never had to say, I was born again
this way because the law doesn't
allow for abortions in the 68th trimester,
I was created instead
by stories that I never told, but let fester.

We, armored in denim and leather,

smoking constant cigarettes,
spitting and fucking
sneaking acid and mescaline
dribbling giggles at urine tests
enjoying the sumptuous cacophony
of perfectly poisonous put-downs;
you're as thick as shit but half as useful
why don't you shampoo my dick with your saliva?
derisive disrespects;
I'll kick that nun in the pussy so hard
she's going to menstruate toenails and shoelaces
thought-provoking threats;
if you fuck with me you will bleed
forever like the god-torn cunt of Mary
or just a well delivered
douche!

Fr. Frank, the surrogate parent priest,
forced us to talk to counselors
Other priests who asked us
about our childhoods,
but spent the session
staring at our crotches
searching for the wrong answers

You really want to know about my parents?
the time he threw out my albums,
the time she kicked a hole in my guitar,
the times they weren't there,
The times that I was punched awake, knocked off a stoop,

knuckled in the lips, stolen from, bled
Mommy's hating green eyes as she swung wild
Daddy holding me shoulder-high and horizontal
and slamming me in my cub scout uniform to the floor
and after I could see again - relearning how to breathe and hear
Fuck that whiny bullshit

Confronted by the face and beard of Father Frank
his bob haircut and leather sandals
I'm tired of talking to them
risking being kicked out
I called him a Jesus poseur once
And he replied *Jesus was only the son of god*
lately, he looks a lot more like Moses

Oh, I know that "a lot" is
not correct, and I know that god is -
by someone's law - to be capitalized
or laughably hyphenated - fuck you and him
Watch your thoughts
And don't forget that
I might bite down on the cob of your throat
and chew until I decide to spit out everything but the taste
And when I say I lived with killers and MS-13s and Bloods,
and they feared me.
Don't think it's a boast
The last two men that I had to punch -
didn't need more than one
I ain't no pussy poet
that wouldn't rape your mother

if I was so inclined

And as I say it, I still feel
the patternless, industrial, maroon carpet at my feet,
the same goddamned wallpaper in every hall,
and the same fucking paneling in every room.

Solder

the broken Christmas light smell of the solder burning -
the henscratch hiss of the iron's smoldering tip
 against the cut wet rectangle of sponge;
did you learn your sputter from this alloy
 this liquid silver spit used to pin things down?

like Synonyms for Cinnamon
 the antinomy of antimony
mutual paradoxical wishes, the anti-me,
 of the son and the father
 for the other's nonexistence

I know the consequences
 hear you bellow, An-tho-NEE
 and despite the bruises
considering Kant and his antinomies
 I think how lucky it is to be here
 in this particular chip of infinity

the next time the universe exhales
 the elements that comprise me and bind me
 might be in a frozen ocean
 of an uninhabited planetoid
 too minuscule to be seen
through the ALMA telescope
 like the multitasking particles in an atomic computer

I might wonder, while there, if this poison that
 you sustained us with, ever killed me.

be-lie-ve in the G.U.T.

I don't have time to count these syllables;
like crafted shifted hair on balding scalps,
await a fickle muse to share her buzz,
and call me back when I am past her help.
Refuse, we, crude allusion's stolen fruit;
the works of lifeless best left to decay,
and weed out useless words up from the root-
and parrotry dry pedants use for play.
Instead, we build up beauty from the bone
and viscus. Haul the haughty to the ground,
enthusiastic, energy un-honed,
draught our laughs until we have half-drown'd.
Around the ways I'll waste my days with you -
a solipsistic solecism -- so untrue.

Masshole

Do you know how we cross the street in Cairo?

You close your eyes, pray to Allah, and run!

Anonymous Cairene - 2009

Working for the priest - you never know
while he's on the slopes without poles in Vermont
I have to leave the warmth of the lodge
drive to Connecticut
pick up one of the boys
and bring him back

The uneventful winding of a turnpike
Pine trees...road...median...road...pine trees
in ungodly symmetry

Pass Walden
Get Steven,
he falls asleep
Pass Walden in the dark

In the right lane ahead,
on the Mass Pike
A colorless minivan
going maybe thirty
I signal to pass,
move towards the left lane.
It lurches left - like a limping lush,
wrong in front of me.
I pull the wheel, hard right, avoid the crash
thinking the driver just couldn't see -

inhale...exhale...alive

But he speeds up, and dives again in front of me

This time - hits his brakes

Steven is shouting awake now,

Bug-eyed, beard bristling

There's a car seat in that fucking car!

