

WHAT COULD I SAY?

more space

ignore to morrow's

maybe

The 'disarmers' talk, ~~an arm~~ ~~the~~ question mark. At the back, somewhere, grins the big half-truth, half lie. "The son unborn mars beauty: born he brings pain, divides affection, increases care. He is a male: his growth is his father's decline, his youth his father's envy..." "James Joyce - Genius, moron? All very confusing. ~~Maybe~~ the 'disarmers' don't remember what they decline and forget their envy - shouldn't forget and vice versa.

We sat in front of the fire and read the latest news. My son and I.

We sat and read. ^{new} The fleeting sun hovered for a while - ~~blushed red~~, burst in ~~of cheous anger~~ by waves of anger the edge of shadows, ~~and lid of abyss~~ knocked askew, ~~was knocked askew, yet nothing came amiss~~ ^{(2) the lid of a byss.} ~~no window rattled!~~ ^{Nothing came amiss, & nothing fell or stumbled.}

The news tumbled in cascade, then dropped like the beads of rosary. The fire gaped, yawned.

News and fire made hideous, contrary pair, suddenly joined and spawned more. I went on reading; the printed page - daily mausoleum of the passing show - full of the ^{thudding} echoes of clashing minds, of disembodied lunacies, big and small, of threats and crimes fetid with the chemical reactivity of biles confused and drugged me. A fire-ball, brought the world to focus; all kinds of apparitions - gliding, mute, grotesque mines - ~~peopled~~ the dusk with ~~whom~~ strife. ~~...~~ I saw him frown.

^{visions} What passed behind his puckered brow? Ecstasy, fear, some searing sense of shame the ~~unexplored~~ mystery crowning a sweetheart's thighs, love, success that pons asinorum to fame? What? A tongue of flame shot up ~~and died~~ and in his eyes an unresolved tear. I strained my soul to hear... Would some advice, ~~an understanding word~~...

New line ochreous

apparitions peopled

unexplored

To: I vavan givi
oixi un ppayni

an understanding word

The present stood in crutches; future strode
(grinning hag, ^{or} self-deluded virgin) ~~many~~ beckoned
unknown, fearful. I remembered ^{ed} a sage
say, fifteen is an unhappy age!

Hardly the ^{banal} platitude to soothe to spur
~~was~~ was half-formed in mind and I saw him stir
- searching ~~the~~ apt remark, the capping metaphor, -
only to catch ~~the~~ ^{catch} ~~be~~ ^{be} ~~murmur~~ ^{murmur} ~~=~~ from ^a far off shore
"There 's going to be war".

catch of murmur

WAR!
Silence turned vertiginously ~~and~~ ^{round} splintered
and howling images stood up to roar -
war!

Rifle in hand twenty years before:
terror slithered along the misty ground
glassy-eyed; I heard his hissing sound
choke my day,
and saw myself outside myself te-pray
kneel somewhere to pray
with my memories. Deciduous years
always shedding hope (shedding tears
too) when we walked with yesterday
for to-morrow was the day after's previous day.
War, says Herodotus, ~~is~~ old men's crime
(fathers send their sons to kill other men's sons
or by other men ~~son's~~ hands to die),
my crime, but from the culprits

kneel memories

Afterthought doesn't matter. ~~of~~ ^{of} ~~repenting~~ ^{forethought}

Afterthought doesn't matter.

war now: A blind turbulence of light.
preamble to endless night ... ^{preamble to endless night}
What could I say

Afterthought doesn't matter.

The bleak, whistling Furies shifted their stand;
shuddered at the enormity of their prospective task.
A double extremity -
to judge, to punish. whom?
who the parri and matricide and
paedoctonus, who?
The future ~~falls~~ falls with all
and all with the future fall.
The Furies sighed and stepped aside
their task uncompleted, ~~as~~ ended.
What could I say?

