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Gone

by CHARLES L. MEE

SOPHOCLES

In childhood, in our father's house,
we live the happiest life, I think, of all mankind.
But when we have understanding
and have come to youthful vigor,
we are pushed out.
And this,
we must approve
and consider to be happiness.

No man was ever born
but he must suffer.
He buries his children and gets others in their place;
then dies himself.
And yet men bear it hard,
that only give dust to dust!
Life is a harvest that man must reap like ears of corn;
one grows, another falls.
Why should we moan at this,
the path of Nature that we must tread?

Heaven and earth were once a single form;
but when they were separated from each other into two,
they bore and delivered into the light all things:
trees, winged creatures,
beasts reared by the briny sea--

and the human race.

[A woman in a red silk dress enters,
stands a moment
and then begins to dance.]

Let any man get hold of as much pleasure as he can
as he lives his daily life;
the future will always be unknown.

The best thing is a life free from sickness,
the power each day
to take hold of what one desires.

The time of life is short,
and once a person is hidden beneath the earth
he lies there for all time.

A man is nothing but breath and shadow.

Time makes all things dark
and brings them to oblivion.

A cup without a bottom is not put on the table.

First you will see a crop in flower,
all white;
then a round mulberry
that has turned red;
lastly
old age
of Egyptian blackness
takes over.

[Music.

[A man enters
and dances with the woman.]

PROUST

For a long time

I used to go to bed early.

Sometimes, when I had put out my candle,

my eyes would close so quickly

that I had not even time to say "I'm going to sleep."

And half an hour later

the thought that it was time to go to sleep would awaken me;

I would try to put away the book which,

I imagined,

was still in my hands,

and to blow out the light;

I had been thinking all the time, while I was asleep,

of what I had just been reading,

but my thoughts had run into a channel of their own,

until I myself seemed actually to have become

the subject of my book:

a church,

a quartet,

the rivalry between François I and Charles V.

This impression would persist

for some moments after I was awake;

it did not disturb my mind,

but it lay like scales upon my eyes

and prevented them from registering the fact

that the candle was no longer burning.

Then it would begin to seem unintelligible,

as the thoughts of a former existence

must be to a reincarnate spirit;

the subject of my book

would separate itself from me,

leaving me free to choose whether I would form part of it or no;

and at the same time
my sight would return
and I would be astonished to find myself in a state of darkness,

pleasant and restful enough for the eyes,
and even more, perhaps, for my mind,
to which it appeared incomprehensible,
without a cause,
a matter dark indeed.

I would ask myself what o'clock it could be;
I could hear the whistling of trains,
which, now nearer and now farther off,
punctuating the distance like the note of a bird in a forest,
shewed me in perspective the deserted countryside
through which a traveller would be hurrying
towards the nearest station:
the path that he followed being fixed for ever in his memory
by the general excitement due to being in a strange place,
to doing unusual things,

to the last words of conversation,

to farewells exchanged

beneath an unfamiliar lamp which echoed still in his ears
amid the silence of the night;

and to the delightful prospect of being once again at home.

I would lay my cheeks gently
against the comfortable cheeks of my pillow,
as plump and blooming as the cheeks of babyhood.

Or I would strike a match to look at my watch.

Nearly midnight.

The hour when an invalid,
who has been obliged to start on a journey
and to sleep in a strange hotel,
awakens in a moment of illness
and sees with glad relief a streak of daylight
shewing under his bedroom door.
Oh, joy of joys! it is morning.

The servants will be about in a minute:
he can ring,
and some one will come to look after him.
The thought of being made comfortable gives him strength
to endure his pain.

He is certain he heard footsteps:
they come nearer, and then die away.

The ray of light beneath his door is extinguished.

It is midnight;

some one has turned out the gas;

the last servant has gone to bed,

and he must lie all night in agony
with no one to bring him any help.

BLOG

So I haven't updated this blog in forever.

So Yeah.

I live in NY now.

My apartment is pretty sweet.

We're right behind lincoln center,

and it sounds dumb but I feel rejuvenated
everytime I walk through it.

I get the feeling like "this is why i'm here."

I wish I knew more people here.

