

Old Business Cards

Since they are otherwise useless
At this late-Renaissance stage
I've been smoking old business cards
Rolling them into a "crutch" for joints
A mouthpiece tip made from cardboard memories
Reinforcing raw hemp paper
With the power of lamination and forgotten phone numbers

Who burns today?
Who shall be reincarnated from the ashes?

Once this woman placed her contact information in my hand
Once this man placed his sacred geometry in my hand
Some time ago I cannot recall precisely
I thought mistakenly we'd made our last connection
Despite an instant connectivity promised in the fine print

As my lips today engulf them
Sucking on their name
Tonguing their address
Gladdened now and enlightened by the plants
(Card-less nameless wisest friends)
That tricky veil of distorting duality hangs briefly in the air
A cumulus cloud of white smoke
Carried away on the wind to somewhere else
And in this moment
No one disappears forever

Ascendancy

When I learned the truth
From one privy
To the secrets of the stars
Existential panic seized me
For the few seconds required
To review my entire life

Had I done it all wrongly
Every day for decades
Mistakenly thinking I had puzzled out
My best use during a brief residency
On this earthly plane
My golden path
What I was meant to be

Had I stumbled blindly down hopeless avenues
Condemning myself to certain failure
Or did I choose rightly
Inadvertently
Ignorant of larger forces
Constructing some semblance of a cogent story
Out of pointless flailing and random bumbling
Comfortably deluded by devout belief
In free will and blank slates
Unaware for more than 50 years
Which celestial body was in
ascendancy
At the precise moment
I emerged from Mother's womb

Great Souls

Great souls live within me
Struggling
With uncharacteristic ineptitude
To find freedom from my flawed humanity

Ghandi knocks three times politely
Jesus scratches at my scars
Mr. Rogers whispers koans of kindness
The Buddha giggles at bondage imaginary

They're always present
Yet too seldom manifest
These great souls
Waiting patiently to spread
Love
Like spores on the wind

Liberation at last
When my wife
Keenest observer
Tells me
When I die
I will be missed
By many imperfect worry machines
Inhabited by all the great souls
Whose names are lost to history

Peasant

No royalty in this family tree
Potato eaters Bean planters Dirt diggers
Involuntary serfs elevated to peasantry
Absent pious affectations and social pleasantries
My tribe had no aspirations
Aside from surviving the occasional genocide
Radio says
She big, a big girl thick 'n' juicy in the flavor spot
Ain't never tryin' to be somethin' she not
They don' know she older than the cotton gin
Sister of Methuselah
Sister of a man with a question mark back
Stooped over his cabbage patch in Poland
Dream-knowing 900 years hence a boy would be born
His crownless birthright passed and fumbled
Settled into a comfortable routine
Tending to the tubers
Peasant proud
Unpossessed of oligarch ambitions
Every remnant of his anonymous ancestors
Nearer than a velvet throne

Guilty

I'm off parole I'm on the dole
I'm on patrol for deep-fried dough
The initial superficial deal was hastily rejected
 but a subtle plea bargain we readily accepted
Conciliatory counsel bounced me to a flea market
 where a meal was haggled over so some would get less and one a bit more
I ended up being brought up abruptly on trumped up
 charges of sedition and uncommon erudition
My thoughts were accused
The judge was recused voluntarily when it was discovered in discovery
I planned to plead *nolo contendere*
 but could not outlast or overcome the auto-correct defect
 in the extra-judicial prefect
 of my unconscious keypad
 reminding me I had no chance
Spitting out *no contender* is a simple misspelling of mistaken intention
 The shrill point made punctiliously by silly fly-boys and crybabies
 The bloviating aviators bellowing sails of zeppelins
 while telling tales of airborne hoagie grinders
If bread could fly there would be no famine and there would be no war
So let us commence to planning and attending the blessed wedding nuptials of yeasty flour
and lark inspired wing power

I said this plainly with no trace of ill intent or discontent with maladroitness
Alas there's no defense when your chief offense is to make a pretense
Pretentious am I pretending to intense attachments to all that will die
 Said I
My confession saved me from penitentiaries
My obsession with penitence sent me to the nunnery
I read the holy books and then I got to Shakespeare and read them in reverse
I learned you can repeatedly rehearse what you will say when the climax comes
 The litany of facts
 The liturgy of passion
 Or whatever stimulates an electrical reaction in the synaptic traces
Fact is nothing works when nothing works
Inventing epigrams and syllogisms and provoking a momentary disruption of the preferred
discourse
 Between a girl and her screen
 Between a horse and his water or a tortoise and his amphibious ambitions
Will win you nothing when nothing is working perfectly well without
 your imperfect assistance
The sentence came without punctuation so I would never know
 When the end
Fine thank you I said
Through a mouthful of black robing he meant to say
 You are welcome to stay out of jail or monasteries
Where malleable minds congregate the persuasive must be banished and repelled

Uncaged am I now hit with only a lien against all future worth to my community
Unlike the lion from Zimbabwe or the Kudzu from Botswana or the chicken from Arkansas
Unfazed am I by setbacks to a worry free zone in Arizona
Now showing

A matinee extravaganza of illegal immigrants

Chemical stimulants concocting simulations of hallucinogenic elation and every other
delectation fracked from our fractured manufacturing sector

Persistent anxiety

Unearned piety screams high society so I go slow for fellow felons

Now I'm even more convicted in my conviction

Pleasure must be taken in being guilty as imagined

Before returning to the masquerade

Before the next reprieve