

The Means by Which a Spirit, Too, Matures

Under a blue sky with white clouds like dunes in the delta, the single branch outstretched sways - dangling, dangling in that sea of shade harbored by the forest canopy as though, with a light hand, pressing close a soft head - and I saw, in just the same image, within: how a prepubescent boy in sleep hangs his arm over the side of his bed, so that the fingers on his hand are grazed by the spirit that wells up within him, rises within him, and then pours out in a fountain of dream - those dozing thoughts of mother, of father; those thoughts of bright blue love not yet become complete and noir; those new thoughts of the future and the past, which have only just recently been introduced and established in him - these thoughts come rushing in the plane of his projecting dreams like a school of fish: they rise up to where he floats on his bed like a cloud, and, with their fins, graze the skin on his hand, or glide past his palm in a pulse; their sudden jetstreams shake him like an aquatic heartbeat; he hears them, through the dimensions of imagination, leap and splash in the distance. He is the center for all that world's sound, which comes, eventually, to float down to him, to speak like a man come to entreat his king. As for the fish (much less the sounds), maybe one day, the boy will become mature enough to grasp one out of the waters, and then begin the harder, more serious work of staring face to face, deep in the eye and the mouth, and wonder what one does with such things that *looks* so differently than the way we gaze from the beginning-

Speak, before it is much too late

[(Eraserhead)]

(The body in the text)

She had glanced out the window,
then held it there, and ceased to move.
But her warmth filled the sparse room,
poured into my eyes;
crossroads, right-angle
of our corner of gazes;
the bold
ring -
her iris
like coffee
spirals; but tributaries
splinter off and flow; and her *vision*,
like a condensed breath in winter,
diverted, and, obliquely, approaches me; she has decided
to pass through the severe continent of the unlit room;
she first dove into the dark border of Her still averted face,
sprinting across the long black field of shadow,
The cheekbones like a white mountain behind her,
lending the gaze of fate one meteoric eye - it threatens to tear out of the fabric of space and
fall to the earth, consuming everything like a tempest come from the moon; still - together, in a realm of
self-same inky-ness, her Look's silhouette traverses the wavy borders, no different than those old Bedouins
tip-toeing on the serpentine trails that link the drowsy heads of the Arabian dunes; altogether, heralding,
these travelers take shape in the presence of Titans, and remain brilliant, like the winding of an ember
through the untouched forest soon to be consumed. No matter the immensity of the mountain behind her:
her form is the undeniable center, like God gathering the world around him like a coat, or Christ walking
upon the rough Galilee, or Zeus become lightning bolt, clearing away the whole darkness of the valley in a
flash, a fist plunged furiously into a body of water; she stands on the horizon like a torch in the writhing
and damp darkness of the forsaken temple. And she's calm; she's as calm and as fearful as Antigone come
to do

the impossible, and, bearing the same robe- she comes to die.
This is the aura which enframes her as she draws close, out of the
darkness, she emboldens. (she brings her own light)
before hesitantly stepping towards the rim of my onyx pupil,
and then, decisively (she clasps her hands, blows into them,
and holds her hair close to her neck; it's soft) descending,
(and below - the onyx encircles; it has become the sky,
in the way that God's mythical gaze beams with absence
in the glitter of the stars between the pewter clouds).
She walks to meet the makeshift shore within,
where the temple is fully flooded;
where my blood in its beating rushes forward,
threatening to steal yet more of His creation, but
clammers back, rustling like one tossing about in their bed sheets.
She's there, in my neck- to the wave in its long halls; she stoops to it;
and, uneasily, in the hand that brings it to her mouth - she dissolves.
And as a fish propels through a stream, she had become light in the murk.
She had become: keen levitation above the coral steps of the swallowed temple,