I kinda feel like this nobody in a sea of nobodies,

which has never really happened to me before.
It'll change soon. I hope.
SO life is ok.
It's a bit scary, but life is ok.
Stuff is a happenin.
Which is a good thing. I hope!
I had this WEIRD ASS nightmare last night.
I was in a parking lot
coming out of an event or a concert of some sort
and these evil cat people came in a black van
and got out and reeked havoc on the place
blowing things up and killing people with their claws
and i got away in a backseat of someone's car,
and for some reason I was taken to my friend Kim's house,
but it wasn't where Kim really lives,
it was my house,
but Kim lived there in my dream,
and i was telling her about the killer cat people
and she thought i was crazy,
and then i was in the backyard
and i saw the black van pull up front
and these 20 somethings got out,
but i realized that they were actually
the cat people disguised to not look catish
and be completely human,
and i tried to make myself not seen
and walked to the neighbors backyard
and somehow i wound up hiding in their bathroom
only for the door to be busted in by the cat people
and my friend Kim,
who I was alerted to was a cat person as well.
And then I woke up
and I thought:
What does this all mean?

NIKOS

I thought,
I've always liked you, Lydia
seeing you with your sisters

sometimes in the summers
when our families would get together at the beach.
I thought you were fun, and funny
and really good at volleyball

LYDIA
Volleyball?

NIKOS
which I thought showed you have a
well,
a natural grace
and beauty
and a lot of energy.

LYDIA
Oh.

NIKOS
And it's not that I thought I fell in love with you at the time
or that I've been like a stalker or something in the background
all these years.

LYDIA
No, I never...

NIKOS
But really, over the years,
I've thought back from time to time
how good it felt just to be around you.

LYDIA
Oh.

NIKOS
And so I thought: well, maybe this is an okay way
to have a marriage

LYDIA

A marriage.

NIKOS

to start out
not in a romantic way, but
as a friendship

LYDIA

Oh.

NIKOS

because I admire you

and I thought perhaps this might grow
into something deeper
and longer lasting

LYDIA

Oh.

NIKOS

but maybe this isn't quite the thing you want
and really I don't want to force myself on you
you should be free to choose
I mean: obviously.

LYDIA

Thank you.

NIKOS

Although I think I should say
what began as friendship for me
and a sort of distant, even inattentive regard
has grown into a passion already

LYDIA

A passion.

NIKOS

I don't know how
or where it came from, or when
but somehow the more I felt this admiration
and, well, pleasure in you

LYDIA

Pleasure.

NIKOS

seeing you become the person that you are
I think a thoughtful person and smart
and it seems to me funny and warm

LYDIA

Funny.

NIKOS

and passionate, I mean about the things
I heard you talk about in school
a movie or playing the piano
I saw you one night at a cafe by the harbor
drinking almond nectar
and I saw that happiness made you raucous.
And I myself don't want to have a relationship
that's cool or distant
I want a love really that's all-consuming
that consumes my whole life

LYDIA

Your whole life.

NIKOS

and the longer the sense of you has lived with me
the more it has grown into a longing for you
so I wish you'd consider
maybe not marriage
because it's true you hardly know me
but a kind of courtship

LYDIA

A courtship.

NIKOS

or, maybe you'd just I don't know
go sailing with me or see a movie

LYDIA

Gee, Nikos,
you seem to talk a lot.

NIKOS

I talk too much.
I'm sorry.

LYDIA

Sometimes it seems to me
men get all caught up
in what they're doing
and they forget to take a moment
and look around
and see what effect they're having
on other people.

NIKOS

That's true.

LYDIA

They get on a roll.

NIKOS

I do that sometimes.
I wish I didn't.
But I get started on a sentence,
and that leads to another sentence,
and then, the first thing I know,
I'm just trying to work it through,
the logic of it,
follow it through to the end

because I think,
if I stop,
or if I don't get through to the end
before someone interrupts me
they won't understand what I'm saying
and what I'm saying isn't necessarily wrong-
it might be, but not necessarily,
and if it is, I'll be glad to be corrected,
or change my mind-
but if I get stopped along the way
I get confused
I don't remember where I was
or how to get back to the end of what I was saying.

LYDIA
I understand.

NIKOS
And I think sometimes I scare people
because of it
they think I'm so, like determined
just barging ahead-
not really a sensitive person,
whereas, in truth,
I am.

