

The Speaker Sinks the Hall

Listening to a boring lecture is like bobbing
deep underwater being held upside down.
With no breath, the eyes of the audience
start to close, the light fades as oxygen
seems to be running out fast.

Mermaids float by but do not sparkle with
shining scales the gesticulating speaker promised
nor with the fantastic curves he painted,
rather they are clad in drab overalls
of clichés billowing into bag-like shapes
that drag them down into the mud.

Deep underwater, we nod, and silently drown,
still sitting dutifully
in a row on the undersea floor.
as we pull him under with us.
Too late the speaker notices
the dangling lifelines were withdrawn
as grim sharks circle.

Breakdown

Between those layers of mind,
memory, a fermenting cheese, and
hope, a precious chocolate,
lies the thick batter of personality.

Too fluid to give a steady ballast,
this desert in the making
sloshes from side to side.
Tottering now, there is a need for balance.

Fortunately, this delectable, never quite done,
never good enough for company,
never quite set into the desired mold,
floats placidly in a stagnant sea.

The sea, the pool of self-deception,
blackens and cakes the lowest layer
with a slime that clings. The sea shifts
gives support for this unstable sweet.

Hydraulic pumps and electric winches
whir along the edge of the dirty
basin called soul, working
to keep the flow steady.

This molding barge of personality tips,
rocked by lies and cruelties, heavy
weights to have on deck, and by the constant
shuffling of crowds at the image shows

projected on screens on the uppermost deck.
Unfortunately, a falling lie or cruelty
drops off deck like a depth charge, blasts
a hole in the well patched catch bowl.

Now, the grimy waters of self-deception
run low, lose their comforting power
of fluid base and slimy cuddle,
let the tucked away tart topple.

Now, we pray, the splattered cook
will put this mess to the test of the oven,
allow heat to touch the protected layers,
so they come out
 baked perhaps,
 charred perhaps,
 but done.

A Correction about Antimatter

When the physicist speaks of antimatter,
we rest our elbows firmly on the table,
push with our forearms down on the solid oak
and fear we
 will suddenly sink through
 and fall
 into some new sort
 of rabbit hole.

Our heads
 are full of visions
of BLACK EMPTY HOLES
 devouring voraciously
 the colored universe.

Mistakenly, we think antimatter's lesson
 is about opposites—like driving
a clanking old car down a road past scruffy shrubs,
 feeling the heat rising from the brush,
 and knowing in our sweat

 that the heat is echoed by the hum
of droning tires, and through
 the wavering air
 imagine we see an identical rusty old Ford,
 popping with backfire, heading
down the lane
 irresistibly
to meet
 IN A FATED HEAD-ON.

Or, we fear to trust each gentle gesture,
 like the finger pushing softly back
 the hair from our lover's cheek,
as if love's gestures
 summon from below our soul
 some impulse to slap,
 but cruelties travel another vector
not A HIDDEN NEGATIVE TWIN.

Boredom, Antimatter and Ages of life

Instead, in the hushed nightly
drama of stars,
the silence is bearable
because we do sense
they sing without a sound
like a greeting of neighbors,
a truth in unintended embrace
a shadow
right within the brightness
of the beam—
or else we would be blinded.

The unseeing looks with your eyes at deeper visions.
Otherwise,
matter, so full of itself,
sitting on our shoulders,
BEING TOO WEIGHTY,
would bear us
down to our knees.

Matter without eddies would fill
utterly our bellies
until there was no hunger
for the not yet attained.
Antimatter gives
the universe of the packed-in

SOME SPACE,

makes the over-serious loosen up
chuckle,
propels the now half-empty
Hamlet from mourning
to poetic
musing,
opens a door for
our pent-up psyches
TO FINALLY PLAY.

Trying Stupidly to Stop Old Doddering Time

Holding on too tight, I know the snap of the branch
will surely follow, as much as I knew
when young to cling to my parents
shouting for them not to leave,
would get a shrug, a look up at the sky
and the query whether I was the right boy
they took home from the hospital.
No matter how ardent one's love is,
we know to clutch will change the Eros
in the glance of the lover
to one looking out the window for an escape,
or the director implored with tears
in mid-audition, will look down
at his papers and quickly yell *next*
hoping for an actor
who is truly lost in their lines.

Still I chase and try to grab
the hobbling years, who calmly pass by,
hunched over with a walking stick,
white hair wispily falling
towards the ground
trying to hold that stubborn old man
by the knees and make him stop,
invite him to have some tea
and hope he will lie down
in the back room and fall asleep
for decades, so during those years,
I can love easily
and live carefreely
not staring at the clock.

Yet I know that long snooze
would be a disaster,
the myriad babies bursting at the door
bawling for their turn to toddle,
to echo the earth in sheer play,
since they would be stuck,
no room made for them by the departing
they'd pile atop each other
as they keep arriving,
awaiting the Old Man to step forward
greet them with newly vacated rooms.

Boredom, Antimatter and Ages of life

Even the plants at that most tender stage
of green chlorophyll arising in veins,
ready to shoot upward
reach towards the sun,
would spill over themselves
and flood the ground with a green mash
if last year's growth wasn't already gone.
The sun itself would be lost without
the death of each day,
its path in the golden track across the sky
would lead nowhere,
Apollo's steeds would halt mid-stride.

Without the dreaded end,
it would go all black,
no sparkle left, no new upstarts
springing forth.
Even we old ones would be crankily
complaining, *hey*, where is
the permanent rest we earned.

Our First Glance at the Light

The first light shaft splinters,
but not like the rays from the sun at sunset,
cloud filtered, seeking
a place to rest for the night,
but instead bouncing all around the cheek,
tickling feathers of radiance,
fingers of white warmth,
flying under the newborn chin
promising that the orbs will soon awaken,
for the first light cannot yet be,
that first light of the beginning,
since the eye always
lingers in the dark.

But the gasp of the first breath
should warn that to be a human being,
means that even air
can pierce through
to the heart, as the onrush
of life shocks and hurts.
The shaking, reddened need
of the aah that tore open a hole in the air
remains woven like
an ever spreading vine
in every wreath
of breath and sound.