I know now the driver in front of me
should be the one heading for a priest

My teeth meet with decision

I decelerate

switch lanes

He switches again

I roar forward

pull to the middle of the lane

He jerks right and as he does

I pull hard left

and pass

Hawooph, I sigh, as Steven cheers.

I see the car seat is full

Blurred Pine Trees

Through the bluish dark -

two gleaming low-set red demon eyes emerge

rising through the snow

ahead in the right lane

snaking slowly backwards... tractor trailer

A sublimely vengeful idea strikes

I accelerate to the truck - chased by this...this...need a word

and

Decelerate

matching the crawling speed of this leviathan

I synchronize harmoniously with the truck

While the honking, shouting, lunatic

behind me chokes on his steering wheel

beauty.

Night of the Living Dead

“At issue is the specificity of the temporality of life in which life is inscription in the nonliving, spacing, temporalisation, differentiation, and deferral by, of and in the nonliving, in the dead.”

- Jacques Derrida

Shuffling footfalls across the page -
guttural throaty groaning for brains,

clawing gelatinous flesh of the eyes,
through the dust, in costumes of twisted licorice,

nightcrawling with repetitious vowel
sounding moans locked in consonant stops

snaking into the senses
in sibilance and assonance.

stitched together from hacked limbs of intertextuality
they infect you - an un-killable virus

the corpses you shocked to life, feed on you,
once freed, will not be slammed back into their wood casings

they band together to smother you,
overwhelm you, like the death of a child

Stakes, garlic, silver bullets all useless
as they possess you, move you, and make you their own.

Free Time

If I had the free time, I would send a postcard to everyone I know
And ask them why, when told that Nanny's last rites were administered

And her sons and daughters were praying for it to be over
All I could do is wash the dishes, and clean the counter?

When my grandfather died - my aunt was whispering in his ear
it's Ok, you can go, but it wasn't...it still isn't, and now he isn't here

Who gave her permission to give him permission?
I have his hat, but in a forced sin of omission, no one is supposed to know.

Why did I find comfort in a soaking and soapy blue sponge in scalding water,
Pruned fingers,
an overflowing dish rack,
as if an empty sink is better.

Retribution (The Only Way)

1.

*He, too, will drink of the wine of God's fury,
which has been poured full strength
into the cup of his wrath.*

*He will be tormented with burning sulfur
in the presence of the holy
angels and of the Lamb.*

(Revelations 14:10)

We all know the stories
that confront us
before the drool has dried from our chins
the pillar of salt
men turned to beasts
women raped by beasts
the razing of sodom and gomorrah
plagues of locusts, flies, frogs
and first born
the golems
the demons
seven circles of hell
those struck dumb, struck mute, struck dead

the lessons
in our churches and cartoons,
in our fairy tales and mosques,
in our temples and dirty jokes,
in our schools, newspapers,
and the panopticonic stares
of the others all around us

of retribution
it is the only way
the way we are all taught
the way we all learn

the Greeks begat unto us Homer
and he begat unto us heroes
the *Iliad*
Menin aeide thea pelayadeu Achilleus
the first word means Wrath.
and the punishment of Odysseus
and his raging slaughters of suitors
he hides in disguise, bolts the door, draws tight his bow
and tensing the gut
around a sneer
notches arrows

buries them in suitor necks
to the feathered fledgling
Sacrifices! Sacrifices! Sacrifices of blood!
crushed ribcages of children
buried under Kali - by the original thugs

Yahweh, the wrath of God
used to justify Katrina, tsunamis, the World Trade Center
Yahweh, like your brother Moloch, you need demasiado sacrifice
you slaughtered
your only son. Allowed stupid
reeking centurions to hammer
nails in his hands, spike

his head with thorns, lance
his side like an overgrown boil
jeering and spitting until
dumb desert mouths dehydrated
mocking the logos until it broke

And the flood, you bitch, always the flood,
only one cubit loving mother fucker
spared in the greatest genocide ever told.
until you let our sun implode

2.