first with toes, as though unsure, as though touching upon steps above steps, as though
 the visible were illusion and the invisible truth - and then the heel. It is thus that the scarlet
 serpent, by command of Quetzalcoatl, flies, freed from the prison of flesh, and ambulates to the
 ground
 on the days of sacrifice. This is how it moved for the Aztecs. And, just the same, that now-
 nameless
 Spectator, he laughs and cheers in the salt-orange light that bleeds in from the window. This light
 rests
 upon her, she whose divided Glance scours within me - and ignites her eyes within her head,
 like the sentry's warning signal, the cry of flame snuffed out, and a muffled sentinel
 seized in the dark by the throat, and stabbed in the hand. She knows - the Look, it has
 - *read the walls within me*; and now, she, my Love, she knows: She knows how within me,
 there are beasts of beauty; How, dear lord, Beauty stalks in circles!
 in wound-up heads, turning and twisting and tumbling in thoughts,
 abundantly thrashing,
 like a man thrown in the open water,
 abandoned by the ship
 swarmed,
 berated,
 barraged
 by frenzied schools of grey fish, a broken light,
 a clicking reflection, striving to breathe amidst
 a whole suffocating gallery! Standing over him, imposing over him,
 over and over
 all these questions in sudden trial,
 questions which too stand over him! -
 like a giant pressing his nose against his - questions,
 questions only satisfied with silvery yeses and nos, and thoughts of kisses,
 and tense embraces. He thrashes, and yells, is enough ever not enough!
 Now your eyes must burn to blindness!
 Now you know the truth!

- No, she doesn't. She only suspects.
- But she suspects with almost black certainty.
- She does not move from facing the window.
- She does not bat an eye.
- She is waiting.
- - - - - -

But of course, it is clear to me, the message.
 Even from the side, I know what her gaze means.
 She knows the truth, I know what I must do.
 But do I? Now, yes. No more. I know. I have seen.
 I have recognized. My eyes, my eyes were too close.
 But no longer. There is no use resisting. No more lies.
 But - *that is not all* - I have to say - that's why
 she does not cease to look. I have to say -
 - despite whatever *was* the past fervor of my feelings,
 whatever past sincerity...
 - the obsidian shines in the dark recess
 of my palm; it burns - This sort of thing that I'm thinking about - I must
admit -

when the wet heart beats into the beyond (and the untethered body, it
spills -

down the steps,
audibly, wild -
into a fate, with only a push
as light as a glance)
this remorse you have:
it will change everything.
It could terribly upset someone,
even a god
who currently laughs.

(offspring)

("But how else are we to ever move on? We need the truth. It must be said, in order for it to be *heard - for itself!* Those who are dishonest are doomed to their original circles. They never go up, nor below. You'd doom us to this mundane hell. And for what? There can be no love where there is no transformation. And transformation is impossible without honesty. What is love without honesty? Well, you'd be surprised. How many sham romances persist far beyond their real years? Nothing depends more on honesty than love, for love can, more than anything, lie to itself, and subsist on those lies, as long as the lies produce nothing of real consequence to disturb the charade. Nothing more than love can so easily subsist on *mediocre* nourishment; in fact, everything else at least takes a stand, and admits either good or bad nourishment; never anything bland. No, the reality is that only Love does not require honesty to begin, or even to last. Love, perhaps because it, more than anything, so desperately hinges on Good and Evil, that it can be satisfied with an ongoing suspension of the question, a tacit rejection of both. This then, is love's great peculiarity, its unique taste of sin. More than anything, love requires honesty to become pure, and, in that, requires you know what honesty is, which is why it will eagerly beguile you when you so obviously are not. Only honesty gives love access to substance, and, by that, the power to do its real work, the power to brand. The honest lovers are branded. And Love, let me be honest, it seems you fear the burn. And with that, you're a damn fool.")

