

Prisoners Dilemmas

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An eye for an eye for an eye for an eye

A tooth for a tooth for a tooth —

Bins full of teeth

clicking in the desert wind telegraph of the centuries

Endless walls of baleful eyes

a maze winding back to Trojan wars Babylonian captivities

a long gaze

overlooking you,

the living

the living you

groping through that maze regress repeat

those footsteps they're yours

that ass you're following is you yesterday

They hear a voice (they say) in the horrorscope click-and-dash

the code of vengeance

It's The Word says the one who carries The Book

It's the way it's always been says the one with the sword

and by the way

what about those other assholes with swords?

It's dizzying a hand for a hand head for head round and round

Treading marble paths other feet have worn into shallow marble stream beds

blood flows tears flood

But go ahead: Just suggest *Hey. Let's turn here this time.*

It's the way it will always be says the Leader

lighting his cigar on a hundred-body bill

It's a sick game Screw Them Before They Screw You

but you and that Other "protected" by that other sword

are captive bated with each other

trapped inside the words

of a language not yet dead

Red Shift

It was already well into being a century of astonishments the twentieth century
When Hubble propounded the results of his peering at the infinitesimal
through the great bigness of his telescope
the universe already having been realized vaster
than the Founding Fathers could have imagined
was much vaster than that hundreds thousands times bigger

Suddenly the bottom that already wasn't there fell out again
the top was not a top at all
the Nothing of God inhaled immensity
and on top of everything else it was receding
faster than speeding bullets

But that came after the Great War the one that broke history
broke Europe broke Progress in the blasted slime of mud and guts
High shoes had already gone down low skirts went up and up
and so did stocks until like planes they didn't

Meanwhile the world's very busy brilliant publication population exploding
continued picking apart the thoughts that boxed the world's brains
measuring the growing growing vastness of all that nothingness
finding nothing where souls had been *known* to exist
with this increase in Gross National Intelligence agencies
we got concentration camps and mind
-splitting bombs

yet the atomic forces kept spinning in our graves
electromagnetic nuclear strong and weak
slander hate fear and hate

The Doppelgänger Effect keeps happening:

while tearing one step ahead of some destruction hot breath
for some reason we're suddenly preening before the reflection
of this keen mind
we see a great future taking shape bearing down on us
better living through Dr. Faust chemist
but as it comes into focus it's a red-eyed beast
YA-AHH!!! 6-6-6!!!
and we hafeta crank outta there at half the speed of light

The Ancients

There was an I child in the making
Who saw them as deficiently incipiently competent
with their humors horrors bleedings
those craz-ee sky stories
Like, anyone who could pick out the big W of Cassiopeia
and call that a seated lady
had to be marching one shoe nailed to the floor.

There was an I tying my fingers in knots to save a keystroke
jockeying for position from red light to red light
thinking like the other thinkers hungry aggressive guys
shaving seconds gettin it done
Until the long yawn, by which I realized I obliterated every second
wrested from an hour's contention

When my mother came to me and spoke that year after she died
I saw through the grass the blockading streets
the separating sleep
My vision blurred whole days
I paused while dialing and forgot the next number
my beating heart playing my fingertips a spastic little dance

I really don't get it about physics or chaos
or Trinity
But I can understand people without a clue reasoning that Reason
would lead them truly —
Is not our luminated mind divine? divinity's speech?
It still works like this doesn't it:
seer teaches priest priest shapes prince
prince awards golden temple keys to an important family's son
who loves his buttered toast

can't find his ass with both hands
It's just one of the ways we distinguish our kind.
The Dangerous Monkey.

This all here and now seems real enough — when you punch me in the face
it hurts

A child's funeral such as my friend's little girl, yesterday

too real to stomach rapist unknown

the cemetery ringed by strip mines

in yonder highwall an ancient dug tunnel exposed

carries in earth fossil timbers rotted

today's destruction adding to yesterday's acid runoff

O humanity Be born, will you!?

But the process slides forward in labor

Ancients just like us moderns scarce more than ancient

And I too am ancient

a child coursing the slow slow tunnel

Crying out to God