LYDIA
I know.

I'm getting a cup of coffee, Nikos.

NIKOS
Now?

[she puts a hand reassuringly on his arm--
she's genuinely friendly and warm towards him]

LYDIA
I'll be right back.

[he is left alone]

ODETTA SINGS

Another man done gone (another man done gone)
Another man done gone another man done gone another man done gone
Another man done gone (another man done gone
Another man done gone another man done gone)
He had a long chain on (he had a long chain on
He had a long chain on he had a long chain on)
They hung him in a tree they hung him in a tree
They let his children see they let his children see
(When he was hangin' dead) when he was hangin' dead
The captain turn his head the captain turn his head
He's from the county farm (he's from the county farm
He's from the county farm he's from the county farm)
I didn't know his name (I didn't know his name
I didn't know his name I didn't know his name)
Another man done gone another man done gone another man done gone
Another man done gone (another man done gone
Another man done gone another man done gone)
Another man done gone another man done gone another man done gone

BLOG

I have not taken a single step toward losing weight yet. I really, really need to. I am desperate. I have the most disgusting pair of sneakers and no real gym clothes, so I just look like this ragamuffin slob. I at least need some proper footwear. I will make the time to do just that this weekend.

I doubt a single soul has ever seen this website, but if so, and you happen to have any information on the University of Phoenix online, can you please email me and tell me about it? I am seriously considering it because I don't think I can actually attend classes and I'd get more out of it than in a classroom setting. Thanks. I just want to do this before I have a baby. Or babies.

Which reminds me, my sister said the strangest thing to me the other day on the phone. She said, "I'm surprised you haven't accidentally gotten pregnant yet." What is that all about?!? She's had my entire childhood to torment me and set my fragile emotions in a tailspin. She was a very cruel sister. She doesn't care if she draws blood.

So here's my to do list:

- Lose lots of weight, and really tone up my middle, thighs and arms.
- Buy a nice outfit. I consistently look disgusting because I don't like anything I own.
- Go back to school.

Because I realize now: there's not much time.

PROUST

I would fall asleep,
and often I would be awake again for short snatches only,
just long enough to hear the regular creaking of the wainscot,
or to open my eyes to settle the shifting
kaleidoscope of the darkness,

to savour, in an instantaneous flash of perception,
the sleep which lay heavy upon the furniture, the room,
the whole surroundings
of which I formed but an insignificant part
and whose unconsciousness I should very soon return to share.

Or, perhaps,
while I was asleep I had returned without the least effort
to an earlier stage in my life,
now for ever outgrown;
and had come under the thrall of one of my childish terrors,
such as that old terror of my great-uncle's pulling my curls,
which was effectually dispelled on the day-
the dawn of a new era to me-
on which they were finally cropped from my head.

I had forgotten that event during my sleep;
I remembered it again immediately I had succeeded
in making myself wake up to escape my great-uncle's fingers;

still, as a measure of precaution,
I would bury the whole of my head in the pillow
before returning to the world of dreams.

WILSON

How could you just suddenly: disappear?

SUSAN

I didn't.

WILSON

I thought you did.

And I thought you loved me.

SUSAN

Well, I do love you.

WILSON

Yes, you love me,

but you don't love me in that way.

SUSAN

I never pretended to love you in that way.

WILSON

I can't go on in life

without being loved in that way.

SUSAN

A lot of people are never loved in that way.

WILSON

How can you tell

if you are really alive

if you're never loved in that way?

SUSAN

What do you mean: in that way?

WILSON

Unless I thought you were crazy for me

so crazy for me you couldn't stand it

you just had to kiss me

you just had to knock me down and kiss me
because you couldn't stand it
that you laughed at my jokes
or thought I was so cool
or like said really intelligent things that made you think
maybe not all of those things
but even just any one of them
just one of them

[Silence.]

You see what I mean, not even one.

SUSAN
I'm sorry.

WILSON
Why did you live with me, then?

