

Second Elegy

This is one meaning of mauve, the first new color on Earth, leaping to Earth's light from its grave miles and aeons below.

-Gravity's Rainbow

1

Mauve sky, now lavender, amethyst, damson, coal-tar. The beginning of a dream: blood in closed eyelids. Cellist's final down-bow, legato. Dead lungs expel dust, breathe joy and fear and song as the moon washes up against a sable coast, light foam, then a budding flower makes its way ashore.

2

Night flower: Spathiphyllum. Petal-thin Selene sights him of the Four Days in al-Eizariya. Sweat marred muslin clings to his beard and tresses, perfumed linen over crude skin, a red facial wen (nebulous moment of nascence). No one will trust his tide of abstract emptiness, a yawning chasm, spirit remaining with body, disintegrating with box and bone. Selene, with attenuated smile, sending silver moon-breath to guide his path. Her integer-mate (she too was born reflecting the light of others). She whispers, "I want to hollow out a space in my side for you my love".

3

Veiled Selene, nacre tears falling on dust, rue, clover, stone. He Whom G-d Must Surely Help gropes along raw granite toward an antre, to bury himself in other objects, to again wash up on that other senseless shore. "What will you say to those souls you failed to remember?" "What can the dead utter against those who have forgotten them? Without eye, without ear, without tongue, what new faculties are forgotten and relearned and forgotten again?" Silent Selene. A hand touches air and falls to the side as the body continues away.

4

Aubade. Dandelion spores float on the wind. Orchestral mauve, air adjusting to a uniform pitch. The body of Lazarus again walks away from the grave. The moon sets as dead legs stand and dead arms begin to push against a stone.

Rejoyce in the Lord

1

Rejoyce in the Lord who built on a rock, built on a pun. There is something in the gravel. The Grave-El.

I remember a time when I was young and the river was high and the rocks were slick behind my grandparent's home. I don't remember anyone watching. I did not fall in.

2

Mimir, Giant of the North who guards the Well of Wisdom. These reflections by a well: a memory mirror.

It was at granny's house first I tasted the mineral rusty, wet-dog smak of well-water. No one liked the water, so we drank orange and grape soda from the same baby bottles that our parents used. We chewed through the nipples.

3

Memory is a pun, perennial taste buds, blooms fragmented red

Like the flowers my great-granny grew well past ninety. The green house is still there. Inside there is a red rake, a single glove, a straw hat with a worn brim, empty wooden shelves. They are dark and thick and slowly decaying. It is quiet.

4

Mum memory, matchstick burst, sulfur or soil scent. Proust's limbic marmalade.

My mother, picked raspberries for jam, kept an eye out for maggots and borers. Yet, into the metal bowl they went. Sometimes crawled out from inside the fruit. I picked one up and squeezed it. It was red.

5

Proust says memory is steeping bits of cake in tea.

At age 13 steep was a hair-pin turn of gravel and dirt, a motorcycle skittering away from me to the cliff's edge. What can we do but let it slide away? At age 5 there was a kind of depth to running my motorcycle into the trampoline (a reminiscent bump). A cracked helmet and a shattered bucket filled with a forgotten sod-brew. Flash-back: I woke on the couch, forehead damp and seeping. My father, walking away, in search of a clean washcloth.

To the Ghost of Ginsberg

Don't warn me about the blizzard, all winter I walked through Akron, five months of snow, wind chill, and seeping blisters.

Don't tell me to get the lump checked out, it shrunk, doesn't hurt anymore, or I've learned to ignore it. Let's find a name for it in a book of astrological signs.

And don't ask me about my blond-haired girl, with your eye-twinkling, crotch-ward look. I love you and all your poetic excesses, but I am no cocksman.

Tell me again about the time we drove to Berkley. The two of us sleeping in my car, my ear resting against your worn pages. It was there I asked if Jewish angels play harps.

Good God, where have you been? My Johnathan, my how our souls were once knit. Go ahead, laugh at my poetic waxing. Knock me down a peg. Was I weft or warp? What color was the yarn?

You want the yarn to be red, I can tell. "Red as borscht" you'll say. "Red as crushed beets". YES! What a fine romp we'll have. Are those clouds really Whitman's beard? Heaven cannot make us so self-conscious tonight. There is no moon to haunt us.

Aphorisms on the Pen

1. Cheap pens are tragic, easily misplaced, forgettable. Buy a ten-dollar pen shaped like a woman. Engrave your initials in her.
2. Make invisible ink with lemons or urine.
3. Pens do contain hearts, and they can be broken. He wrote a poem called “The Book of Numbers” and proceeded to copy the phone book. All the while thinking to himself, “Damn that’s avant-garde!”
4. Lick the point.
5. When the clip breaks, the life of a pen is cut short.
6. Tighten your grip. Pens gripped well grunt like Atlas.
7. Angels pluck their feathers to record our sins.
8. Consider other flowers. That vernal day God held a dandelion, squeezed sticky, yellow juice from the stem and wrote the Bible on His forearm.
9. Take away the spring from a spring-loaded pen. Remove its armor. Naked, aware of its mortality, what will it produce in its final hours?
10. Write a will for your pens. You could not leave your body to science, so I buried you in the couch.
11. Words graven with an iron pen in the rock. Keep hidden desires in the pages of a hymnal.
12. Pray to see pens in paradise filled with white ink.

The Limits of Charity

Don't click your tongue at me, pretending
To manage your autism.
I don't like the look of the self-inflicted,
bread-plate-sized bruise on your temple,
but what can I do now?
I'm jealous of your only word: "Mommy."
Tie your own shoes for a change,
I should ask your mother to buy you Velcro.
I'll tell you a secret you will not remember:
when you want to leave
I turn on The Care-Bears,
lay you on the couch,
put your feet on my lap and take the laces in my hand
but never actually do anything until it's time to go.
We've played this game for over an hour now.
I can't, however, make you sit at the table or
eat your chicken nuggets.
I can make you hit me until my own shoulder is blue.
I can't explain how tired I am.
Kiss me on the cheek,
Put your fingers in my mouth,
I don't care where your hands have been.