

## **Rendezvous**

*I walk in the night to confront personal gods.  
They pick a rendezvous. I don a coat.*

*I've been the same man for too long.  
This is why I go.*

*I walk with ritual, with things to be cured, with bitterness.  
My breath mocks me in white lamplit clouds. I arrive.*

*I tell them that nothing has changed.*

*They spin and twist and stab me for no good reason.  
I do not understand your tongue, I say.*

*It has one thousand eyes and one thousand mouths. It cries, and  
one thousand mouths drink one thousand tears.  
I am angry.*

*I want, at the very least, to understand, I say.  
One thousand mouths say:  
Time is not bound to us like to you.*

*Why must we only meet in the night, I ask.  
Then I realize the question is hollow, and has been answered.*

*I wish I didn't understand yet that you are stronger.  
I wish for the time when I approached you with a knife in my sleeve.*

*Your thousand eyes blink and blink, and then, in the darkness of the every-night,  
You do the worst thing you could do:*

*You hold me with arms that feel human*

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**I could not write, and so I wrote**

Something about the blizzard of dust in my sun-drowned room, illuminated by the shelf of light from the window—as if each speck glows from deep inside its tiny self—and how they laugh in spirals when I swipe my hand through them

Something about the pockets of gentleness in the tragic fabric of the universe

Something about something something, words words and words

Something about how this is how it should be

I hide my mouth in my shoulder

I explore my fragility

I hurt and understand more every day

Then again, I am the same

Then, again, I am the same

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**Illegible writings to the crooning of a soft piano:**

My world wraps around itself gently:  
All encompasses all:

Only melodies can trap us to this truth:

Only the trembling, tiptoeing, intelligent dance of a dusty, pinpricking piano:

We must trust what we hear when we hear it:

We are all, but nothing

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## Stupid (Purgatory)

I feel stupid  
Stupid, stupid, stupid, in an  
Airport terminal

I think this is where the end of the world will be,  
And I know that this is what will come after:

Waiting, listening  
To suitcase wheels clicking their tongues at you over the tiles  
Baggage claims, the same announcement every three minutes,  
And the same heat that shifts its weight  
Between your head and your chest

There are things here, around

Posters of inspirational people: ballerinas, people who climbed everest  
I would say that that kind of life feels miles away  
if it felt like anything at all

Someone tried to sell me the Bhagavad Gita  
That was the best part, to be able to shift some of this shit into someone else's eyes  
(He called to me from across the terminal and I actually came, because I'm, you know,  
And maybe because I was genuinely intrigued by his boldness)

But the rest of it wasn't like that, wasn't like looking into someone's eyes

The rest of it was like:

And:

And all the while, the heat of my own stupidity pressing up against me  
like someone sitting on my lap

Maybe, I thought,  
This is the way that I'm punished, the worst kind of punishment—  
Maybe I couldn't be hurt by things external, so it had to come from inside,  
It had to be this sneaky, sticky, hot, feeling, this  
remote control car of razor blades clipping around in my brain  
And its greatest, most evil trick:  
To look like stupidity

A lot like stupidity.

Or maybe I'm just stupid.

And let's be honest, "I couldn't be hurt by things external" is bullshit,  
Evidenced by the crunch of my shoes everywhere I walk:  
Shattered glass of my own, stupid feelings slamming like a car crash against everyone else's,  
All the time

That's why this would be hell,  
This pharmacy-lit, empty as white noise  
Airport terminal,  
Where I have no agency, except that I do, except that I

Where, one minute, I'm just sitting  
Trying to survive my thoughts

And the next minute it's time, I've been counting down the time and it's time, no time now,  
And I get on the bus, and the driver closes the door, and all of a sudden I want the universe that  
(maybe) trembles around my fingertips and eyelids to shatter into glass and take me with it,  
Because I've forgotten my bag in the terminal,

My bag with everything in it, which I packed and looked at so many times, and there's no  
explanation, none at all,  
And everything in my life is confirmed  
Not proven, but confirmed,  
As having to do directly with my own stupidity  
And worthlessness

And so I go back into that terminal—

There's another shuttle, later, or something.  
The logistics, never enough to save me, to get me out,  
Are always enough to bring me right back here to where the hours are

This, this terminal, is where hours and minutes go after they're spent  
They serve their time, and then they come,  
brought by a bus I can't get on,  
And sit next to me, one chair away,  
in these always-almost-comfortable black leather seats  
With the silver arm rests

And that's why this is hell.