SUSAN
I thought I loved you
but I guess I didn't know what love was.
I liked you in a way
not much
but in some ways
or at least in the ways I thought guys could be likeable
and the rest of it I thought maybe that's just
how guys are
and as time went on maybe it wouldn't matter so much
but then I find it does matter
I can't help myself
some stuff you do
I just can't get over it
and the stuff I liked:
that I thought you were a responsible person
and mature
solid and dependable
all those turned out not to be true at all
so what am I left with?

WILSON

It's not your fault.

SUSAN

No, it's not.

WILSON

Or maybe it is

that you weren't thinking very clearly

or being very focussed when you made your choice

and a lot of people were depending on that choice being really clear

or at least I was

SUSAN

I know.

I'm sorry.

WILSON

Being sorry doesn't cut it somehow.

I know people always say they're sorry

and probably they are

and I don't think it means nothing

I'm sure it means something

and it's essential for people to feel it

and to say it

in order for life to go on at all

and yet

the truth is

it doesn't cut it.

I'm sorry: but it doesn't.

SUSAN

I'm sorry.

WILSON

Is that somehow now

supposed to cut it?

PROUST

One day in winter, as I came home,
my mother,
seeing that I was cold,
offered me some tea,

a thing I did not ordinarily take.

I declined at first, and then, for no particular reason,
changed my mind.

She sent out for one of those short, plump little cakes called
'petites madeleines,'
which look as though they had been moulded
in the fluted scallop of a pilgrim's shell.

And soon,

mechanically,

weary after a dull day with the prospect of a depressing morrow,

I raised to my lips a spoonful of the tea
in which I had soaked a morsel of the cake.

No sooner had the warm liquid,
and the crumbs with it,
touched my palate
than a shudder ran through my whole body,

and I stopped,
intent upon the extraordinary changes that were taking place.

An exquisite pleasure had invaded my senses,
but individual,

detached,

with no suggestion of its origin.
And at once
the vicissitudes of life had become indifferent to me,
its disasters innocuous,
its brevity illusory-
this new sensation having had on me
the effect which love has
of filling me with a precious essence;

or rather this essence was not in me,
it was myself.

I had ceased now to feel mediocre,
accidental, mortal.

Whence could it have come to me,
this all-powerful joy?

I was conscious that it was connected with the taste of tea and cake, but that it
infinitely transcended those savours,
could not, indeed, be of the same nature as theirs.

Whence did it come?
What did it signify?
How could I seize upon and define it?

I drink a second mouthful,
in which I find nothing more than in the first,
a third, which gives me rather less than the second.

It is time to stop;

the potion is losing its magic.

It is plain that the object of my quest,
the truth,
lies not in the cup but in myself.

The tea has called up in me, but does not itself understand,
and can only repeat indefinitely with a gradual loss of strength,
the same testimony;
which I, too, cannot interpret,
though I hope at least to be able to call upon the tea for it again
and to find it there presently,
intact and at my disposal,
for my final enlightenment.

I put down my cup and examine my own mind.

It is for it to discover the truth.
But how?

What an abyss of uncertainty
whenever the mind feels that some part of it
has strayed beyond its own borders;
when it, the seeker, is at once the dark region
through which it must go seeking,
where all its equipment will avail it nothing.

Seek?
More than that: create.

It is face to face with something which does not so far exist,
to which it alone can give reality and substance,
which it alone can bring into the light of day.

And I begin again to ask myself what it could have been,
this unremembered state which brought with it
no logical proof of its existence,
but only the sense that it was a happy,
that it was a real state
in whose presence other states of consciousness melted
and vanished.

I decide to attempt to make it reappear.

I retrace my thoughts to the moment
at which I drank the first spoonful of tea.
I find again the same state,
illumined by no fresh light.
I compel my mind to make one further effort,
to follow and recapture once again the fleeting sensation.
And that nothing may interrupt it in its course
I shut out every obstacle, every extraneous idea,
I stop my ears and inhibit all attention
to the sounds which come from the next room.

And then,
feeling that my mind is growing fatigued
without having any success to report,
I compel it for a change to enjoy that distraction
which I have just denied it,
to think of other things,
to rest and refresh itself before the supreme attempt.

And then for the second time
I clear an empty space in front of it.
I place in position before my mind's eye
the still recent taste of that first mouthful,
and I feel something start within me,
something that leaves its resting-place and attempts to rise, something that has
been embedded like an anchor at a great depth;

I do not know yet what it is,
but I can feel it mounting slowly;

I can measure the resistance,
I can hear the echo of great spaces traversed.