Boyhood

She's in the midst of laughter,
her laughter; she's laughing.
Though I know her, and I see her gaze;
it vaults far off in the distance left of us, to the horizon -
which incessantly peers at her from every crevice,
every possibility of a door, seeking
to diminish us in the massiveness of fate and limit.
I know what is on our minds, -
the train is impatient, and has no issue letting us know
the dimensions of his restlessness, his angry stamps and grunts.
It's almost time, almost -
but I don't know where this laughter came from,
from where in her she managed to dig it up;
it was so unheard of, so unexpected, so upsetting,
it upset everyone, even Time, who had to cease his tireless weaving,
brushing the sweat from his forehead with his arm
as he angled around to see - even God and the angels were disturbed,
rudely awoken, stare down this audacious girl -
(Humorously, it was the first time God had noticed that,
in fact, there is a creation other than his, that exists alongside man
is woman; he does not remember her, nor does he recognize
the white in her hands and the pale red of her breath -
a slender bone come to life, come to transformation -
a betterment? An advancement? An evolution?
Oh, none of us could admit it initially, but it was undeniable.
I think all of us, we spectators, in seeing her -
the Gods, the earth, the hills, the wind, the brush, the
flowers, the flies, the birds, the prairie dogs, the passersby,
his coatjacket, his pocket book, even the furiously stubborn bull -
We all wanted to be more. I wanted to be more,
Such did her laughter - a virulent laughter -
Steadily walked by each of us and touched
our lips with her fingers; so her laughter inspired us to critical feelings.

But it wasn't until later that I recognized
the irony of my weakness, long after she departed;
long after I was capable of saying what I should have said.
I was much more eager to make her a symbol of hope,
the mother's dress at which my childish love tugged,
without any awareness, without any attention paid
to she who nourished me - never did I turn to look her in the eye,
so enamored was I with my fear;
because if I did, I would have noticed,
like sapphires in the jewel box of laughter,
on the cusp of streaming, her eyes.)

Lee

You stand towards me to begin the thought before the thought, the shock:

Bushy haired, too natural for your polyester fleece sweater,

lamp light illuminated, mousy, pointed, direct;

your brown eyes are like gunshots in the air, taunting;

but it's the smirk that cut me so cleanly in half.

And what's better? In those seconds after,

where I'm falling to the earth, fatally wounded, clutching my gut -

you turn to leave, disappear! Ha -

and re-emerge around the bookcase, in full motion, handing out drinks -

making conversation, always on the move, on your toes:

your hair is an Anima of brown

in a sea of drab chestnut coffee tables and mahogany bookcases -

That was the beginning. I knew almost immediately that I was madly in love with you.

Though, would you believe it, - I never again found you in that a pose, that first expression that

caught my eye, as statuesque, as solid and exact, as just a few seconds ago.

You looked me in the eyes - seemingly, for no reason.

(though, after the fact, it retroactively produced *all the reasons*)

Yes... never again - in such a poise of concentrated stillness, suspended, breathless, but not at all

overwhelmed, no, almost devastatingly cool -

Such was the diversity of your life - I've noticed it's just the way of your being.

You try out so many poses all the time, over and over, spontaneously, like the bubbles in a fountain,

like girls playing with garments at the department store.

It was a part of your soul; unlike many people, you were comfortable in your body and your

appearance, to the point that you made a constant demand of it; you were always teasing out its

possibilities, always pressing it out of habits, never letting it become complacent or routine. Routine

was a sort of enemy, for you.

So, given that, I understand why you never wanted to repeat a pose, for that would be, in a sense, the potential for a new pose wasted.

(though I also have no doubt that you weren't the type that was into keeping strict records; you did it unconsciously; it was that beauty that you made manifest,

((and yet I think never saw with your own eyes. It's nearly impossible to see the light we provide,

given that it's so starkly different from the usual kind. We need the right kind of people, people who

can, by their own nature, become our mirrors. Not everyone has the eyes for you, Lee, for you to see

what you, by every right, should see.))

Well, at the very least, *I know*, and it's a marvelous thing to discover.

Even your smiles evolve.

Sometimes to great sighs, sometimes to a slight frown, or an upset quiver in the bottom lip, like a

restless leg; sometimes it would evolve to a greater smile, like a trick, or a warning, or a perhaps even

a proper introduction. I was always on guard.)