*But because of your stubbornness
and your unrepentant heart,
you are storing up wrath against
yourself for the day of God's wrath,
when his righteous judgment will be revealed.*

(Romans 2:5)

They might drown my city
as glaciers spill their guts into our oceans
and bleed up our coasts
a briny marauder with blades in its molecular teeth
moving up our legs four times faster
gnawing at the Holland tunnel,
hacking at the east side highway,
bashing battery park,
eroding the foundation of the new World trade Center,
the ferries, Canal street, Coney Island
south street seaport, the FDR drive,

Brooklyn navy yard, Long Island City
Something else we will always Never Forget

Amiri, that same somebody that blew up America
is doing it again
in their paradises fenced in with green teeth
under traditional blankets of oil soaked trust funds
paid for by our people
with their weary blood
but I rise, before the rise
to make a list of somebody
Bachmann and Palin, Inhofe and Perry
Trump and Crichton, Beck, Milloy, George Will and

Richard Mourdock testifies
the greatest hoax of all time
is that the climate can be changed by mankind

See this witness born by Mitt Romney
we don't know what's causing it
climate change on this planet.
trillions and trillions of dollars
is not the right course for us.

Paul Ryan accuses like a pharisee
intentionally misleading the public
data were manipulated
to a predetermined conclusion,
perversion
of the scientific method,

somebody better pray that you're right
over 40 million eyes are on you
many of them are armed

not to mention if you drown my city
you will wish I was only Achilles
after I shackle your carcasses
behind my chariot and hit the gas
until your bones have been bared from the flesh

And if it comes to pass that you helped this, my city, drown
You will no longer need to fear Al Qaeda
the Taliban, or the fatwas declared on false prophets
I will enact the wrath of all gods
Not just Allah, Yahweh, Kali, Zeus, Shiva
It will be Homeric, It will be cinematic, It will be biblical
you will wish for Dante's punishment
of fraud sorcerers
heads twisted on their bodies backward
so you can watch your back

You better be looking behind you

I will steal the hammer of Thor and pound your head
until your face is shitting teeth
you will wish you had died as a child or better
that your father, like Cronus, had swallowed you

I'm going to bring the diseased temple down on your head
Like the planes that went into our towers, I will penetrate your life,
Your women and children will die screaming, dressed out like deer
your sleeping friends - gutted like salmon
like a biblical plague, a Homeric page, the revolt of a slave
I will risk the torment Dante promised for wrath
and gnash my teeth against all the other wrathful in a lake forever
if I get to sharpen them on you first

you can follow a Greek warrior into Hades,
or Dante into the confines of Hell
past the gluttons lying in the cold mud
the greedy crushed
the liars whipped by Beelzebub,
steeped in excrement, blowtorches burning the soles of their feet
past the corrupt politicians in a lake of boiling pitch
sticky like their fingers and dark like their corridor secrets
the sowers of discord divided with a sword
the feverish, treacherous, disemboweled
and never find the wrath that will be in me,
And if you drown my city, I will show you the way
like a god

Naked Shame

My son, six, echoes from the bathroom:

Daaaddy, there's no toilet paper!

I grin, *Well, what are you going to do?*

and laugh while I fish my arm into the bag for another roll;

you are so mean

giggles

I open the door, find him facing me

in front

of the toilet -

pants up.

You pulled up your pants without wiping?

expecting a clean-up in aisle two.

No, I didn't

he spins showing me his bare butt,

and the stretched elastic waistband of his pants

that part of him was under.

I didn't want you to see my private

My son has learned naked shame

Not long ago, before those lessons began, his favorite game was "Naked Baby"

He would charge out of the bathroom soaked like a boat

try to tackle me - a mean giggling fish,

I would squirm away so Naked Baby couldn't get me

Inevitably, he would

I'd howl, *get him off of me*

pretending numinous fear
until my wife,
cross,
grabbed him back - frowning around a waving
white towel

I guess
naked baby will never get me again;
someone...something...else has been
taught,
and then it snaps:
I can now
leave my wife.

The Quick Brown Fox Jumps Over The Lazy Dog

Just what are they trying to
prove with this bizarre sentence that
I quietly and feebly tried
to ink perfectly on the triple-lined page
as if it were for an exam?

Quick, it is written, like the
Bible quote, paired with the dead
Does it mean the fox jumping is more alive than the
lazy cur lying
uncolored?