Undoubtedly what is thus palpitating in the depths of my being
must be the image,
the visual memory which,
being linked to that taste,
has tried to follow it into my conscious mind.
But its struggles are too far off,

too much confused;
scarcely can I perceive the colourless reflection
in which are blended the uncapturable whirling medley
of radiant hues,
and I cannot distinguish its form,
cannot invite it,
as the one possible interpreter,
to translate to me the evidence of its contemporary,
its inseparable paramour,

the taste of cake soaked in tea;

cannot ask it to inform me what special circumstance is in question, of what period
in my past life.

Will it ultimately reach the clear surface of my consciousness,
this memory,
this old, dead moment
which the magnetism of an identical moment has travelled
so far to importune, to disturb,
to raise up out of the very depths of my being?
I cannot tell.

Now that I feel nothing, it has stopped,
has perhaps gone down again into its darkness,
from which who can say whether it will ever rise?

Ten times over I must essay the task,
must lean down over the abyss.
And each time the natural laziness which deters us
from every difficult enterprise,
every work of importance,
has urged me to leave the thing alone,
to drink my tea and to think merely of the worries of to-day
and of my hopes for to-morrow,
which let themselves be pondered over without effort
or distress of mind.

And suddenly the memory returns.
The taste was that of the little crumb of madeleine
which on Sunday mornings at Combray
(because on those mornings I did not go out before church-time), when I went to
say good day to her in her bedroom,
my aunt Léonie used to give me,
dipping it first in her own cup of real or of lime-flower tea.

The sight of the little madeleine had recalled nothing to my mind before I tasted it;
perhaps because I had so often seen such things in the interval, without tasting
them,
on the trays in pastry-cooks' windows,
that their image had dissociated itself from those Combray days
to take its place among others more recent;
perhaps because of those memories,
so long abandoned and put out of mind,
nothing now survived, everything was scattered;
the forms of things,
including that of the little scallop-shell of pastry,
so richly sensual under its severe, religious folds,
were either obliterated
or had been so long dormant as to have lost the power of expansion which would
have allowed them to resume their place
in my consciousness.

But when from a long-distant past nothing subsists,
after the people are dead,
after the things are broken and scattered,
still,
alone,
more fragile,
but with more vitality,
more unsubstantial,
more persistent,
more faithful,
the smell and taste of things remain poised a long time,

like souls,
ready to remind us,
waiting and hoping for their moment,
amid the ruins of all the rest;

and bear unfaltering,
in the tiny and almost impalpable drop of their essence,
the vast structure of recollection.

BUDDY JEWELL SINGS

I heard that warnin' whistle blowin'.
I knew that train was comin' fast.
The sound of the wheels was hypnotisin':
I could not move from it's path:
I just stood there, glued to the tracks.

It was a long time comin':
She was a heartbreak waitin' to happen,
An' I went right along.
It was a long time comin'.
Before I knew what hit me, she was gone:
She was so gone.

Those cold black eyes that burned right through me,
Could melt a heart of steel.
I just pulled her closer to me,
'Cause I loved the way it made me feel,
Underneath her wheels.

It was a long time comin':
She was a heartbreak waitin' to happen,
An' I went right along.
It was a long time comin'.
Before I knew what hit me, she was gone:
She was so gone.

It was a long time comin'.
Before I knew what hit me, she was gone:
Before I knew what hit me, she was gone:

She was so gone,
So gone.

So gone.
So gone.

PHILIP

I work all day, and get half-drunk at night.
Waking at four to soundless dark, I stare.
In time the curtain-edges will grow light.
Till then I see what's really always there:
Unresting death, a whole day nearer now,
Making all thought impossible but how
And where and when I shall myself die.
Arid interrogation: yet the dread
Of dying, and being dead,
Flashes afresh to hold and horrify.

The mind blanks at the glare. Not in remorse
-- The good not done, the love not given, time
Torn off unused -- nor wretchedly because
An only life can take so long to climb
Clear of its wrong beginnings, and may never;
But at the total emptiness for ever,
The sure extinction that we travel to
And shall be lost in always. Not to be here,
Not to be anywhere,
And soon; nothing more terrible, nothing more true.

