

## Private Library

O, authors of infinite books, scribes of forever,

I hear your cries

emanating from the shelves

in the wood-paneled velvet-draped library

where ladies and gentlemen store their unread First Editions.

You, Benjamin Franklin and George Eliot and Harriet Beecher Stowe,

you have become collectible, stacked side-by-side slave-ship style.

Unlikely neighbors. Involuntary intimates.

The words and ideas contained inside the flat-bound hand-tooled

something-or-other leather,

the thoughts that made you valuable when you lived,

the pronouncements that you authored -- this is why you're still remembered

like childhood afternoons of cut grass and lakeside breezes.

Because rarity

and not what they say on the page

now makes these blessed books a valuable commodity,

let us henceforth commence to composing troves of tomes

with print runs of one.

We'll snatch from vapor the kind of luck you can only buy, then one day

in the cold dead future,

when it will be difficult for us to fully enjoy,

our work will be worthy of collection by the better sort of readers,

the hoarders with no interest in reading.

# Thank You to the Birds

Perched on a wire, a feathered ornament prettifying  
the blight of power lines  
graphing the sky with staves  
and you're the notes.

La-la-la...and a little higher  
laaaah!

Yah, hah, how you make me *la-la-la*,  
how you make me laugh  
with something like childlike, childish, altogether foolish  
joy joy joy.

Oh, *joy!* That kind.

Thank you, I'll say it directly. Thank you!  
I say thank you, plainly, in a language that  
every living thing can understand,  
and maybe the dead ones, too. The universal being universal.

Thank you, birds.

For everything. The parts you can't understand and  
the parts I don't understand and  
the parts that everyone understands.

And thank you for the smaller mercies,  
the ones I'm certain

you haven't planned, unless, in fact, it's true

that in your avian breast is where  
God dwells.

Thank you, God. I'm grateful that you've perched upon my composition,  
keeping an omniscient eye on the Eden you aerate and fertilize  
with divine obliviousness  
redolent of eternal grace.

Here's a secret that maybe you always knew:

The seed I furnish and the flowers I grow and the stale bread  
slung backhand like a Frisbee to the distant precincts of  
our little garden sanctuary park –  
it's allegedly for you, Lord,

Mr. Sparrow Warbler Wren Dove Towhee Finch Phoebe.

But here's the secret part:

It's also for me and all the other earthbound Godheads  
who seek a chirping singing shouting cooing  
confirmation that you really do exist.

# Seven Lost Friends

Predilection for guns

Addicted to opioids

Reliably unreliable

Prefers video games

Distant after the divorce

Uninterested in my work

Bigger narcissist than I

# Guilty

I'm off parole I'm on the dole

I'm on patrol for deep-fried dough

The superficial initial deal was hastily rejected

but a subtle plea bargain we readily accepted

Conciliatory counsel bounced me to a flea market

where a meal was haggled over so some would get less and one a bit more

I ended up being brought up abruptly on trumped up

charges of sedition and uncommon erudition

My thoughts were accused

The judge was recused voluntarily when it was discovered in discovery

I planned to plead *nolo contendere*

but could not outlast or overcome the auto-correct defect

in the extra-judicial prefect

of my unconscious keypad

reminding me I had no chance

Spitting out *no contender* is a simple misspelling of mistaken intention

The shrill point made punctiliously by silly fly-boys and crybabies

The bloviating aviators bellowing sails of zeppelins

while telling tales of airborne hoagie grinders

If bread could fly there would be no famine and there would be no war

So let us commence to planning and attending the blessed wedding nuptials of yeasty flour and lark inspired wing power

I said this plainly with no trace of ill intent or discontent with maladroitness

Alas there's no defense when your chief offense is to make a pretense

Pretentious am I pretending to intense attachments to all that will die

Said I

My confession saved me from penitentiaries

My obsession with penitence sent me to the nunnery

I read the holy books and then I got to Shakespeare and read them in reverse

I learned you can repeatedly rehearse what you will say when the climax comes

The litany of facts

The liturgy of passion

Or whatever stimulates an electrical reaction in the synaptic traces

Fact is nothing works when nothing works

Inventing epigrams and syllogisms and provoking a momentary disruption of the preferred discourse

Between a girl and her screen

Between a horse and his water or a tortoise and his amphibious ambitions

Will win you nothing when nothing is working perfectly well without

your imperfect assistance

The sentence came without punctuation so I would never know

When the end

Fine thank you I said

Through a mouthful of black robing he meant to say

You are welcome to stay out of jail or monasteries

Where malleable minds congregate the persuasive must be banished and repelled

Uncaged am I now hit with only a lien against all future worth to my community

Unlike the lion from Zimbabwe or the Kudzu from Botswana or the chicken from Arkansas

Unfazed am I by setbacks to a worry free zone in Arizona

Now showing

A matinee extravaganza of illegal immigrants

Chemical stimulants concocting simulations of hallucinogenic elation and every other delectation fracked from our fractured manufacturing sector

Persistent anxiety

Unearned piety screams high society so I go slow for fellow felons

Now I'm even more convicted in my conviction

Pleasure must be taken in being guilty as imagined

Before returning to the masquerade

Before the next reprieve