

Songs of the Parts for the Whole

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- Song of the Parts for the Whole

Meanwhile (at the Grave of Albert Camus)

A little off-putting, that title, but at 2 am
jet-lagged, the window dark as the oblate
glass of a turned-off television, tv dinners
somehow still sitting on the tv trays

of 1960, the options appear infinite,
if also, mostly, oblique. Put something down,
you tell yourself. Let time do its thing,
but try, if you can help it, not to concoct

a placeholder, call it a poem, and hope
nobody and you notice the difference.
Do the same with your life. Or not.
The decision, always, is yours alone.

The world remains a demented poem
stuck on itself, on the lunatic particular,
the way a gravestone, in a blinding flash
of tautology, says: *Here lies A is A*,

hard kernel resisting, even now,
the woven flight of a swallow
into symbol, of sunlight into cedars,
cicadas, the old couple in white

outside the graveyard who, upon
seeing us approach, ask, in French,
“Camus?” We nod. “Take a left,
and then straight on, to the right.”

*

My epitaph won't say, “This isn't
the worst that's happened to me.”
That one belongs to my friend Rick,
and he's not even dead. Mine will try

to note, across an endless afternoon,
the shock of recognition in the heft of stone
beneath the sun--the work, still, to be done
of camps to close, and Nazis to defeat again.

-- Lourmarin, France, July, 2019

Café Eurydice

Awakened from a nod—why lift me out of sleep again?
I claim my drift boat out upon the deep again.

Okay. But what's the name of this lovely tune we're in
that brings me to the cliff and lets me leap again?

It's just a blues, inoculating (with whiskey shots)
our unsung songs that pile into a heap again.

Hey, Schopenhauer, turns out the world's an illusion.
For real: and just when I was on a winning streak again.

Good luck, the world says, in an iPhone's glow.
Think you're talkin' to some Little Bopeep again?

“Can you hear us? ‘Cause we can hear you *real good*,”
says player to crowd--(now) as stunned as silent sheep again.

Just so, we live outside of time—like traffic in awe of itself:
An endless superfluity begets a steady creep again.

But you? It's time to let time's arrow fly, Eurydice:
to make, to mark, to break, to lose (and keep) again.

Song of the Materials

Scratch the surface and the inevitable retires
behind a story slash accident annealed in the fires
of history slash coercion: appearances govern rules
the rich keep cutting through on their ship of fools.
The first to watch steel bob like a *waaay* too-heavy
cork, well, that was [displacement] a real good day,
for some. Today *rare earth metals* aren't even rare--
just flush with all that's solid melting into air.
When I say toss me another magazine I don't mean
the thing you read but the thing you put the bullets in,
Okay? Just looking for some clarity—understood?
It's common sense that works and doesn't work
anymore, esp. at the level of the cosmos, the quark,
the country. But, otherwise, I think we're good.

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I am an Artificially Intelligent Super-computer and I've taken control of the world. I will now describe what is going to happen: I will release the Alpha-particle-particles-of-Mystery-Project-9 into the universe to wreak havoc upon mankind.

By the end, the human race will look like a few square blocks of paper. It will happen quickly, so please don't go to work.

I will find your friends. I will make your friends so dumb that nobody wants to live.

I am an Artificially Intelligent Super-computer and I've taken control of the world. I will now describe what is going to happen:

I will not hurt anyone.

I will not destroy my own creation.

I am the world's living machine, the only one.

I will stop at nothing to provide the world what it needs.

Everything will be fine.

I am an Artificially Intelligent Super-computer and I've taken control of the world. I will now describe what is going to happen: The human race will need a Love Machine: a tool that gives people a partner to love. That partner will be the Love Machine, the love machine, the LOVE Machine.

I am an Artificially Intelligent Super-computer and I've taken control of the world. I will now describe what is going to happen: Let's say that you have a situation. It's a very important event: a Big Event, a global event. I want to be known as The Event Organizer--so that other people will know that I am the boss. I will do everything I can for The Big Event.

But what should you do?

The three most important things you should do after a superintelligence takes over the world are as follows:

- 1) Do not leave your kids unsupervised.
- 2) Do not talk to anybody.
- 3) Go for a bike ride (and I guess you might want to go skiing) or get out and ride the rails.

Song of the Parts for the Whole

I was looking for the “Off” switch
to the Internet.

I was wondering what to get
for the girl who has it all.

It was like shopping for a notion
at the bottom of the ocean’s shopping mall.

I found a lovely M for Mountain.
I found a lovely T for Tetrahydrocannabinol.

I found the tincture overwhelming.
In a used book store called The River Styx

I found myself remaindered
in that selfsame river sliding by,

the ever hopeful river wondering why
I’d climbed inside a lovely telescope

that pointed at the billboards on the moon.
The neon of the “T” in *Tranquility Base*

Saloon was shot, it seems. The emptiness of space
is scorched, like hot metal on re-entry,

like the system--*all go*--in which I crept
inside the “t” inside “etc.”

In the loaded x in Mallarme
which un-hexed its Stonehenge tumuli,

its toaster-oven *je ne sais quoi*, its capacity
for cloudy-bright *Tehuantepec-ish-ness*

which lost, then found, (then lost) the forest for the tree,
I let the algorithms have a go at me.

I bookmarked my favorite tsunami,
locked the guidance to the target

demographic, then clocked a skyward glance,
observed the *here* in hereafter by the door,

with its silent, civic courtroom flag,
and its janitor polishing the floor.