This is a special way of being afraid
No trick dispels. Religion used to try,
That vast moth-eaten musical brocade
Created to pretend we never die,
And specious stuff that says No rational being
Can fear a thing it will not feel, not seeing
That this is what we fear -- no sight, no sound,
No touch or taste or smell, nothing to think with,
Nothing to love or link with,
The anaesthetic from which none come round.

And so it stays just on the edge of vision,
A small unfocused blur, a standing chill
That slows each impulse down to indecision.
Most things may never happen: this one will,
And realisation of it rages out
In furnace-fear when we are caught without
People or drink. Courage is no good:
It means not scaring others. Being brave
Lets no one off the grave.
Death is no different whined at than withstood.

Slowly light strengthens, and the room takes shape.
It stands plain as a wardrobe, what we know,
Have always known, know that we can't escape,
Yet can't accept. One side will have to go.
Meanwhile telephones crouch, getting ready to ring
In locked-up offices, and all the uncaring
Intricate rented world begins to rouse.
The sky is white as clay, with no sun.
Work has to be done.
Postmen like doctors go from house to house.

DAUDET

In front of the mirror
how thin I look!
What a funny little old man I have suddenly become.
I have leapt from forty-five to sixty-five.
Twenty years have dropped from my life.

The striving to walk straight,
the fear of being taken with one of those shooting pains
that glue me to the spot or wrench me and
make me lift my leg like a knife grinder.
The memory of the first visit to Doctor Guyon.
The examination
contraction of the bladder
a somewhat nervous prostate
in short, nothing.
And this nothing was everything

that was beginning: the Invasion.
Great furrows of flames cutting apart
and searing my carcass
the dream of the keel of a boat
so fine and so painful
burning in the eyes
horrible reverberating pain.

At first, oversensitiveness to noise:
shovel and tongs on the hearth
the pain caused by the ringing of bells,
the ticking of a watch like the web of a spider
whose work begins at four o'clock in the morning.
Excessive sensibility of the skin,
diminution of sleep,
and spitting of blood.

The first phase of the disease
as it feels me out and chooses its ground.
One moment the eyes like winged flies,
double vision,
then objects cut in two
the pages of a book
the letters of a word
half seen
cut off as with a pruning knife
cut crescent-shaped.
I catch the down strokes of the letters as they fly by.

I am sinking.
I am going down.
Struck below the water line.

Clever:
the way death gathers its harvests.
Whole generations do not fall at once,
that would be too sad
and too visible.
But bit by bit.

One day, one will go.
another day, another.
One must glance about oneself to notice the empty spaces,
the vast contemporary killing.

Abortive, and Stillborn...335
Aged...916
Apoplex, and sodainly...68
Blasted...4
Bleeding...3
Burnt, and Scalded...3
Cancer, Gangrene, and Fistula...26
Childbed...161
Cold, and Cough...41
Consumption, and Cough...2423
Convulsion...684
Cut of the Stone...2
Dropsy, and Tympany...185
Drowned...47
Executed...8
Fainted in Bath...1
Falling-Sickness...3
Flox, and small Pox...139
Found dead in the Streets...6
French-Pox...18
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BERNHARD

In the last months of his life
he was a shadow of his former self, as they say,
and the more spectral the shadow became,
the more everyone dissociated himself from it...
he often did not leave his apartment in the Stallburggasse
for days on end,
and we seldom arranged to meet.
From time to time,
without his suspecting it,
I saw him in the city center,
walking along laboriously,
yet trying hard to maintain his accustomed bearing,
by the walls of the houses in the Graben,
into the Kohlmarkt and up to St. Michael's church...
I did not dare go up and speak to him.
As I watched him, I suppressed my conscience
and refrained from approaching him,
because I was suddenly afraid.

We shun those who bear the mark of death...
Quite deliberately, I shunned my friend
in the last months of his life,
and for this I cannot forgive myself.
Seen from across the street
he was like someone to whom the world
had long since given notice to quit
but who was compelled to stay in it.
Dangling from his emaciated arms--
grotesque, grotesque--
were the shopping nets
in which he laboriously carried home his purchases
of fruit and vegetables...
Watching him I felt ashamed.
No one really wanted to have anything more to do with him,
for the person they occasionally saw in the city center,
carrying his shopping nets
or standing utterly exhausted by the wall of some building,
was no longer the man to whom they had been attracted
all those years.
His mouth hung open,
his hands trembled,
he would sit silently clutching his shopping bag.

