

The Thoughts

Lithium assists in slowing down the mind so that one can for once ask of them, The Thoughts, why they do the things they do? Why, as a pastime, they play my mind the thoughts I hate? Being not one to buffet my body, I merely ask:

When *I* think, what is the other part (who does the other thinking) doing just now? For instance, when I think: *I am waiting for the toast to pop up*, what is the part that is not me doing right then, the part who was just a few moments before so busy thinking while first opening my eyes for the day (up before the sun as ever! all the worms for me!) how I am not sane enough to teach or wise enough to love or brave enough to try, what was that part doing while I was wiping my mouth and swigging citric acid, so as to remedy my pesky gout?¹

When I do the thinking I do to fend off the other thinking, why is it the ring feels so oft oblong? Why does the canvas seem quicksand and the lopsided ropes aflame? When I try to box with that other thinking (the one with all the training and practice, shakes and vitamins, fans and tweets) why was I made so fearfully and wonderfully that the other is all too strong and stronger still, like a villain from childhood cartoons (the more I fight the bigger he gets) and why, why is that? Guess, I think (and I hope it's the sensitive and funny me) but I think it might be time to read *Job*, gratefully. Bound to get it zen one of these days, one of my thinking thinks. Or, is it believed?

Can look a lot like a coin flip, (*pistis*), but don't be deceived.

I get those two confused, think and believe, no matter how much I read and teach about a space between. I think I know that belief is in what one cannot see, so I believe the other thinking in me (that I do not respect or trust or love) cannot be me, for it I cannot see. What *I can see* are the scar lines of the other's thinking, the one that I faith is not me, his robust handiwork vividly seen, more than that of the me I must faith is not: the kind boy, the altar one, he. Not the one who the record of my life seems to be the biography, not he, but how and why, how and why can I believe those ego ills are not, save apathy?

Whitman had his multitudes, Berryman Henry's dreams,
Sexton her moon mad moods, and Stevens his emperor's ice cream.
I just don't know what thinking could mean
when I will never know who is doing it for me.

¹ Gout, I do not know or care where you have gone as long as you are away and lounging beachside with the oblivion cravings in the man on the dump where you most certainly belong.

Blueprints

for William Carlos Williams, Physician

It may be so, *no ideas but in things*,
and a man in being may be a city,
in what he may achieve.

Deserving none, he takes breathes as birthrights,
devouring desires as if stolen by a hairy brother's lie.
With what profit he gains from disease,
the mortal ambitions Melville had warned him of in youth,
he squanders both coin and energy on this
building of an edifice, now lying flaccid,
fetal in the sack of skin once worshipped as a god.

A man a city, now built without a why,
unable to endure the hows a city complicates
with its cravings for ceremonies and plays,
bells and whistles,
high speed collisions,
and manic alleyways.

As the city ages, so the man.
A planner must be brought on,
the budget bled red.
The man works on the books.
No ideas but in things and no thing more
needed than a book and
fears his tenement has been rent illiterate.

Inevitable, the interest lost in a city
once travelled through enough to embody its wafts,
its shortcuts, its secrets and baubles.
The man is no different, thought he knew he was
much longer than he knows now not.
So weary of his skylines,
his subterranean trails,
the ennui of his board rooms,
his ledgers and impressive sales.

The finale of apathy man's form, no place left
to leap or dig,
living as if the city is underwater
unawares, air bubbles coming up slower,
the heft of self-making too big.

Cities as the existence of men,
their very suchness
an ode to the essential human sentimentality:
Unique, in that knowing they are not,
as prey persist,
by grandiosity they build without ceasing,
as they were once taught to pray.

The man finds peace in this stubborn pain.
The man asks to see the city periscope again.

Grateful in Time

Time started early on and much like most ideas, with God: *there was evening and there was morning the first day*. Being numbers and what we now all know of them and their kind they just kept on, remorseless, without the instinct of the penitent to bow or slow, so there came second and so on. Days got stopped at seven, weeks went on by L twice but no more, thus fulfilling their created purpose of birthing a year. We started counting those down, but now we count them up, and remember, directions get uncardinal and heretical once you leave the Earth.

Time sometimes, like years, seems to take longer than others, though they are so wonderfully almost as one. The older we are allowed to get the more objective we are asked to feel, in order to succeed in time, of course. Not too early, and oh, never too late as that would be a shame. It *is* timely, how the world asks you to become. Subtle as a corkscrew twist, in step with the clock of human thought and want, the world (not the Earth for the Earth is timeless) is ceaseless in its petitions, as clockwork, to become as objective as you can. Be the best object you can be in time's army. The older one gets, the more in time with the world's tune, the more one's hours have been spoken for and not by or for the one living these make-believe hours. *Like papers falling from a press* the days fall, bespoken of and already dead in our calendar we carry in the pockets of our pants and soon to be the pockets of our neurotransmitters (which we banefully do not understand in or out of time), our time so numbered, so voluntarily hung to die inside perfectly square boxes our capable and squiggly fingers drew, feeling we were enacting one of the habits of a successful person *right on time*.