Though, I do wonder if it's exhausting.

And, if I'm being honest, it does sadden me that, even though I eventually do the dumb and gutsy thing to tell you

how I feel - oh, god, how I feel, don't get me started -

Nevertheless, I mean to say that it saddens me greatly that I'll never see you like this again.

It often takes you some time to make it back to a genre of gestures, much less a similarity.

What is it they say, that lightning never strikes the same place twice?

Well, I certainly never saw you express something as pointedly vivacious. Everything after was tender in how it consumed both me and your surroundings, like a girl eating a large fruit on a sunny day.

(Or, after, the recollection, - after you regained your senses and resumed engaging with the party, you proceeded onwards, as though personally unfreezing time, tossing the moment aside and returning to being aflame, illuminating all the titles on the books in the den as you glide, one white ankle in front of the other)

Oh, but this was a rarity! - and I got to see it. Shouldn't that be splendid enough?

Sometimes, I wonder if it was a trap really, a secret door to the squirming vitality at the center of everyday life; that it was a mistake attributing such qualities and insights to you, and that you weren't merely the window into such feelings that reside in everything - it was true that, after this encounter, the feelings I felt for you radiated into everything. I saw the paths you traversed like trails of light; everything you touched was branded with your warmth; I would pick them up and would find myself absorbed with trying to see what in each book or object spoke to you, especially the things that, without your suggestion, would have never caught my eye. Was it too much to say that you were the cause of these illuminations? I certainly saw the world a bit more enchanted after our time together, there is no doubt in that, and it's the one thing that makes me worry that I made you into some kind of golden calf.

(Deep down, I know, though - I'm not a very mystical type. I know whatever pleasure I find in these mundane things, long after our time - is your presence, and the memory of us together - it still flows to me from the memory pressed into these things, from them being caught up in the crossfire of our romance - yes, for instance, I still treasure and own with great pleasure that copy of E. E. Cummings. But it would be a lie to say that I ever would have noticed the beauty that book possessed if it weren't my means of transcribing you - I still pick it up, here and there, when I'm in a reminiscent mood. This book does all the work, really, without even having to be read - in my hands, it already engages me, almost with a commanding finger; the book warmly caresses me: the spine produces subtle waves of time that brush my palms; and the words brush with subtle waves of time my heart, like a great citadel braving the persistent flow of the tide -

And my ears? Without you as the darling pin holding it all together by an ornery corner - without you, Lee - my ears wouldn't naturally begin to hear, as though already the needle were on the record, and I just needed to recognize the sound - which, Lee, I wonder, do you think of, when you reflect back on us? Do you hear the Bach record I purchased for you? The one that skipped when we first kissed, and we bumped into the poor thing? That scratch has its very own scar in my psyche, you know. Or do you hear that great, fun classic by Sammy Cahn: "*I've heard that song before*," which we used to play at the family dinner parties? I don't think I ever had the chance to tell you, but that's what played when you first looked at me in that way - or do you hear the opening and concluding piano notes to "*Bewitched*," played by Billy Snyder? - -)

(Lee, is it silly to wonder whether the things I've touched continue to touch you in the way the things you've touched continue to, relentlessly, touch me? Do you still put up with that labor of having someone in your heart, which really is such an exhausting bother - but you never stop, because - well, how could we say that we really loved them, if we don't do them the highest honor of always - sometimes, painstakingly - remembering them? Even when it would be so much *easier* to do otherwise...)

But, that said, without it, I never would have been able to tune in to your subtle genius - if not for this spontaneous respite, this break of the tempo - the music had, for a eternal moment, vanished. And with it, all sound, all commotion:

Out of nowhere, this gush of exhaustion: out of no suddenly opened window, no languid girl's cry of the street intruding in and imposing itself on the party and its members - no, not at all; rather: just within, just you: a sudden need from your spirit, mewing, you: stretching into a pensive face,

- your cheek pressed up against the wood post of an entryway - and as though you lent the material of your face for a house, and, within that house, a window, and - within that window - a spirit, stretching, now woken for the time being, stirring steadily, cracking its back, thinking of something warm, smiling from its will - all the way to your lips, an expression like stained glass, and, within it, a tilted rose of quartz, almost done blooming.

