

# Lick the Empire (ELECTRIC DELIRIUM 1.3)

*by* Jamie Grefe

We prick and study the pud back to a life of the productive mind.  
She's fallen into irrelevance. Mentally unhinged.

Once erected, the self, that fragile bundle, crumbles under the weight of absolute certainty: a dull collapse, behind-the-scenes, of an already artificially constructed web of virtual truths, facts, models, stains, streams, emotions, solitary, silent in their senile fever. Scattered in fragments, spoken of only in sacred or philosophic terms, the self is a broken vigil whipped sore by learned ignorance. Inescapable holes are statements by those who think they know better or could know better. (From where comes this idea of becoming better?) They tell you so. Raise the questions against hegemony, Rosalind, that serve to sew together the torn strings of your selfish empire. Stop wasted thought. Stop hubris. Stop speaking. Forge the best by what you do with what you say. There are still useful possibilities. Seek the skeptic depths, stomp them underfoot with your solitude. The debaters will follow, no doubt about it, in line to the vineyard or the chaise where you wait, sipping gallons, the tongue a dash, a pen. Close your lips. Season frivolity, so when winter comes, the chamber sizzles like a warm pool of tears, the roof and walls held secure by spring births, still water, creative sighs to birth artistic satisfaction into the world once more.

There was a time when speaking in groups silenced you to dead breaths of despair. An impenetrable shroud of what you had already learned was erected, torn down, stiff in the mire. Let it melt. It melted. Rigid horizons exist.

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Verbal blood: spoken, unspoken, castrated sentences of the male. This was before the mechanical flood gave rise to new forms of lust, such as erotic technology, that weeping willow of every child's bored incapacity to choose what is best for themselves. It was a fragile womb of steel, Rosaline, a lake stretched to the city's edge. Unbearable. It's vibrating. It was there I remembered who I once was. Once, some time ago, you whispered the dusk to life, a life in recognition of the gift: homeless dogs hidden in the brush near the building where you grew strong in learning how to live in the most efficacious ways possible given the context of a happy home. Their barks, hungry, lonely, brought them creeping to the edge of the green. (Was it a bush, that green space?) We watched them come close. (And, what did you do?) You fed them, Rosey. Later, we walked in the evening cool of November's loneliness, gifts of food in a pile where you hoped they would eat, but they did not come. What kindness, I thought, stirred within you, and exploded, opened your heart to give of yourself. Magnified. You wanted only for them to experience the satisfaction known to those who are close, stern in gratitude, bountiful fist: father, mother, keeper, savior, family far from gloom stricken understandings. And, this, too, is a form of progress, but of a different kind, the unspoken warmth of serving others.

If this is misunderstood, then I hope the fruitful tree of misunderstanding forms the right kind of tears to tickle the grin of your budding self-denial. (For, who has bound themselves to your questions? Have their voices become your own, your own in them? Is voice a sacrifice? Should we all remain quiet lest we spoil the gift?) We are all diseased. (Why them and not others? Is it possible to answer without questioning the myriad potentials? If so, why? Where do their words lead your thought or do you merely look to where you've come from and dream a popping snap to spark words with fantasy? Are we deniers of life, all of us? How not to deny when death dwells up around us?) Look at your hands. Lie in the dirt. (Can

you still perceive their words as their own or have those words, again, sunken into the byways of received privileges, to the canals of your popping brain-streams? Can you see the rut? Can you dig your fingers into the flesh? Why do so many people seemingly think in the same way? Shall we even try to separate the threads of who we are? To what end and where does it go? How do we cope with what we cannot understand?) Yes, it matters. There are boundaries that keep it from mattering. (What would be our purpose, Rosalind?)

(I have hinted to you before, if even one inquisitive beggar, a sloth like me, purposeless in the glut, makes his or her way to the open gate where you dwell adrift like a dying god or hungry dog in a tragic play, wouldn't you consider that, even if just for a moment, a success? Would you feed me?)