Even in handwriting class
morality slithers in buzzing, and grips your tiny
hand pressing it to examine squinting
your own works and days through jerky
canines

Zoologically speaking,
vixen and foxes, dogs and bitches
generally don't make quintessential humans but
whether or not you judge that it's
right - understand that you have to learn it

Kicking and bleating, violently or quietly
or you will wind up just like those crazy
fuckers in the cartoons
signing their
names with an

x

Ridgewood (*I Think We Are Wasting Our Time Here*)

the most delicious train ends

here, where Queens and Brooklyn

verge; everything liminal and uncertain,
unmasked windows hide everything
like silent waterless aquariums;

Undecided to the foundation, Arbitration Rock,
at the house on Onderdonk, buried
for centuries, dug up, and chucked
drawing invisible lines
streets on a grid, the border, a diagonal
making a stair-stepped hypotenuse
of the confused, who move our cars
only for street sweepers, our time put to good use

On Stockholm street's yellow brick road
Poles on the street mutter *Marnowanie mojego
czasu tutaj* through the bachata dripping
from the apartments above
the stores on Fresh Pond Road

Rosa's pizza and Zum Stammtisch guard

the north and south contours of the hill where we wait

after the seventy-seven riots, Ridgewood
seceded from her stepsister,
broke from Boswijk and Breuckelen

Past the 99 cent stores, in front of Kraupner's,
Crazy Loretta, under her navy knit wool hat, pink sweatsuit
and winter coat, smokes shaking hand-rolled
cigarettes under the train trestle. She grins, jaw-jutting,
through inch thick specs. She waggles her chicken bone
fingers, *Hiya honey* when you walk by.

In her mind, a phrase like green smoke from her youth
Penso che stiamo perdendo il nostro tempo qui

If you are brave enough to stop and talk to her,
she'll tell you her nephew plays for the Texas Rangers,
her daughter is a doctor and she'll probably give you bedbugs
She'll tell you, fascinated, *when you squish them - the blood comes out*
She'll tell you the same thing tomorrow - Loretta forgets.

Racism like carbon monoxide permeates
this new purgatory; at the Y, sweating
through shirts revealing swastikas
in the skin pushing weights through breathless
panting - *Ich glaube, ich bin meine Zeit hier*

The rib muscles tighten
reaching for the light
and fall back into the dark

the Romanian dentist down
the street drilling curses,
Cred ca am pierd timpul meu aici
over the machinery scream and burning enamel
she won't say this if you understand what she means

The playgrounds are packed with children practicing
how to swear, the girls huddled reading
Twilight like the Bible, and the boys huddled reading
the girls like the Bible. A woman yells to her son to come home a third time
and mutters *Creo que estoy perdiendo mi tiempo aquí*

Buried in Machpelah Cemetary less than a mile from my house,
is the place Houdini is still staging his greatest escape

He has a wide audience.
Sometimes I think there are more dead
residents of Ridgewood than living ones.

The cemeteries stretch
the borders of the appropriate
spilling into Christ
the King high school's front lawn.
trick or treat
Driving Cypress Hills street,
in our Gehenna of squirrel squabbles
in the in between

the Manhattan skyscrapers rise looking tomb-toothed, parallaxed,

and blurry through less ephemeral sepulchres,
stones, and cement angels pointing at the sky
Chiselled simply into one of the stones the phrase *Videor perdo temporis hic*
I think we are wasting our time here.

Artifact #45 - Allie's Mitt

*“He was in that pitcher with Melvine Douglas?
The one that was Mel-vine Douglas’s kid brother?”*
(Catcher in the Rye - Chapter 13)

When the radiation sickness yellowed me,
as the chemo shook out every red hair that I had,
And my white blood cells were a deconstructing artillery,
I scanned the green words through eyes filmy, cataracted,
Deep grooves cut into the leather of memory

Written in the scent of mink oil fused
with the good, clean dirt of the ball field,
Driven, discolored, so deep into the laces
of the glove - simple to slip on the player’s right hand
He used to cover the white scars and stitch-mark traces

The mitt that we used to play catch with for hours
we would hurl pitches as Feller, Ford or Newhouser
(fewer remembered backs of the catchers)
Alternately glaring down batters or squatting
ready to receive the sock in the pocket

And the Dodgers would never get past us,
‘til dusk made the ball too small to see.

After our team suffered its greatest loss,
my brother carried the glove, folded, from Ernie’s to the Edmont,
equipment never misplaced. Protected with a Cardinal red hat,
half a battery, delayed at the end, tearful in the rain;
The verse evidence still in green, the poems all arranged:

don't let me disappear

don't let me disappear

don't let me disappear

From heel to web

in Holden's handwriting.