GINSBERG

What thoughts I have of you tonight, Walt Whitman,
for I walked down the sidestreets under the trees
with a headache self-conscious looking at the full moon.
In my hungry fatigue, and shopping for images,
I went into the neon fruit supermarket, dreaming of
your enumerations!
What peaches and what penumbras!
Whole families shopping at night! Aisles full of husbands!
Wives in the avocados, babies in the tomatoes!
--and you, Garcia Lorca,
what were you doing down by the watermelons?

I saw you, Walt Whitman, childless, lonely old
grubber, poking among the meats in the refrigerator
and eyeing the grocery boys.
I heard you asking questions of each:
Who killed the pork chops?
What price bananas?
Are you my Angel?
I wandered in and out of the brilliant stacks of
cans following you, and followed in my imagination
by the store detective.
We strode down the open corridors together in
our solitary fancy tasting artichokes, possessing every
frozen delicacy, and never passing the cashier.

Where are we going, Walt Whitman?
The doors close in an hour.
Which way does your beard point tonight?
(I touch your book and dream of our odyssey in the
supermarket and feel absurd.)
Will we walk all night through solitary streets?
The trees add shade to shade, lights out in the houses,
we'll both be lonely.
Will we stroll dreaming of the lost America of love
past blue automobiles in driveways, home to our silent
cottage?

Ah, dear father, graybeard, lonely old courage-
teacher, what America did you have when Charon quit
poling his ferry and you got out on a smoking bank
and stood watching the boat disappear on the black
waters of Lethe?

THE RADIO ANNOUNCER
Visit The Lost World
of Embera village in Panama

When we finally arrive at the Embera village, visitors will quickly realize what a
unique and beautiful people they are. We will be warmly received by a welcoming

party, and escorted to their village overlooking the Chagres River. We are shown our overnight accommodations and presented with a traditional meal. Visitors are welcome to explore the area. Swimming in the Chagres and relaxing on the beach are encouraged.

Visitors are invited to explore the abundant variety of birds and wildlife during a jungle trek that includes a visit to local waterfalls. You will be amazed by the botanical knowledge possessed by the Ember?ö. Visitors are also welcome to paint their bodies, as the Ember?ö do, with a natural fruit dye known as Jagua. In the evening, we will join in the villagers' evening meal, followed by a night of traditional ceremonies. You soon forget the outside world as you are immersed in their cultural dance and music. We awake the following morning, eat breakfast and say our goodbyes, and travel by canoe and land transport back to Panama City.

JOHN UPDIKE: This is a nice museum. Sort of cozy...cozy antiques.

JEFFREY BROWN: John Updike, welcome.

JOHN UPDIKE: Thank you.

JEFFREY BROWN: What did you see when you went back to look at these early stories?

JOHN UPDIKE: Well, I saw...I saw a kind of vanished world, a world of relatively simple gadgets and simple innovations, technologically, a pre- electronic world in a way, and I also...I saw a writer who was quite new to the craft, but excited by it, and sort of experimental, and there's a freshness to some of these stories that surprised me. I hadn't read them again for many years -- a kind of nearly wet-paint feeling about them that I liked. There's a shine which I enjoyed, and occasionally I tried to polish them a little bit more, but basically they're...they're bright and hopeful attempts to bottle some small portion of the truth.

JEFFREY BROWN: Is it easy for you to put yourself back to that time and remember what it was like?

JOHN UPDIKE: Fairly easy, although, of course, there's a lot you forget. But, yes, I can see myself. First, I had a little room in the house, and the children kept rattling at the door, wanting to get in and see what daddy was doing, and then I rented an

office which I filled with cigarette smoke, and then when I gave up cigarettes, I filled it with cigar smoke, and in that way the years went by.

