

THE LOVERS

[6]

Dear S.,

If you were not alive
within me, I would be
in Philadelphia,
with those who read
Miscellanies in their wish
to go mad.

Consider that Lesbos,
Xanadu, Patmos, Babel
have pearls on their shores
as far as the eye
can see; that Mecca Bay
lies empty, open land
before a wall of water
from Monte Carlo to Punjab;
that a great wave,
worse than any since the Flood,
has poisoned Chernobyl
and Cape Town;
that the Shaded waters
off Telstar are probably
bottomless now...

I write from Apple,
between Times Square
and Our Lady of Lucifer.

My only solace,
when I think of you
and where you are,
is the stubborn belief
that the turmoil here
is no different.

Nature seems a prison;
yet what reappears
is a vision of absence,
our own cells unoccupied.

“The way of the world is to bloom
and flower and die but in the affairs
of men there is no waning and
the moon of his expression signals
the onset of night... His meridian
is at once his darkening and
the evening of his day. He loves
games? Let him play for stakes.”

Cormac McCarthy,
Blood Meridian.

“Consider the well-known
card trick, ‘forced choice.’ You
want to make someone choose,
for example, the king of hearts.
You say first of all: ‘Do you prefer
red or black?’ If he answers
‘Red,’ you withdraw the black
cards from the table; if he replies
‘Black’ you take the red cards
and again you withdraw them.
You have only to continue: ‘Do you
prefer hearts or diamonds?’ Until
‘Do you prefer the king or the queen
of hearts?’ The binary machine
works in this way... The point is
that the machine goes beyond us
and serves other ends... In fact
the binary machine is an important
component of apparatuses of power.

So many dichotomies will be
established that there will be
enough for everyone to be pinned
to the wall, sunk in a hole.”

Gilles Deleuze and Claire Parnet,
Dialogues.

“I sing the body electric, /
The armies of those I love

Word is spreading that madness
has struck both Rex-King
and Dexter-King, and the Queen
has fallen asleep in Orient.

Worse still, those who say so
are themselves mad, or at least
the story can be traced
to someone who is.

These events came
to my Attention
through 'eccO the Actor.

It was after a difficult hand
at *L'Avant-Garde*
in Rhetro Province,
beside the Pool of Dreamings.

(The ouzo there has balance,
light-bodied with a soft
bouquet, like at the former
Tic Douloureux.)

Death felt imminent,
closer than ever.

I faced the Polychrome
statue of a masked figure,
larger than life,
whose phallus poked
straight through the top
of a bald head
impaled in its lap.

Rounded and smooth
at the end, the phallus,
like a rod about which
the head continued to
rotate, shone a White beam
that lit Dollar signs
on the ceiling.

To either side of the statue,

engirth me and I engirth them, /
They will not let me off
till I go with them, respond
to them, / And discorrupt them,
and charge them full
with the charge of the soul.”
Walt Whitman,
Leaves of Grass.

“Voice is a kind of sound
characteristic of what has
soul in it; nothing that is
without soul utters voice.”
Aristotle,
On Soul.

“We may define colour as
the limit of the Translucent
in the body.”
Aristotle,
On Sense and the Sensible.

“A propos of sleep, that sinister
adventure of all our nights,
we may say that men go to bed
daily with an audacity that would
be incomprehensible if we did
not know that it is the result
of ignorance of the danger.”
Charles Baudelaire, quoted in
H. P. Lovecraft, “Hypnos.”

“No one here gets to transcend
out of this landscape.”
Kip Hanrahan, “No one gets
to transcend anything
(No One Except Oil Company
Executives),” in *Coup de Tête*.

“Transcendence is always
a product of immanence.”
G. Deleuze,
“Immanence: A Life.”

“There are many kinds of open. /
How a diamond comes into a knot

gazing out from the wall,
were monstrous eyes
as wide as doors,
one of which (the left?
the right?) blinked periodically.

Beneath a grid on the floor
lay a Red patch of sky.

The air smelled of sulfur.

Voices babbled.

I knew that my only hope
was the memory
of the last wager
—13 cents—
yet Number XIII,
in its correspondence
with the *Death Card*,
interfered with my knowledge
of the ruling hand: whether
five Cards remained or six.

Then, to the far left,
a Bluish form glimmered
momentarily.

The setup became clear to me:
a vertical Rhomboid,
consisting of six Cards
on four rows.

The impaled head
turned into a skull,
the eyes on the wall closed,
and the light from the phallus
went out, obscuring the Dollar
signs on the ceiling.

Intuiting my wager, I exclaimed :
“21!”

After the brief Sound
of wind chimes,
and severe Nausea,

of flame / How a sound comes
into a word, coloured / By
who pays what for speaking.”
Audre Lorde, “Coal.”

