

The Seance of Fishing

1. The Seance

Lydia and I
boat south from Rainbow Island
across Ecstasy Bay
into a sharp west wind
land at the clay bank
and hike the portage back to Orpheus Lake
a deep, immaculate, wilderness lake

we weren't following
a ribbon
a string
angling down
tied to things
a twig
an abandoned car
in a Sacramento parking lot
a bed in an attic
a thundercloud near the ceiling
a dip in the road
a hospital
a medical file
a street in Boston
an angel with a gun
a shooting

I wanted to fish for lake trout, siskiwit--
drift a silver spoon
deep down
tempt the speckled grey fish
to rise up
bite

we scrambled down shore
over rocks
along brambled paths
to the cliff face
so I could
fish for...

why am I so sad?
so unhappy all the time
the question I was asking
at the seance of fishing

I flipped the silver spoon
far out across the windswept lake
it slipped in
with a slook sound
sank to the bottom
of Cameron's *Abyss*
Adrienne Rich's wreck

when I reeled in
nothing flashed up
like
some Biblical king's lost dream
nothing
like
Harry Potter
complete and perfect

after ten beautiful
futile casts
switch to live bait
me in a white dress
nothing on underneath
stoned
dancing to the Rolling Stones
naïve as a flower girl
in a sunny field
impaled on an Eagle's Claw #4

on the first cast
something hits hard
I go down
fast
as clinical depression
with suicidal tendencies
violent fantasies
voices
to hell

2. The Landing

the water wasn't burning
nor dead black like the Styx
it was clear
uncanny
I landed
on the small point on the north shore of the island
no demons howled
lashed the damned with willow whips

The Underworld did not look like The Underworld
I did not remember how I got here
no big black hearse
no through the mirror
certainly nothing like a movie
which made me doubt
which made me worry
I might have been fishing
in a fiction

I landed the boat
stepped out
secured it
there wasn't even a dock
no zombies crowded round
no shades begged for blood
there was a blurred sign on a tree
a flier for *Rosemary's Baby*
a faded picture of Mia Farrow
looking down in horror
over the mound of her belly
the should have been beautiful mound of her belly

there was an old, red, Coke cooler
mostly hidden by the orange touch-me-nots
nothing in it
except a mostly rotted Mary Shelly's Frankenstein
maybe a vision quester's sign
but nothing significant
like a Demigorgon's cave
or Dr. frankenstein's lab

to lend the place
the rusting propane tank in the bushes
the yellow minnow bucket sitting on a stump
the necessary Gothic significance

back up shore
half hidden
beneath the wreckage of a white pine
toppled like a snapped clipper ship mast
a picture window
glinted
from the front of the tumbled down cabin
it was more like something I had written about
than Minos's Palace
the place where the Minotaur is created
in the center of the Labyrinth
inexplicably
it reminded me of
Boy Scout camp

3. Sphere

as I pushed my way in through the stuck open door
I saw the huge mirror
like the surface of Michael Crichton's Sphere
then a pink striped dress
a pregnant belly inside it
her hands beneath it holding it up
then something . . .
 . . . something
like the shimmering surface of the black hole
the business end of an event horizon
a shortcut through Neptune
to the bottom of Lake Superior
then the smell
the smell struck me
part pages of books
crumbling away like flesh

part stale wine, beer
cigarette butts doused in the half empty beer cans
glasses carelessly spilled across the threadbare green rug

and piss
people
urinating inside
not bothering to piss outside on the dead grass
defecating
an internet scat site
yellow streams pouring across a body
a flash of lightning
a flash bulb gone off in the dark
blood
blood blackened with age
thickened into gargoyle clots
tragedy
the place smelled like tragedy enough
to fool anyone
smelled like no dream was supposed to smell
smelled
real
phenomenal
someone had brought it this far!
this close to the surface
then everyone vowed
to forget
so they shot her in the head

4. Eurydice

a nightmare that smelled
like dried shit
felt like jerk strands of intestine
pieces of body
her body
a corpse
gorped forth
from the event horizon of hell

because they shot her in the head

gore
spewed across
issues of Time, Newsweek
Life
Colliers,
the Saturday Evening Post
pictures of the Titanic,
the Lusitania
World War I
World War II
Hitler, Stalin
Martin Luther blessing them
blessing kristallnacht
blessing the Death Camps
because they shot her in the head

the black and white fire of the atomic bomb
Amanita Verna
Destroying Angel
in a ballerina tutu
of rotting skin
risen above Hiroshima
from the Virgin Mary's lap
Korea, Vietnam
Rosemary's babies
gotten on her by "Satan"
because they shot her in the head

Kennedy assassination
King
Kennedy again
the rise of Nixon
religious fundamentalism
carnage of Cambodia
Billy Graham preaching
in baseball stadiums
build it
the Kingdom will come
out of the empty acid stare of Charles Manson's eyes

because they shot her in the head

Iraq
Afghanistan
children
planted
by rape
by the fathers of our country
our history
our foreign policy
almost made manifest
a few feet from the surface
before fading back down
into the unreal
the redacted
every psychologist swears by
because they shot her in the head

the nightmares from Pandora's box
the foul afterbirth
snuff movie videos of 9/11
snuff movie videos
of the December 26, 2004 tsunami
swallowing little children
Clinton crying
Bush crying
crocodile tears
because they shot her in the head

and then...the voices upstairs
pastors preaching
apologizing
"we cannot understand"
the evil in the human heart"
"cannot understand Adam Lanza"
"cannot understand how monsters are made,
why God allows such evil
and suffering in the world"
the same old tired words
by pastor after pastor
priest after priest
rabbi after rabbi
because they shot her in the head

the Holy Koran is read
it explains nothing
about how
the End is coming
ready or not
whether you want it or not
the president is introduced
he explains nothing
about
why everyone wants a gun
Eurydice is so far away
she no longer exists
because they shot her in the head

5. The Teachers

the bed where I woke
on December the tenth, 2012
was in the southeast corner
of my first grade classroom
facing the corner
I did not know why I was there
why the room was empty

the child killer was out in the center of the room
I was the next victim
I was not supposed to look
he was out there in the middle of the room killing them
“I cannot know this!” said Kant
“I cannot remember it” claimed Orpheus
“cannot witness angels
shoving Sig Sauers up somebody’s rectum!”
“I cannot comprehend how monsters are made
cannot see the lightning bolt
ejaculating the Martians
to raise the war Machine!” Steven Spielberg swore
“I cannot understand the Incomprehensible Will of God!”
Bishop Berkeley whispered

“why He has chosen to take 20 little lambs!”
“I cannot see the Id monster!” quoth Dr. Morbius
“there is no Id monster!”
claimed the famous psychologist
“No 1214201228
so you cannot see the blood jets of 20 little children
filling the golden cup of the Ghent Altarpiece
all the priests and pastors
will drink from to be blessed”

“you are not allowed to understand
the miracle
filling all the Wall Street bank accounts
this spring in the middle of December
keep your face to the corner
keep your dunce cap on
let St. Joan flash the penlight in your eyes”
“better screening!”
screams the president
“no more high capacity magazines
a ban on assault weapons”
but you cannot remember
how you saw them raising the child killer
in the center of a first grade classroom
December tenth, 2012
when there was still time
to warn everyone
when there was still time
to abort 1214201228
from the womb of creation
if it was legal to abort 1214201228
from the womb of creation
which it isn't
because they shot her in the head