

note in ashland

eye see gnats swirling round the well thirteen open bottles
the gnats circle(n)swivel(n)dip(n)dive(n)duck round the things
they go in(n)out ov the bottles kissing(n)sucking
the lips ov the rims the beer taps drool long spools ov sour(*lipid*)liquid
& the gnats pool round it

me the romanticizer the reminiscer
me the gnat leader the drunk drunkgnat leader
i'll lead my gnats those poor reincarnates
one day i too will be a gnat caught in the sordid(*samba*)swill
i've begun t'enjoy looking at myself in mirrors at bars
my cheekbones accentuate my lips purple & pallor
my eyebags plump & morose under the sick bar light sepia overlay that swallows my
sanity
if i were a gnat my cheekbones wouldn't accentuate my lips wouldn't purple &
pallor my eyebags wouldn't plump & morose
with my wings
i would whirl round the mansion ov bottles
engulf all the amber burgundy grandeur gold
to(*be*)or(*not*)to(*be*) i be a lonely gnat flow t'the
delirious crux ov my mind

peeled fruit skins ceremoniously dry under the summer sun
you come to mind as eye watch the wilting clementine skins curl like blossom petals
& those gnats those funny fuckin things
they're on the fuckin fruit peels too they're on fuckin everything
everything deemed as beautiful & sacred

in infancy i would lay out in the sun
my skin would itch from the heat
& i would imagine hundreds,thousands ov gnats
dancing(*n*)dragging themselves long & over my pale lips nipples stomach legs
& i wouldn't move
i would lay there & let the gnats kiss me

self portrait in mirror

[no: v]

poor ole joe

i
cry me a river cry me the longest stream
waterfall it over mountains of nude fragrant men
bathing in eau de of sweat steaming
& reeking along their ass cracks & genitals

poor ole joe stuck there in the mist
grimacing grinding his molars
pounding his heel against the floorboards
hoping for a splinter or some loose reach around
 starved & shriveling minute by minute he shrinks
and after a while he becomes nothing
& everything begins to be edible

he never hadda chance ever since he was shot out of a cooch
then laid quivering beneath the sycamore trees
staring into a june sun tryna rifle a meal out of the
 vast cerulean thing above
something with buckshot innit torpedoing through clouds of gnats
while some faroff sonovabitch yells:
 “that ain’t no bird boy!”
& boy that sonovabitch ain’t ever wrong

joe suckling daniels like a calf onna utter
rumbles along the traffic pretending to be a car
his mother told him that he could be anything
 “daniels is my gasoline!” he yells
while winding through the intersections
racing barefoot through red lites
skipping to sounds booming from car stereos
playing hopscotch with pigeons
then tearing their legs & wings off in a fury when losing
 he’s just out of touch with the modern man
poor ole joe

ii
cry me a river have the tears carve canyons ruttet with whores
plagued by paregoric rot
of serpents lounging & scratching theirs & other’s scabs
a miasma of mucus & pellets of feces piling around their broad whiskered lips

as they all suckle various knobs or tits or whatever or
whomever falls into their toothless holes
can't catch a disease if you are one
well poor ole joe didn't know he was the exception
to be an abomination

"be born to be something." rumbles joe
making a u-turn into oncoming traffic
wild to return to his roots
he veers into the middle of the two lanes
the two yellow stripes smelling of arid asphalt
& begins to strip
a man of maneuvers of jiggling flabs of gut & thigh
of wounds pushing a perfume of forsaken destiny & tribulation

he took ten years of tap was quite good at it too
was walkin home one nite after takin ten years of tap
& lost all his toes in a card game
drew four aces in a hand of fourcard omaha
it was an unfortunate hand &
he went all in the river ran & he slammed his hand hard
curling n deforming his lips as his palm plowed into the plastic card
table

with dissonant shrill joe crows
"FOUR OF A KIND!" "bust." spits the dealer
"snake(eyes) bust to two pair beer hand."
ten years of tap to heel(toe)twist(walk)down the gutter of a patrol rifle
joe sing slow the chorale that floods rivières
as cement scathes yr soul into sear:

"my scabs. . .
my scabs. . .
my scabs. . .
ooooohhhhhhh! save my scabs!"