A million billion candles lit up the
northern sky
- a slightly bigger show the showmen bargained for -
but ~~only~~ not a single window rattled!
A million billion spasms cavorted
round the planet;
prodded the womb of slime - baffled!
Reaction negative. The womb had atrophied.
Hell shrieked: enough I'm overburtened,
and the little lizard listened,
pondered and its eloquent, quivering tail
traced a calligraph upon the dusty path
(In caps) the single word ~~AFTERMATH~~ AFTERMATH
Gazed ~~at~~ like Rodin's penseur ~~with~~ ^{with} half-closed eyes
and wrote underneath the line -
THE SKY-WALL OF LIFE CANNOT BE SCALED TWICE.
The billowing waves froze
under implacable light, and
drowned the sea in amber. Nothing rose

Rodin's
for a while,

for a while
and more...

from the deep sea to cry, nor spirit lingered on the land.
What could I say?

"Courage son"? Courage! Empty words. Reflex talk
from Pavlov's human dog.

Were said. Their echo cracked from gnarled void came
a - ~~as~~ piercing gallows laugh,
~~seeing~~ "what a meaningless term to frame
a cosmic epitaph."
A million billion candles lit up the
Northern sky...

minutely -
A New Apocalypse of giant mushroom size,
dreamed not on Patmos isle,
but minutely planned, weighed, calculated
blast and heat to maximize,
threatens the world of Hades. The little reaper
with the big scythe,
who picks and chooses and leaves as much behind
- works to rule does not unduly hurry -
averted his eyes. His progeny,
begat on sexless mind,
makes his work redundant, for
killing death with death
leaves no life to die nor
death to roam and harry.

We crossed the busy streets; breathed
cancerous diesel fumes spat
from progress on wheels. Sought the comfort of the
park; mother's bosom.
uncrushed by entrapping masonry,
~~with tomb and shafts.~~

My thoughts cried out a meagre "why";
Reacted the unquivering tree
and hung its head in shame
- no answer came.

The scabrous tongue of silence
licked hope and fibres bare.

to it? The ape laughed. What the cosmos is,
what's to happen ^{to it} why should I care?
I haven't the gift of prognosis
I'm immune to fear."

He sauntered off with his integrity intact, Sober
unfrightened ape,
with just that superior, knowledgeable air
of a stage character by Jean Paul Satre.
Voltaire sat by the banks of Styx
and watched Frederick's wretches writhe;
Barbusse saw in a dream
millions of coffins glide
by the Arch of Triumph..that
Open, echoing sepulchre of dead, young souls.
"No more such front-row seats"
chimed in the ape.

"None can sit by the Styx
Or stand to watch the coffins glide."
Many-tongued darkness grinned
row upon row of flashing teeth
yelling hurrahs, bravos,
for a million billion candles lit up the
Northern sky.

"Crazy English" - boomed under stark arc-lights glare -

"you'll be incinerated in your lair".

English, French, Greek, the tse-tse fly too

- why not Arab, Russian and the rest -

"you'll be incinerated". Grizzly Mars told you

so ~~you'll all have your five tent.~~

l the rage!
t not drunk
with wi

The ape looked at his flimsy cage
scratched his genitals in bewilderment

(it's now all the rage!).

"You'll be incinerated". The statement

was ^{made} ~~boomed~~ ^{twice}, ~~and~~ five thousand ^{stood} ~~men~~ ^{jumped up,}

~~sober~~ ~~not drunk with wine,~~ ~~stood up and cheer,~~ ~~shout hurrah~~ ~~clap~~ ~~and cheered.~~

Stood up ~~and cheer~~

Thoughts spiralled, broke, concatenated did not commune;
the ape saw them uncoil whistled to the tune
of her who 'walks in beauty', the Byron lass,
"how dread the rhythm of warning sand
from irreversible hour-glass!"
laid himself down, relaxed, stretched
and said: "were the roles reversed
I would treat you better than you treat yourselves.
Can't you build an Ark, escape anew -
I saw it happen before."
It can be done no more,
no more.