The New Lament of the Old Woman of Beare

As I half-dreamed, an invisible hag, a Cailleach,
 arose from the edge of my bed; in immigrant smock
 she left me a choral symphony of history, a new lament -
 full of emptiness and fragmented, like the falling pieces of a crockery pinchpot

the brass, muted howls of chained half-transported slaves,
 trumpeting through the opulent hallways of the Louvre
 after hours, washed up on after sunset private beaches
 metal instruments hammered into fossils of extinct species

the woodwinds, stilled cries of crib death in January baseball stadiums
 the panting of chasing escaping thieves written in snap-tipped crayons
 on new vacuum bags, a lullaby to cut yourself by,
 oboes cry like baby girls left on the mountainside

The strings vibrated like the ejaculate of the impotent
 bows tense, suspended, the unapologetic genocide of an entire continent
 eyes taut over a lying smile, alone, enclosed in a wallet and a purse
 with some broken teeth, torn hymen, in a pocket like a curse

an instrumental stolen blues, my mind hummed
 straining to sense the endless time signatures, uncommon,
 on the staves, shavings of crookedly drawn pencil
 the lyrics she sung before, our kings forget still

it is riches you love, and not people; as for us,
when we lived - it was people we loved
 she composed for them I transcribed
 immeasurable measures, one for each of the wardead

eight million for the Congo, 9 million the russian revolution
15 million for world war one, 20 million for stalin
40 million for mao tse tung, 66 million for the second world war
and always more, and always more, until we close the store

the percussion crescendoes steadily until in my mind
I am looking at myself from a satellite
no one hears when the last measure is reached
the bars broken with bullethole dots, indicate repeat

Moo

For Joseph Solomon

I - I saw the best ungulates of my generation domesticated to patties, starving putrescible rawhide,
hoofing themselves through the indigo Kentucky grass at dawn looking for an angry graze,
horny-headed heifers burning for the ancient heavenly connection to the capitalist manifesto in the machinery of night,
who lethargy and udders and hollow-eyed and cowed sat up smoked in the supermarket darkness of cold-freezer flat-packs
advertising across the tops of cities contemplating bells,
who deli-ed their brains to Heaven under the El and saw Mehet-Weret angels jumping the moon from red-barned roofs illuminated,
who were expelled from the abbatoirs for mad cow & publishing bovine odes on the windows of the skull

II - What sphinx of cement and aluminium bashed open their skulls and ate up their brains and imagination?

McDonald's! Solitude! Filth! Ugliness! Ashcans and unobtainable dollars! Cattle screaming under the stairways!

Bulls sobbing in bull rings! Oxen weeping in the parks!

McDonald's! McDonald's! Nightmare of McDonald's! McDonald's the loveless! Mental

McDonald's! McDonald's the heavy judger of

calves! McDonald's the incomprehensible prison! McDonald's the crossbone soulless jailhouse and Congress of sorrows!

McDonald's whose mind is pure machinery! McDonald's whose blood is running money!

McDonald's whose fingers are not licking good!

McDonald's whose eyes are a thousand blind windows! McDonald's whose factories dream and choke in the fog! McDonald's whose

smokestacks and golden arches crown the cities!

III - Joseph Solomon! I'm with you in Harvest Meat

where you're madder than I am

I'm with you in Harvest Meat

where you've murdered your Bos primigenius

I'm with you in Harvest Meat

where you laugh at this invisible humor

I'm with you in Harvest Meat

where in my dreams you walk dripping from a slaughterhouse walkway
halfway across America in tears to the door of my cottage in the Brooklyn night

Nigredo

Taoist alchemists

searching for panacea

found black gun powder

Performative Anxiety

Longing for the Derridean fairy tale, *She*
riffles the pages with liminal pixiedust; *He*
leans in from the margins to hear his cue; the
binary opposites urge resolution - *They*
want to agree; the woman leads
to the stage where fables are made

It plays snippets of Kant's moral imperative
Like a universal clockwork cockblock
She is unwilling to be a hypocrite
but the alchemy - mercury - a Max Ernst dream
They refrain from comment
He traces the woman's lips

She pulls back inwardly, as *he* pulls forward
paradigms, peripatetic paralysis,
It is mumbling about Jesus in some numb tongue
He ignores *it*; the prologue is finished. The scene begins;
the parts that lead to his entrance are reached;
They are attentive - attuned. The woman moans textually

She is frozen nearly zombie-white with fear,
It finds *its* privileged voice invoking logos,
But *he* must speak the lines as written
play his hour upon the stage...or is truth a fiction?
The woman lights his cigarette.
They applaud.