Time is money, after all, or so we are told so often it must be true, just as the world was made in seven day chunks so we can keep a handle on it all, so time's handles can remain firmly affixed in us. We, the fastest learners of the bunch and ever so stubborn and greedy to hold on to that which we have come to believe is knowledge, powerful and needed knowledge to stave off the cruel uncertainty of consciousness and momentarily becoming in the state of being called human and not a biped in the state of obedience to the fools of time, we so desire to feel overwhelmed by time as that is what we are told makes us valuable, in how much we are able to *use our time wisely*. But what is *our time*? When might that be calendared for us? Ah, when we retire! But do so *in a timely fashion*. And by the way, how much money will you need to die on time? No no, before that. On vacation. Set your itinerary.

Time is of the essence, dear friends. Gratefully, we have been given time to fret over the whys of time and it all, as they say, as the world is a present given without the notion of deservation or merit, the Earth a prop stage to practice and play and perform and all this time we spend wallowing on the meaninglessness of our time as a human thing. It is well with us, as the one truth about time is that it cannot be wasted, as it is merely an idea we thought up to help us remember we were alive and thus were needed and thus once put into motion in time and space as we all are, eternally on fire with the

heat and awe of the ticking stars and though time may be the wettest blanket we have yet devised, and sad as our individual subjectiveness to time may be, to live in the world of numbers and accounts and double-primes and platforms and onboarding and resolute data tracking and metrics and rubrics and social security and misnomers and humans above you so afraid and humans below you so afraid and side to side of you so afraid and in you, all the corners and crevices of you so afraid, and almost all of the fear being, if you allow yourself to freely associate, all that fear being based on this notion of time, of beginning and ending, of personal importance or legacy, of if your time was used the way it was intended to be used, or if your intentions of your used time really did *add up* to anything like you planned or hoped or wanted, and will your kids who you invested so much precious time into be good or awful and if anyone else will care, or if all your work for him or her or It got you enough numbers to do what you want for once and if your health numbers will be hefty enough to see you through the last however many years of freedom you have once you are no longer stuck under the thumb of your specific and demanding Time Corp. and then of course the yogis remind us of the speck of dust in time we are and to unhook from time but of course that is all a load of *I don't have time for this* because here we are, here *I am*, we each say and we are very much in the shackles of time and who has time to be grateful at such a time as this. Did you hear what the news said on the news? Yes, they said it is 9:43.

When I Am Manic, When I Am Not

When I am manic
the Garden bustles with busy bees, but
when I am not

I look outside from within, fearing stings,
inside and low, safe and feeling-free, unlike
when I am manic

Buzzing from petal to leaf, a singular
host of participants pollinating in me, planning while knowing
when I am not

Some of the stems show spots. The stalks start to panic,
the fruit always rots, days die by clot, but thank God,
when I am manic

All those dead rancid days are raised
up into the thinnest of air, tropospheric, just as
when I am not

The sea level rises, the Garden begins to frown
and I flounder, truth too temporal it drowns, then forgot.
When I am manic,
when I am not.

Coffee for the Other Hand

for Boethius

According to Horace, Tiresias once asked Fortune *whatever I say either will be or won't?*, this being according to Boethius, the dead man who speaks to me while I complain to myself, complain about how my hand holding my morning cigarette is unnecessarily freezing, which causes the warm hand in my warmer pocket to involuntarily fidget for my phone, my phone which knows the weather in my backyard this moment, which my hand does not know.

My freezing hand picks up my steaming coffee cup,
drops it on my concrete slab upon which my feet
faithfully stand, my feet surrounded by glass shards,
glass shards that previously were my cup, my coffee,
my warmth, my one surviving substance to stave off the shivers
my necessary sobriety sows within my sums.

*It is because you men are in no position to contemplate this order that everything seems confused and upset.
Providence is the divine reason itself. But ordinary people do not see such things.*

Sobriety feels as ordinary as ordinary gets, my long-gone teacher.
I first met you 17 years ago near the Pacific Coast and still,
now in a valley, attempting to feel gratitude that I am not
rather in a box or ditch or marriage to anything, save for today.

*And if the muse of Plato speaks the truth,
Man but recalls what once he knew and lost.*

In an unrelated result of the whims of Fortune, I lost my favorite and only coffee cup this morning,
and my favorite pen.
I lost 5.84% of my earthly wealth before coffee yesterday morning,
and my favorite lighter.
I lost the desire to lose my life the other morning,
and my childhood favorite, oblivion.

*Look up at the vault of heaven: see the strength of its foundation and the speed of its movement, and stop
admiring things that are worthless.*

Fortune allows the wound.
Wisdom offers the salve.
Today exists as practice.