

Automatically Writ between Meals

by strannikov

Quandaries emerge from shaded locales near fences of a bristly afternoon, it seems. While late day sun shed orange light on falling orange leaves one mid-December day, the wind cooled to herd them close to the same fence, where the quandaries crept out from shade.

Birds were not amused and took no notice, either. The sky was cloudless.

I was too lazy to rake leaves, lazier in fact to keep from plugging in the battery pack for the leaf blower whose buzz soured my memory. Even though most of the close birds are blue jays with their uncivil shrieks and screeches, the leaf blower would have been more objectionable still.

Regardless of the meteorological circumstances and sidereal conditions, I wondered about our poor Moon, all the junk that accumulates upon its pristine shores. Not enough to pollute ourselves and this turgid globe, we have to junkify any and every spot we say we want to reach. No vacuum cleaners for our Moon, no dustbins for Mars, no chimney sweeps for any planet's atmosphere into which we've hurled our scientific tech. What considerate scientists we breed!

The numeric constituents of our thought are not circumscribed enough, perhaps. We unpeel our numbers as if we can count to infinity by single digits, though of course no one even makes the attempt, not out loud, anyway. How petty our practices to engage the infinite, which we objectify without spending enough time looking within.

Where and when could we have gone so amiss? How is it that we fooled ourselves so magnificently with our accomplishments, that we starve ourselves now with the regrets that would only choke us?

Fewer words, more silences. What would Nerval say? Would Baudelaire concur? Isidore Ducasse? Jarry, Butler Yeats? Some other savage god? (They seem to say not much more now than what they're reported to've said.)

How does Holy Science know in fact the direction we spin out of and in to? What if East and not North is "Up"? Who's to say what is too distant to ever see, and can it be summoned with requisite specificity by imagination alone? What if to our detriment we undervalue the olfactory sense? (Tactile numbness and ischial paralysis perhaps can be excused.)

The misspent effort reposed spontaneously, a prank worth ending with the dog letter: "GrrrrrrrR!"

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The synapses forget to fire, the neurotransmitters do not transmit. How can memory work under such conditions?

All those associations to the wind, everything learned dissolved. The medium of the void absorbs all energies.

Everything here translated into silence, not kept, not able to be kept, we are powerless to hold.

Sisyphus at last is spared, his weighted stone forgets to roll as Sisyphus forgets to push.

What was the last fashion that rushed by?

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The deafening road around me roared. This construction project had been underway for over twelve months, still it was not finished. Dust blew from the bed of every dump truck, off of each tracked street waiting to be re-paved, emerged in dust devils blown from each trench where pipes and conduits were being laid. Of course, traffic had to be regulated not by posted signs and automated traffic signals but by day-glo vested workers holding signs aloft as they held walkie-talkies to their ears. It would not do to put the car in park, cut if off, another nudge of two feet could occur any minute, or in five or six or seven minutes.

Was this business worth it? Shopping, getting worked up with impatience just to get stuff in order to get home before dark, or to

shop in time to take an early supper. It was all for private consumption anyway, no one else would derive nutritive value from it.

Traffic moved intermittently enough that I dared to read. I carried in those days short books, and if I ever lost my place in what I read in order to keep our line of traffic moving, I could take up another book without missing a thing, it was something to occupy the time since I refused to listen to the radio (everyone knows I own no wireless phone).

One book of poetry, a book of aphorisms, some prose by Kharms, some by Calvino. I could, and did, with the frequency of my gratuitous shopping take to reading from one until the traffic nudged, then another in no specific order, another traffic nudge, then another part of another page from another writer, another ten feet, another paragraph (maybe) before we had to pause for almost ten minutes for traffic on the two-laned road accommodating traffic moving the other direction while the construction equipment and vehicles drove onto and off the road. More texts, more nudges of slow traffic, the perfect purpose put to our internally-combusting engines.

Piece by part: the neighborhood street hurled the authors' sounds into one ear.

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