We have demolished God,
not yet constructed truth,
and in the meantime
we made a bloodier gush across the face of time.
Power stepped in, the Interrex, uncircumscribed
and with science combined
waxed, spread, divided made other divisive units -
makes more. Grows. Croaks her shrill appeals
from vantage print-wire points, rival dunghills
of ethics: - The one sovereign print-wire
the other Guide to better days.
All to be done with gadgets,
the whip not far behind.

Evil (ix)

6x1 2x107 6x105

Boys! Rejoice! side with us and prosper
We'll give you everything- ~~everything~~ ^{everything} from pram to tomb,
shelter of (sorts), unloved work, an ordered mind
All,
the brightest future and the biggest bomb.

We have

We've created power and are
its self-enchanted slaves.
We've built up science
and can uncreate life
with
million billion candles of jellied opaque light
What could I say?

What answer could I give? Could I say:

It is an evil day - it'll pass;
Some shut say - we'll ride it;

It's an evil day- It will pass;
 Come what may- we'll face it;
 stand your ground, protest, march, yield, desert,
 join the C.N.D., escape; find a
 cushy job; burrow under-ground; What?
 Jeanne D'Arc in agony, the man on ~~Cavalry~~ Calvary
 had their share of solace
 the immense heavens of self-consuming faith consuming
 the one,
 the other the thief's acclaim.

For my son? (Your son. Every-one's son). What
 solace is vouchsafed? Defiant Parthian shot
 striking home, tempestuous heart uniting with
 angry tempest in the last, mad rush of the fibres;
 Promethean, searing curse calling down
 retribution- justice on unseen odds to drown
 the empty ache (make stirring post-humous readings)?
 Nothing! For nothing will remain
 to grain
 a memory in ^a beloved breast.
 Earth and heavens rage because
 because this life un-lived, because
 I, puny man, pursued success and failed
 beyond failure's bitter harvest.

All around, as each morning's hour strikes
 Rival cockerels crow-
 be-plumed, proud, scarlet-faced perched on balconies
 behind closed doors always before mikes:
 "I'm stronger than you, ~~you'll live~~
 I'll annihilate you"
 -No idle threat.
 "My riposte, even if a poor second,
~~will do its deadly job.~~
 "I'll annihilate you too"
 -No idle threat either
 Inert energy trembles, piled on stockpiles of chaos,
 as annihilation's song reaches crescendo, anvenomes
 the air, unrestrained.
 The wise, old ape looked pained
 nodded his head and said:
 -Glad our roads diverged
 -Glad, I missed the missing-link: Departed.

We stood alone gathered in our^{nc} own shell
 of sky, riddled by shafts of fear. "Well!
 Shall we go?"

Where - all I could reply-can one grow
 old guilty? My father gave me life;

it was my own.

I gave my son life-

it's not his own. Some devotee
 of perfectibility

dreaming new dispensations from out the whore
 past-jungle or sty, where men ^{savage} cry
 wolf or grow bigger and fatter ^{= prey,} -
 calls back the echo before it strikes the shore.
 A count-down, ten to zero- such a ^{short} time-
 and timeless time is counted out of Time.
 The future, sliced off

quietly?

sty

boil savage
cry

hangs in mid-stream, forlorn
like the bridge of Avignon.

I can give you nothing son, nothing except the future.
That gift, all I had to give,
all, our fathers gave us for more
than million years, ~~is~~ is forfeit. All we have to give
yet can't be offered now. What more to say?

To weep, to pray

(the last refuge of impotence realised) ~~1~~ 2

Yes! And more. Reciprocate one another's tears;
cry out, above the raging muteness of the spheres

spheres

-man.

must give back man's future

save man's son.

This is the cry of man.

And from afar

~~the twinkling wink of a weeping star.~~

~~Came the silent sigh~~

the inaudible sigh of a weeping star.

silent →

Doros Alastos.

Βιβλιοθήκη Πανεπιστημίου Κύπρου