And then the spirit had checked out for the night, and went back to sleep, head on the pillow. As for you: smile retrieved, filed away, and off you were, around the bookcase, taking drinks, exchanging words, flying, so on, so on.

That was that. Nothing more than a glimpse.

Normally, your life wouldn't stand for such pontificating; you weren't interested in overcoming others, or in their perceptions - though it did so, effortlessly...

(But then again, *you* looked *me* in the eye! and something spoke? Why did you come this way? I was only standing by my lonesome, nursing a drink, gazing at my hands, thinking of how slow time can be while the years speed by - thinking of the wrinkles, how my hands are now starting to resemble my long deceased grandfather's - which, would you believe it, was something of a consolation, as much as it was the obvious terror. When you've come to live a few decades, you can go some time without thinking of some people.)

(As easily as the frantic mother with her groceries tumbling, unstoppable for all the pedestrians on the street, a kind, unkempt unstoppable -)

(And oblivious. You took no notice to all those you furiously brushed by in your mission, and left behind in dazed twirls.)

(Or am I mistaken? If so, how my heart hurts so terribly over a miscommunication. What a way to come to terms with my feelings, so emasculating. Was it *me* who started all of this, who dragged you into my affairs - on a - *dream*?)

I think, maybe, that your life - maybe! sometimes - contrary to what you think when self-reflecting - Your life-force was too wise to get caught up in exceeding the achievements of fools.

But, then, well - after so long, *it knew a good adversary when it saw one* -

That is to say: a good fool, perhaps capable of interfering with your genius for once, maybe even to the point of maximizing your skill -

- how else must it have looked for a man married to your sister to have confessed his love to you? Or, before that, to send you on your way to his favorite poem, a poem that clearly was only his favorite because of you - what undeniable proof, even if it's the proof of how an idiot sincerely, (almost) innocently feels -

And, in a cheerful insanity, an infinite jest, perhaps without yet feeling the gravity resultant of such fun,

You took me on! Despite *you*, despite *him*, and despite *her*; despite our *common sense* - for life's better, rarer, ultramarine reasons. What those reasons were, I know less for me, but I know why for you.

Your life, It always sought - to overcome itself.

And, as such, you never stopped moving;

Just as you eventually moved on from me when it was clear I couldn't move on from my wife.

You had no time for idling and wavering, which is characteristic for fools, including me.

But I was glad to see it: that you never stopped moving! More thankful than anything.
It made me happy, even if I was to suffer at its hands - that I knew something about you, truthfully.
You never stopped moving.
Not once;
Not in my arms - (I remember, my hand on your white hips, and instead of resisting their hold, you,
simply, made them sway with you)
Not when you slept - (like the undying ring of one silver chime)

Even long after, in my head, like a comet, hurtling in that emotional space,
speeding right by all those yelping stars, those thoughts like planets, green and glowing.
You never stopped moving.
You always had something worth saying,
Whether talking or not.
Usually not.

Ah, when you found a good book! Nothing like when you found a good book -
God! like gunfights, like Guernica, those eyes, bolting -

Not to mention: when the flower of your gaze, having found its music, its prey of art, its little poem
in the book around which to curl your jean and pink skin and sweater-pant petals around,
snug, rooted, but exposed and spread, on the unkempt bed,
in the grey light of the afternoon,
all your thoughts, your dreams, like motes in the pale sunbeams, growing,
unfurling, vine after vine on the wall -
while you, at the center, played with the language:
You were reading made transparent.
Your hands danced on the words.
You could read, like an augur reading the skies -
you could read the poem in the motion of your eyes.

And, when you were asleep? Don't get me started.
You taught me the best ideas while you were asleep.