songs joe

he left everything in his will to them scabs
poor ole joe

iii

doubles of daniels don't subdue his terrors
only propels them into an audience:
audible & without intent joe blurts obscenities into static:
"laaaaah!lah(lah)lah(lah)yei(yuh)
laaaaah!lah(lah)lah(lah)yei(yuh)!"
& everyone in the cell yell
"sit down & shut the fuck up joe!"

stale ramen is all he eats breaking the noodles away from the luminescent neon wrap
then running the thing under the faucet
to have it callous & cake into a cement shiv later
as he stuffs it into his pillow sheet to sturdy
he never really knows when the ramen is ready & cooked
& no one really told ole joe to cook it in water

so he don't
all joe does is sit unrobed ass pointed high to his new
cinderblock sky

with either three or four sometimes five packs of ramen crammed in there
& a huddle of inmates murmuring & shoving & swarming over joe's stinkbox
sharpening their polystyrene spoons & polystyrene teeth
ready to lunge at his seething bung:

"damnjoe." they say

"it's better than we thought it would be." they say

"al dente damnjoe just how i like it." warden say

to joe stinking like he been stuck in some anchovy tin that been boiling in a vat of
soy sauce & prawns

he don't know the food pyramid poor ole joe

he know that people either stink of something or don't smell at all

iv

some tenor tune trickles out of joe's chaste twisted smirk
while being flown out of his cell
cause warden said they was scared ov the bubonic or something
& joe's scab picking tick was perfuming some ozone of rot & charred flesh

oblivious to cosmic superstition joe soars beneath the constellation pegasus
along with a stratus of star clusters brightening the oblivion
above to near white

reset & autonomous from institution

he finds himself imprisoned in a new cell perpetual flight

he accumulate long frayed wreathes of feathers

as he barrels through the nite

it must be autumn by now

joe sucks it all in the moon & her craters

the stars & their shimmer the nite & her uncertainty

& bloats up like a parasitic raven croaking

"nevermore nevermore nevermore."

suddenly something cracks joe out of flight

& he spirals into the sleet

from a nearby window some sonovabitch whistles

"some bird."

**well hell we'll all yell hall
elujah as i die**

i
the same hand that i wipe my ass with
is the same hand that i shake another's with
it is the same hand that picks up the beer cans
it is the same hand that smokes marijuana
it is the same hand that participates in love

my body is full of feces and i don't know what to do
i sit in the corners of rooms and think about death
not my death but death as an object
i know how i'm going to die
the unimaginable object
death

is an imaginary appendage attached to my side:
maybe it's an invisible arm!
i sit on the toilet with the window open
with some hope i hope a passerby hears my flatulence
death as an object
its incalculable design
stays stuck to my hips & hugs my ins
there is an uncontrollable surge of embarrassment
as shit travels out of yr body

we live in a world plagued by anxiety & turmoil
insanity surges along a course wiring our societies
we're afraid of our own bodies our own brains our own skin
our own flaws
we're beings afraid to leave our beds of loneliness
we're tired of tying a tie too tight n working for sum cash
we're tired of monotone monotony
we're tired of the tie!
o god!
i tied it too tight!

the first action after death is defecation
they never show the hangedman with shit smearing in a slow steamy slide down his
slacks on television
the urine trickling off his brown leather loafers
a puddle or two ov various fluids
we all pass n go and all the shit & urine runs out of us until we're empty depraved
& guilty for ever living

ii
confined yet unhinged i stay in my corner

as the festival of dussehra plays through my mind
fill me with firecrackers fill my brothers with firecrackers
but only if you let me light them myself
i want to be full of something besides feces
it's hard to see out the window when the glass is shrouded by a grate
eye have never seen the festivals of navrati n dussehra
& i never will
the grated glass will thicken as my skin callouses
and soon i will become blind

the world's greatest rumor
religion
blows out the window with the smooth cool ballad
of some omnipresent omnipotent almighty
that we do not realize is our own body

the big ole room of death
maybe it's a solitary state
maybe it's just a white room
with a mirror & banners floating through the air
with sayings of
"woowee!" "yippeeyippee!" "congratulations!"
& "you did it, champ!"

