

LOCUST TEN

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FOREWORD

It's rarely a sign of *innocent* intelligence to quote from books randomly, but it's often just the prelude to some cunning trick. Fanatics very often quote profusely to overwhelm the simple-minded man's defences. And surprisingly, though we have stepped into the 21st century, there are still a great deal of people who still believe we are living in the 15th or 16th century—or sometimes even before—and they quote from this or that book so dexterously that the simple-minded man is unable to spot the tricky link. Well, though fanatics use quotations *wherewith they weave a [deceitful] paradise for the dolts*, the following words from Friedrich Nietzsche's *Beyond Good and Evil*, Epigram 137, are so pure and innocent that the only possible reaction to them is the reader's fanatical acceptance of their truth:

When associating with scholars and artists we easily miscalculate in opposite directions: behind a remarkable scholar one finds, not infrequently, a mediocre man, and behind a mediocre artist, quite often, a very remarkable man.

This is undoubtedly one of the finest examples of words spoken in praise of creativity, without the usual shopworn hollywood-style flatteries so commonly heard around today. And this is undoubtedly the very best way to open up the last issue of volume 2.

One of Locust Magazine early contributors, Michael Segal, died on September 9, 2010. He was a hard-working English teacher and translator, and only wrote poetry for fun. He was subtle-minded and always extremely perceptive.

Locust Magazine editor would like to remember him here, and dedicate this last issue of volume 2 to all those people who live in hardship and pass away alone and unnoticed.

September 2010

I KEEP HIS PICTURE IN MY WALLET
~ A Poem by Farida Samerkhanova ~

Many rainy days ago
When my girlfriend lied to me
That she was pregnant
I came to my dad for advice.
He told me I should
Marry her, and I did.

His death was awful.
I was thirty eight when he died.
He hung himself on a cherry tree
On the bank of the river
Where he used to fish.
His body was found two weeks after.

Every time we come to the cemetery
Each of us says a good word
Showing respect and gratitude.
My mom says he loved us.
My brother says he cooked well.
I say he was hard working.

*I look at the grave and pray
That they would never know
The ugly truth.*

*My childhood memories
Have always haunted me.
The moment I close my eyes*

*My dad and his brother
Would visit me in my sleep.
Nightmares make me scream.*

Dating my future wife,
Marriage and birth of my children,
Six horrible years of war,
Starting life from a scratch
On a different continent,
Jail, divorce and another marriage--

*None of the above
Could erase from my heart
The shame and the pain and
The image of the barn
Where in the dim light
Coming through the roof*

*My dad and my uncle
Used to strip me naked
And do whatever they wanted.*

How old was I? Seven, I think.

REINCARNATION FOR DUMMIES**~ A Poem by John Grey ~**

In my earlier life?
Let me see.
I believe I was a Norway rat.
No, that's not it,
a serving girl in an eighteenth century
English pub.
Hands off!
I've been a soldier more than once I'm sure
only because the waste of war
is embedded in me like a genetic microchip.
And yes, way way back,
I was the inevitable dinosaur,
not a great start I grant you,
but anything to get my soul in the frame.
My lover is absolutely certain
she was a Salem witch.
And my best friend says
he had to have been a giraffe,
hence the compensatory
lack of neck in this life.
I believe sometimes
that I was an explorer
in the time of the reformation
sailing my ships into view
of a beautiful, uncharted land.
Like when my lover undresses,
but could be it's just the spell
she places on me.
And I'm sure this is the one
until my best friend warns,

“don’t stick your neck out.”

Like he’d know, the rat.

No, I forget.

I was the rat.

Hands off!

ALL CRIMES RESIDE IN THE EYE OF THE BEHOLDER
~ A Troped Poem by satnrose ~

midnight at the counter where I say all crimes reside in the eye of the beholder I still want to be in her life many but many times the ticket is taken the 2nd chance is not obtained but then under these conditions the admission fee is bought with the sign of her kiss the night when it is tonight therefore is a new music you just cannot understand so this is my thing the fast dance where the beat jumps it is in the opportunity where the person whom it does not sway understands and the thing is salted which overcomes the one who is the stamp of entry the item is left to the nightclub which is used privately so she shouts out the lyric but as I raise the sound under the street lamp and then gotten wet with something I dump my beverage of the pot not obtained to that and she came running after me and what we do not overtake floats it does not keep coming out and as for us where and then when she moves in the silence it is like a grain of sand in an hourglass taking forever to fall

From THE RED APEX
~ Two Poetry Pieces by Alana I. Capria ~

3.

It gets cold in these rooms. The pipes freeze and then the saliva. We open our mouths, trying to get a bit of rain on our tongues. Instead of defrosting the ice, it simply hardens. Then we can barely part our lips. The ice grows arms and wraps around us. It constricts our chest. We are in the straightjackets again. We bang our heads against the walls but they do not crack. We try to eat the plaster but cannot get it between our teeth.

4.

This man makes messes of us. He uses our necks for lampshades and our fingers for kitchen utensils. When cleaning the drain, he twists our spines like snakes until the hair clots come free. He ignites us and breathes the ashes. The harder parts are rolled in thin paper and secured on the ends. He smokes this. He gets high. It hurts us. Our throats burn. He makes rabbit ears in his hair using our crossed ankles. We would like to be together but he uses clotted marrow to keep us apart.

DISPOSSESSED MOTHERLAND**~ A Poem by Vivekanand Jha ~**

I am from the land
Reduced to handful sand
Where is only mud
Left by devastating flood.

Here is no crop to reap
But only blood to creep
On our fate to weep
And feet not rise to leap.