No, not hell: purgatory

Which is to say it *is* hell,  
Because that's the primary occupation of the inhabitants of purgatory,  
the reason they breathe, the reason they wander and are  
forever there:

To convince themselves,  
with everything in and around them,  
That it is  
worse than hell.

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## The Last Song of Icarus, and why I should be the one to write it

*To Icarus, mid-free fall.*

I hope this message finds you well.

I'm dearly sorry (quite very sorry) that we (we folks down here [on the ground])  
keep using you (up there, of course) to quicken our hearts (which have slowed, considerably).

Let me share this with you, since you have a moment:

As I write, I like to remind myself that I can dip into different styles,  
Some sonnet here, some free verse there  
Some somber, some meter, some rhyme

“Art is theft,” says Picasso from a quote pinned to my wall  
(I have a lot of them: quotes and platitudes pinned,  
With nice clipped edges where the context was)

I remind myself that it's okay to explore different styles — essential, even.  
(Every man who considers himself a writer must remember this, Icarus).

Well, not to overstep, but I believe it's fair to say that I've done much exploring  
Enough, even, to consider myself capable of touching  
Some of those nice things that the best writing can.

All this to say, I'm thrilled (and now quite bashful, really) to tell you  
That I will be writing the final song of your flight, Icarus.

That's right; no more prose, or poems, or paintings, or songs.  
I know you must have grown tired of them,  
Grown tired of posing, from all the way up there

(By the way, marvelous job. The contortions of your limbs  
And the way you find the light, and those few loose feathers, too —  
A remarkable rendering. It has often moved me to the edge of well-needed tears).

You see, you and I, Icarus, we get it.  
I understand the fall.

I've actually thought a lot about it —  
(That is, your aerial predicament,  
what with its velocity and, of course, its urgency  
Oh, what urgency!)

I've thought a lot about it,  
And I firmly believe (though I'll take on this honor with due humility)  
That I'm the one to write the final word, Icarus,  
The only one.

*Your* final word, that is, of course, Icarus.

For (and I need not be the one to tell you this;  
You're the one in free fall, of course, of course)

For so many have rendered your fall with such triteness,  
Don't you agree? Of course you agree.  
I'm glad we could share a laugh about that.

But your fall is anything but trite, Icarus,  
As you well know, it is masterful.

Excuse me — I meant to say miserable.  
Tragic. Dreadful. Dire.  
“Dire” doesn't even come close.  
“Fateful” might, or “cataclysmic”...

Don't mind me, my friend.  
Best not to get tangled in the workings of a writer —  
It's a difficult and often indecipherable burden  
To render an act of gods into a word  
(But, alas what a thrill!), of course  
No thrill like yours.

Well, really, I'm pleased,  
And pleased you'll be pleased, of course,  
To share this final word with you,



And end the poor presentations of your pain,  
And capture for once, for all,  
*Your* all: your air-gulping, head-spinning,  
Skin-burnt, sea-bound tumble from the heavens

(For, let's be honest, of course, as you well know,  
There are other myths that deserve attention).

So, let's do it together, old chap —  
    (And again, my apologies for any inconvenience  
    My earth-bound friends may have caused you,  
    You know, of course, they mean well).  
But don't worry about the words,  
Just keep on doing what you're doing, if you please.

That silly business — the words, that is — will be my duty.  
It will be my gift to you.