“Commodity, the bias
of the world; / the world, who
of itself is piezed well, / Make to
run even upon even ground, / Till
this advantage, this vile-drawing
bias, / This sway of motion, this
Commodity, / Makes it take head
from all indifferency, / From all
direction, purpose, course, intent.”
William Shakespeare,
King John.

“Nine in the second place means: /
Dragon appearing in the field. /
It furthers one to see the great man.”
The I Ching (tr. R. Wilhelm).

“I squeezed that sperm till a strange
sort of insanity came over me.”
H. Melville,
Moby Dick.

“The fateful process of civilization
would thus have set in with man’s
adoption of an erect posture.
From that point the chain
of events would have proceeded
through the devaluation of olfactory
stimuli and the isolation of
the menstrual period to the time
when visual stimuli were paramount
and the genitals became visible,
and thence to the continuity of
sexual excitation, the founding of
the family and so to the threshold
of human civilization.”
Sigmund Freud,
Civilization and Its Discontents.

“In the state of degeneration,
in which we live, it is through

I found myself
in the saloon once again,
alone opposite my double.

S/he removed *The Scales* and
The Arts from the third line,
and repeated the wager.

At which point
the original Cards returned,
and I was out
of the dreamscape.

Before me, in loincloth,
cuirass and running shoes,
sat my opponent, Daedalus
of Lascô Province.

I played the Queen and King
of Coins off the third line,
as foreseen in *The Scales*
and *The Arts*.

Daedalus went on to win
but with the loss
on my last Card
at 61 cents,
I count my blessings.

It was because of 'eccO
that my course changed.

The Blue specter glimpsed
from the corner of my eye
—before the layout of
the Cards reoccurred to me—
was the emanation from 'eccO
at the moment he walked
into the saloon.

Through a twist of Fate,
his entrance was the signal

the skin that metaphysics will
be made to reenter our minds.”
Antonin Artaud, “The Theater
of Cruelty (First Manifesto).”

“Chrysippus connects Zeus,
reason, semen, and matter
in the following allegory:
in an erotic painting portraying
Hera performing a sexual act—
apparently fellatio—with Zeus
(Origen [*Contra Celsum*]...
Theophilus [*Ad Autolyicum*]...).
According to Origen, Chryssipus
discussed this painting to
illustrate how ‘matter receives
the generative principles of God,
and contains them in itself
for the ordering of the universe.’

So understood, the allegory
seems to present Zeus’ semen
as the origin of the whole
cosmos, and Hera as the matter.

But how exactly should
we interpret this illustration?

In particular: how should
we understand the relationship
between Zeus and Hera?”

Malin Grahn-Wilder,
*Gender and Sexuality in
Stoic Philosophy*.

“Truth has nothing in common
with *allegorical figures*,
with the figures of *nude women*:
but that foot, belonging to a man
alive just a short while ago,
that foot had the violence—
the negative violence—of truth.”

George Bataille, fragment
from a manuscript preface to
The Dead Man (in Lucette Finas,
La Toise et le Vertige).

“Into his muscles, into his feet
the terror flooded, his aura

from outside.

I found him at the Bar
afterward, and during our talk
learned about the Queen's
sleep and the Kings' madness.

But I could tell he himself
was not well, especially
from the way he interrupted
his sentences with a click
of the tongue and a slap
on the forehead.

When he finally left,
smiling and serene, he was
"bound for the soothing
waters of Baalbec."

Almost certainly
he will enter the sea there
and sleep.

What I saw earlier
was no less troubling.

I was with Libra
and a small crowd of others,
among whom Romeo and
Gwenhwyvar, Gilgamesh,
Go-go, Video and Robot.

Before me stood a machine.

It was of Proto-Futurist type,
with Depression and Rococo
elements, more common
to meteor country.

And pointing up at the sky,
protruding from the controls,
was a man's leg!

The Camouflage pattern

of terror flooded, / (Bilgames)
could not *move* his foot from
the ground. / His foot was *held*
fast by his big toe. / In his flank,
in his... it flooded."

"Bilgames and Huwawa:
The lord to the Living One's
Mountain,"
in *The Epic of Gilgamesh*
(tr. A. George).

"A figure materialized on
the landing just below where
Valentinus lay. The being
grinned up at him. Speech
returned to him, in a shocked
whisper. 'Not Achamoth, but
you! The *antiminon pneuma*,
my Counterfeit Spirit!
My psyche feigning the glory
of my spark.' His double, not
fully materialized, continued
to smile triumphantly...
and Valentinus painfully
scrambled up to confront
this mockery of himself...
The double, still smiling,
bent down to retrieve
a jagged chunk of stone
that Valentinus had broken
away. Straightened up again,
the Counterfeit Spirit mounted
toward Valentinus, the stone
held high over its head by
both hands, ready to strike.
'Elaborated error,' Valentinus
unflinchingly cried. 'Dissolve
back into ether!' The stone
fell and crumbled upon
the lower stairs. Valentinus
peered into the half light,
but his double was gone."