Once upon a time

Poetics of Laughter

Instructions:

To listen to this poem properly

*Invite friends, those who experiment, and neophytes
to your site. Ask them to lay down, around,
in a circle on the ground, and Rest their heads
like beds on the belly of the person next to them.*

To read this poem properly

*Take turns reading the stanzas first and last lines,
But if you really want to encounter the sublime
The middle lines of each stanza should be read as a chorale
Except these stanzas of chorus - don't let bad puns ruin your morale*

Homer had nothing but cackling

HA ha ha HA ha ha HA ha ha

Hexing his verses with dactyling

HA ha ha HA ha ha HA ha ha

When Shakespeare laughed in his regular way

ha HA ha HA ha HA ha HA ha HA

iamb and pentameter twice a day

ha HA ha HA ha HA ha HA ha HA

Byron rocked anapestic in some of his poems

ha ha HA ha ha HA ha ha HA ha ha HA

as he often had measure for wrecking his homes

ha ha HA ha ha HA ha ha HA ha ha HA

It's the trochees of Longfellow

HA ha HA ha HA ha HA ha
Citchee-coo me 'til I bellow
HA ha HA ha HA ha HA ha

Emily's verse look common - first
ha HA ha HA ha HA -
ha HA ha HA ha HA ha HA-
for laughs she's not the worst.

The poem is yours now - versed and feeted
And only you know when it's completed.

We

really didn't give a shit
what you thought. we wore
our group home sneer over pajamas
in public, torn donated clothes,
and handmade "grounded" t-shirts
sloppily lettered with aliases
on the back and crude cartoons
of ourselves behind bars
emblazoned on the front.
we flicked cigarettes
at each other or played chicken
with them: pressing our forearms
together and blowing
on the glowing coal of the head
to make sure it wouldn't go out.
we got in trouble for not
doing our chores, or pissing drunk
in hallways, and suggesting the newjack
crackhead play "working at the car wash blues"
for his selection at chapel service.
we laughed loud and if anyone
even glimpsed our way we'd tell them to go fuck
themselves or ask them what the fuck
are you looking at? we never got a response.
we call each other, brother. we shaved
our heads and tattooed each other
in after midnight room parties, high
on psychedelics. we formed bands,
joined gangs, left both for the rich

belle terre girls who couldn't
seem to get enough of our badness or our cocks.
we never smoked pot, in the system
too long, but we did everything else depending
on the day of the week, availability,
and how long it was until our next drug test.
we went skiing. we stole.
we died in droves, in pairs, in trios
by shotguns and overdoses, motorcycle accidents
drunken car crashes and just plain stupidity.
but we laughed still smirking
at the reunion-like funerals
and christmas parties.
laughing like coughs,
like sickness,
like home.

Moving Pictures**[VOICE-OVER]**

Hollywood directors get it wrong about the sound

When she pressed her chest against the steel cylindrical round of the shotgun, and splatter-painted her heart and its protective gear all over her first floor apartment at 72 Fuller Avenue - I heard it.

It was nothing a foley artist would choose. Nothing **[l.s. ext. through window]** like artillery fire or a fusillade of cannon. It sounded slapstick, for laughs.

I rolled onto my elbow and rasped her working draft epitaph:

Sounds like DONNA is having a bad morning

[FLASHBACK]

The acrid smoke awoke us peeling our eyes like onions

I poked around the grounds, searching for the source

JAN knocked downstairs at Donna's door

Oh, I'm sorry, I caught my toaster oven on fire

They share a laugh, I relax, we burrow back into bed hurriedly after opening the windows, drawing diaphragm-deep, exhale spring-delicious air.

Then, the sound, like someone tripping over a chair, a plastic-bag pop, a crumpling thud, and my ironic, unfortunate, eulogy.

[REAL TIME - U.A. SHOT ON FRONT OF CAR]

Screeching Camaro tires. They get this one right. Through the fourth wall the car brakes.