i was robbed as i was birthed
i was robbed of my previous being being unborn
i was birthed by someone that i will never meet nor see
they are all dead now
maybe in a room
waiting for someone
waiting for something

iii
i will sit upright as i die
as if my body is somesort of temple
as if my body is made to revered as decadent holy & understanding
there will be vases full of dried fish
sardines mackerels anchovies

catfish salmon
surrounding my sagged body
my skin knows where to go
the stench of the fish will veil the stench of my death
the stench of my insides the stench of every word i've ever laid

people around me people my age
have begun t'begin their drinking at ten n the morning
when we're thirty we will begin our drink at eight

tears swell around my corneas as they build highrises round my head
they've been built to topple to succumb to my silence

wired & on the fringe of guillotine
i'll hold back reluctantly
the dramatics within my brain act itself in a play
the damsel n distress the lover the loser the loner
the lump
the marijuana smoke now smells like crabmeat
there's no satisfaction within consumption
death & time merely run parallel to each other
until their one perpendicular meeting
look away if i begin to slouch over
i cannot hear you my ears are pooled with blood
my silly sonnet of death will style the nitetide
as i lie into my aged body

i'm afraid
my wish
will not be
 fulfilled

blk/fryday

nobody left how they enter
w/ carried cages locked the doors closed
it's only moans gargled thru those grates
nothing great be heard

& above, to drown down their cries marbled jazz, like the stuff they started
putting out in the late 70's & early 80's to lay yr lady down to
after the golden age ov hard/bop

the floor here is slick, no dog has been able to stand right on its own once it's placed on
this slipper cement

this one dog keeps dragging its forward n
dragging behind its diapered bottom
leaving its wobbly legs to wear hot n
blistered it has no skin left on its knees nor
paws
the owner rips tissues out this box placed at the
receptionist
she sobs, rips them all out
letting the box drop to the floor
nobody picks the box up
she bawls over a form to fill blotting the
ink
as she attempts to scrawl her dog's name &
birthday
over each n every letter
the ink bleeds & is blotted making it appear
germanic foreign

/this jazz is something lenny kravitz would swing to & steely dan would rail coke to/
the dog continues to crawl
under the crying woman

"she cannot stand" some man claims
he seems a doppelganger ov someone i use't slam
whiskey w/ in allentown, if he hit a growth/spurt
"could you try to put this leash on her
she needs to be leashed." the vet hands him a
collar & leash

she didn't need to be leashed
he comes back w/ a gorgeous bulldog w/ bullfrog neck dangling hard round a collar
she's unfamiliar ov
& she collapses immediate when set down upon an electronic scale
she looks round w/ unfamiliarity, it looks at its owner unfamiliar, she must not notice his
tears w/ her eyes glazed glaucomic

& the owner shrieks
soft(n)
silent
over the
sorry saggy canine

she sticks her tongue out not to lick panting

three children & their mother walk in w/ two cats
the cats are not being euthanized; the cats are here to be given/up
one out ov cage n other in a screen satchel
the children dance round the animals
the one out of the cage gets placed in one
“might be a little snug” say a vet

n slips the cat in

they both mew over the untemplated jazz
& the children dance as they’ve always danced

round their alive feline(s)

one of the girls, age maybe four, lifts up her yellow sundress patterned w/ petunias
daisies daffodils

“dont lift yr dress up” her mother snaps she keeps it lifted showing/off her panties
the son, maybe the oldest, maybe nine, his ears are studded turquoise

has the satchel over his shoulder

the other girl, seven it seems, dances harder n harder flipping her legs n arms round
circular w/ slippers round her feet that derange her feet as fuzzy w/ three pink painted
nails that poke out ov each slipper

she bangs on the carrier her mother yells at her
“you asked to come here

now sit”

she doesn’t sit & the cats be boisterous beside her zeal
“she’s scared talk to em”

the boy w/ the satchel coos to the swung cat
& attempts to calms her

the dancing one quits dancing & w/ the boy plays
patty/cake over the carrier, in/front ov the satchel swinging off the boy’s
tilted shoulder

there are stretchers gurneys brought out
pets placed in n out n off into unseen rooms nvr returning

bedded beside walls either freshly painted or scuffed raw by
claw/marks n fresh/fear

“donations make us smile” a donation box outside claims

bags, lighter than they ever were
dog treats, a hyperbole

crates crating no/more
cat kibble n clusters ov glittered litter
& slightly gnawed toys by teeth

everyone leaves w/ cage doors swung
palms clasped
arms empty hearts heavy
& arrives to an empty home
absent ov previous patter

nvr again biting
brim the box

on the drive home
a man dressed as santa walks the uneven
sidewalk sobbing w/ the wind winding his
taped beard aside
drooping it down
fluttering
off his cherry cheek