Here is no food to eat
No room to express the wit
No place to peacefully sit
Good enough to cause the fit
As we are by poverty hit.

Here is no fuel to be lit
No milk in the mother's teat
We have only dust to beat
Bleak and barren land and wit.

Here is no work to do
So we have earning few
And we have courage to muster
To gather the bread and butter.

Here is no life utility
Here is only killing by brutality

Which exposes administrative futility?
By their nature of duality.

Here is no feather in the cap
Only the news of kidnap
In the mean time you nap
Child is dispossessed from mother's lap.

Here is no morality to be taught
If you do death to be bought
Don't give the suggestion unsought
Which only misery to be brought.

Here is only the battle to be fought
One-year flood is another year drought
We are caught in the current of time
There is no difference
Between the age of old and prime

Here is no moment of auspicious, only ill omen
People are living in the devil's domain
To earn livelihood, what can do the men?
Go miles and years away to deadly den
Lovelorn of their children and women.

Here is no magic wand
Men beat their own drum and band
Here are only foes, hardly any friend
Here is none for mistakes to amend
Here is no right for dignity to defend
This is a dispossessed motherland
This is nothing but a Waste Land.

TWO POEMS by Doug Draime

*

BURNING THE COMPLETE WORKS OF SYLVIA PLATH

The suicidal Muse ran up and down my walls screaming for Sylvia Plath. It wasn't my Muse; it came with her. She warned me about something like this happening if my writing became too positive or encouraging. So, I called her up.

"Look," I said, "it's running up and down my walls screaming for Sylvia Plath"

"Calm down," she said, "just turn the typewriter off and it'll stop."

"What?" I said.

"Turn the Corona off and it'll stop." she said

The Smith Corona was a gift from her when my ancient Remington bit the dust. I told her to hold on a minute and went over and turned off the machine. She was right, the thing just disappeared with a puff of smoke. Back on the phone, I told her it worked. She was silent for a moment.

"What are you going to do now," she asked.

“What do you mean?” I said.

“Well, I mean, you got the thing stirred up somehow and now every time you turn the typewriter on the Muse is going to get out and cause havoc. Each time it gets worse.”

“No shit?” I said, shocked.

“No shit!” she replied.

I thought for a moment. “Will burning the *Complete Works Of Sylvia Plath* work?”

She was thinking now. “Well, you could give that a try, probably wouldn’t hurt to burn all the Ted Hughes stuff while you’re at it.”

“Thanks I appreciate the help,” I said and hung up.

I didn’t have the *Complete Works Of Sylvia Plath* and nothing by Hughes, so I went out and bought them. When I got home I went outside, threw them in an empty trash can and was about to torch them when something like a spiritual revelation hit me. I grabbed the the *Complete Works Of Sylvia Plath* out of the trash can and ran inside, turned on my oven and baked her with the oven door open for an hour. Then I gingerly took the smoldering books, holding them with a pot holder, outside and threw them in the trash can with her former old man, and torched them good. I watched the books burn to ashes, then emptied the ashes in my septic tank. I felt something

lifting from me and I knew it was over.

I went in and turned on the machine. It purred like a kitten. I waited for a moment and then typed my first line: *The Suicidal Muse ran up and down my walls screaming for Sylvia Plath.*

[Already appeared in a 2004 chapbook printed by the author and *Unoccupied Zone*, Pitchfork Press]

*

GERTRUDE STEIN HAS BEEN CURSED PROPERLY

Her hair moved
before she spoke.
Everything was under water, except her feet.
State street northside Chicago
was a flood of neon
(this was a picture she held
in her right hand).
I read her lips:
she was cursing Gertrude Stein's corpse,
cursing Gertrude's spirit,
cursing Gertrude's sense of priorities
for not feeding Henry Miller
when Henry was starving in Paris,
when Gertrude was living there high on the hog
on her family's money;
she was cursing Gertrude Stein's
bull dyke ways.
The picture of Chicago in her hand
became a sheet of fog.
She stopped talking and

flung her hair around like tall grass in a tornado.
All the water drained away, and she stood on her feet
and disappeared like the sun at dusk
into the fog of her hand,
satisfied Gertrude Stein
had been cursed properly.

PELAGIA,
~ A Prose Piece by Denis Moreau ~

Pelagia is a four-lemming-headed monster from Zurich and I'm in love with her.

I'm in love with her five pairs of membranous wings. I'm in love with her concave plastrons covered in a chitinous cuticle. I'm in love with her pelvic and anal and dorsal fins. I'm in love with her semi-fusiform body and I'm in love with her eternal soul.

Sometimes, when the weather is fine enough for dreaming out of doors, I close my eyes and here we are, lying on a beautiful sandy beach, listening to the constant rhythm of waves lapping the shore. Pelagia snaps her bony scaly fingers and kisses me hard on the mouth, and then I kiss her on the cheek and my face relaxes into a happy smile.

And then I wake up. The sun is shining and I cut my own stomach open, because Pelagia will always look very frightening and ugly, and because I know I will always be in love with the most horrible thing in the world.

SUMMER OF LOVE**~ A Prose Piece by Juleigh Howard-Hobson ~**

I'm slitting my wrists. Cutting them. Sawing them. With my mom's best silver knife. My skin is so thick and hairy; it's taking a while to get down past the layers to where my arteries are.

Christ. It hurts so bad. The knife isn't that sharp. But I gotta do this. Gotta end it here. Now. Today.

I mean, we were both tripping when he told me he was one of those... werewolves... and who believes a hippy on acid?

I didn't.

So, I let him bite me. Just a little. On my ankle. I was so high I saw blackbirds fly out when his teeth sank in.

I need to die now.

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