I pull on terrycloth shorts, someone is screaming, running before I am awake,

Someone is screaming; barefoot rugburn down the stairs. I punch Donna's door

The shrieking dissolves to a keening: *Call the police! Donna's dead!* **[DOLLY-ZOOM.]**

I send Jan back up to call 9-1-1, as the ambiguous someone comes into focus - a man?

What happened? I yell at the blank whiteness; the other side of the door, voice trapped in can

The police said we have to call from down here said Jan in a voice too low;

What? I say to Jan. *You have to open the door,* I say to the unknown.

**[INTERIOR SHOT B:] Pan to DISTRAUGHT MAN with blood-covered hands
Attempting to open a door with a knob of smooth brass**

[HAND-HELD]

The man, five foot five, paces the pastel living room retching obscenity prayers,
wearing a gore-covered white t-shirt gripping at his broom-bristle brown hair
The pre-set pea-green phone hung anachronistically from the kitchen wall.
I play fullback; blocking with my body as Jan and I enter from the hall
She strides to the phone and lifts the receiver. Glitch. *The phone's dead*
It's off the hook in the bedroom, he sobs onto the couch. She starts to head
there, and breaks the 180 degree rule, running out the back door, and down the street.
So there's me, potential killer, and what's behind door number three; I chose door number three.

[P.O.V.] The entire bedroom was pink, before Donna redecorated the walls
She is sprawled like a painted nude on the bed, among the stuffed animals,
legs bent and twisted to the side - hiding her - he moved her.
She also wears a white t-shirt, this one however, has a rather
large rip between her breasts, red all the way down to its deepest recesses
It matches her hair, her panties match the pink of the walls
I see all this while trying not to see - like a polaroid, with color slide intensity.
The gun, satisfied with the shot, leans rakishly against the wall

[EXTREME CLOSE-UP]

This the Hollywood fuckers get perfectly. The blood splatter and spray
As if from impish children with paint cans, Pollocking all over the walls in play.
After *fuck-you-ing* the 911 operator until the sirens and lights arrived, the interrogations
and explanations for continuity, *she called him before she...*, *he moved her body, emotion,*
he was her ex, she was on heart medication, made her depressed,
No toaster oven but a bathtub of burned diaries, my Allen Smithee mind

repeats: *Let's get out of here, let's get out of here, let's get out of here*

hoping for the nitrate to ignite, or the arms of the end slate to snap together.

Confessional Poem

I have to confess that I am not a poet;
I no longer believe in truth.
Truth has been sucked
out of our age like the creamy
white filling of an ageless Twinkie.
I don't believe in the arbitrary
games we have created; millions of us, lost,
milling about for position, are,
playing the wrong game -
our games not invented yet.
I no longer believe in beauty
either; the imaginary
gardens have been abandoned
too long, cataracted,
forgotten from alzheimer's, amnesia, or trauma
the real toads replaced with animatronic muppets
brought to you by
Disney's taxidermists, all poisons
extracted. Puppeteers control
them so it looks as if they really breathe
Every language slapped into Google translate,
the marks are hardly visible anymore,
and there is hardly a word of complaint.
Every asshole covered in jeans,
all the jeans want to be the same,
they don't even care who has
her or his hand in there
to manipulate them in the end.

Have Metaphors, Will Travel

In Bonn, they play Pong with Cesium atoms.

aim a cross-hatched laser, trap one...

Imagine?

and fire it across a distance and again, catch it.

this knowledge collapses structures in my soul

There, in this minute infinite space

so little that I can grasp;

Still, in my mind, the endless

whirling solar system of electrons,

elliptically circling the nucleus

of huddled protons and neutrons,

instead of the brambly electric thistle that

pul

sates

b l i n d

i n g ly

f a s t -

I measure in feet, pounds, gallons and dozens of miles;

when confronted with a meter, I compare it with a yard

and translate meters per second squared

to the torque of being tackled on a football field

I resist entropy in some matters,

but I encourage it in economic ones

I know that Stephen Jay Gould was right,

about punctuated equilibrium,

I teach high school English

if you don't punctuate a student's equilibrium,
sometimes, they will fail.

I teach my students punctuation and poetry -
I teach them to pass and surpass their exams -

I teach them the world is poetry -

Have metaphors, will travel, I say
and *even science is a descriptive art!*

Because what I know is,
no matter what anyone tells you,
and everything else
and those metaphors,

despite the claims to objectivity,
the language of science
is metaphor
ours.