Harold Bloom,
The Flight to Lucifer.

"The divine names Bran, Saturn,

on the pants phased in
and out of the background,
against the Iridescence
enwrapping the machine,
and the large dark boot
held high seemed the center
of an unworldly form.

(Even now, a mist seems to
veil the machine, setting it
apart within the courtyard.)

When I arrived at the scene,
I overheard the name “Monroe,”
and that of his wife, “Lee.”

I did not immediately notice
the woman, short and plump,
lying face down on the ground
in a T-shirt and jeans.

Next to her Pesos and
Y’en sat cross-legged,
in dark glasses.

From what I could gather
they alone saw
what had happened.

According to Pesos and Y’en,
Monroe, dressed in a uniform,
with a strange curved club
fixed to his belt,
marched into the courtyard
followed by Lee
several paces behind.

Monroe went over
to the machine,
as if to pay taxes.

Then he reached for his club,
and, raising it with the back
of his hand turned inward,
appeared to shove it
through the panel.

Cronos... are applied to the ghost
of Hercules that floats off in
the alder-wood boat after
his mid-summer sacrifice.
His tanist, or other self, appearing
in Greek legend as Poeas
who lighted Hercules’ pyre and
inherited his arrows, succeeds
him for the second half of
the year, having acquired royal
virtue by marriage with the queen...
He is in turn succeeded
by the New Year Hercules.”
Robert Graves,
The White Goddess.

“Leave the boy alone, wild boar /
Whether you haunt the lush pasture
lands / Or the intricate corners
of hanging woods on the hills /
Don’t whet your tusks for the fight /
But send him back safe to me.”
Sulpicia, “Cerinthus Goes
Pig-Sticking,” in *The Poems
of Sulpicia* (tr. J. Heath-Stubbs).

“When we come to Chretien’s
poem we find... there are, not
one, but two, disabled kings;
one suffering from the effects of
a wound, the other in extreme
old age. Chretien’s poem being
incomplete we do not know
what he intended to be the result
of the achieved Quest...
The Parzival of von Eschenbach
follows the same tradition...
Here we find the wounded King
was healed, but what becomes of
the aged man... we are not told.”
Jesse Weston,
From Ritual to Romance.

“If one gets indignant about certain
impartial descriptions of the world
and man, it is not, as one claims,

They said they saw the club
“go into the screen.”

The machine began
to “engulf the man.”

Currents of electricity
coursed over it,
to the Sound of screams.

Vibrating strongly,
the cash machine
“pulled him in,”
consuming first Monroe’s
arm, then his head and
torso, until all but one foot
had passed beyond.

Lee collapsed.

Finally, the boot began to rise,
revealing the leg in full.

There was silence, and
soon after came the echoes.

Such at least was Pesos’s
and Y’en’s account of
what they had witnessed.

The echoes exist
as surely as the leg itself.

I could hear them well.

And I still hear them
from here, however faintly.

Their intermittent Sound
is no mere illusion.

They are loud and clear,
unfathomably distant,

because they are “depressing”...
It is because the evil that they reveal
comes out of man’s freedom.
The “bastards” of *La Nausée* chose
to be that way; it is completely
up to them to be lucid and honest,
and to repudiate the lie behind
which they shelter themselves.”
Simone de Beauvoir, “Existentialism
and Popular Wisdom.”

“Gwenhwyfar felt
the familiar nausea gripping
the pit of her stomach.”
Marion Zimmer Bradley,
The Mists of Avalon.

“Artaud Rewrites his Letter:
*When I saw O, I wanted
to protect her because
she worships her cunt.*”
Kathy Acker,
Pussy, King of the Pirates.

“The origins of the tarot are
shrouded in mystery. It seems that
the high priests of ancient Egypt
transmitted their secret knowledge
by means of pictorial symbols and
that these symbols were the twenty-
two Major Arcana of the tarot pack.

It is believed that Moses brought
these cards with him to Israel,
having received them from
the high priests of Egypt. That
explains why the Hebrew cabala
is linked to the twenty-two cards
(tarot – tora – rota)... / The first
tarot cards we know of were found
in Italy, designed by Bonifacio
Bembo in the fifteenth century
for the Visconti family of Milan...

It was not until the eighteenth
century that Antoine Court de
Gébelin rediscovered their
esoteric meaning... The Major

like the Sound of shooting stars;
yet they issue from down below...
darker, hollower, more Metallic.

A falling into place.

You are the heart and soul
of my life, now and always.

Love,

A.

Arcana are engraved in stone
inside the dome of Siena.”

Niki de Saint Phalle,
The Tarot Garden.

“Ah, the minutes twinkle in and
out / And in and out come and go /
One by one, none by none, / What
we know, what we don't know.”
Laura Riding, “Yes And No.”