ANOTHER RADIO ANNOUNCER

The many harbours and havens around the Westcountry's coastline were once thriving maritime communities. The men and women of these communities were bound together by the sailing ships that traded up and down the coast and into deep waters of the Atlantic and the Mediterranean. This course aims to give you an insight into this lost world and help you to explore the rich variety of source material that is available locally and elsewhere.

Students will be introduced to different themes. The first session will be an introduction to the South West's maritime economy in the nineteenth century and will consider what elements made up the economy and examine how the world of sail changed during the period. This will include a brief introduction to general sources. The rest of the sessions will be based around a particular themes. Each session will introduce you to the topic, give you some background reading material and introduce you to source material and where to find it, including an introduction to the expanding amount of good research material on the Internet

PLINY

Finally,
we come to the nation of the Ingævones.
In their country is an immense mountain called Sevo,
not less than those of the Riphæan range,
and which forms an immense gulf along the shore
as far as the Promontory of the Cimbri.

This gulf,
which has the name of the 'Codanian,'
is filled with islands;
the most famous among which is Scandinavia,
of a magnitude as yet unascertained:
the only portion of it at all known
is inhabited by the nation of the Hilleviones,
who dwell in 500 villages,
and call it a second world:

it is generally supposed
that the island of Eningia
is of not less magnitude.

Some writers state that these regions,
as far as the river Vistula,
are inhabited by the Sarmati,
the Venedi, the Sciri, and the Hirri,
and that there is a gulf there
known by the name of Cylipenus,
at the mouth of which is the island of Latris, after which comes another gulf,
that of Lagnus,
which borders on the Cimbri.

The Cimbrian Promontory,
running out into the sea for a great distance,
forms a peninsula which bears the name of Cartris.
Passing this coast,
there are three and twenty islands
which have been made known by the Roman arms:
the most famous of which is Burcana,
called by our people Fabaria,
from the resemblance borne by a fruit
which grows there spontaneously.
There are those also called Glæsaria by our soldiers,
from their amber;
but by the barbarians
they are known as Austeravia
and Actania,
nations well-established
and enduring.

Ruth M. Siems, Inventor of Stuffing, Dies at 74

Ruth M. Siems, a retired home economist whose best-known innovation will make its appearance, welcome or otherwise, in millions of homes this Thanksgiving, died on Nov. 13 at her home in Newburgh, Ind. Ms. Siems, an inventor of Stove Top stuffing, was 74.

The cause was a heart attack, according to the Warrick County coroner's office in Boonville, Ind.

Ms. Siems (pronounced "Seems") spent more than three decades on the staff of General Foods, which introduced the Stove Top brand in 1972. Today, Kraft Foods, which now owns the brand, sells about 60 million boxes of it at Thanksgiving, a company spokeswoman said.

Prepared in five minutes on the stove or in the microwave, Stove Top stuffing comes in a range of flavors, including turkey, chicken, beef, cornbread and sourdough.

Comforting or campy, Stove Top stuffing is an enduring emblem of postwar convenience culture. Its early advertising tag line, "Stuffing instead of potatoes?" remains in the collective consciousness.

As Laura Shapiro, the author of "Something From the Oven: Reinventing Dinner in 1950's America" (Viking, 2004), said in a telephone interview yesterday:

"Stove Top made it possible to have the stuffing without the turkey, probably something no cook would ever have dreamed of but people eating Thanksgiving dinner might well have thought of: 'Take away everything else; just leave me here with the stuffing!' It's kind of like eating the chocolate chips without the cookies."

Stove Top's premise is threefold. First, it offers speed.

Second, it divorces the stuffing from the bird, sparing cooks the nasty business of having to root around in the clammy interior of an animal.

Third, it frees stuffing from the yoke of Thanksgiving; it can be cooked and eaten on a moment's notice any day of the year.

In 1975, General Foods was awarded United States Patent No. 3,870,803 for the product, generically called Instant Stuffing Mix. Ms. Siems is listed first among the inventors, followed by Anthony C. Capossela Jr., John F. Halligan and C. Robert Wyss.

The secret lay in the crumb size. If the dried bread crumb is too small, adding water to it makes a soggy mass; too large, and the result is gravel. In other words, as the

patent explains, "The nature of the cell structure and overall texture of the dried bread crumb employed in this invention is of great importance if a stuffing which will hydrate in a matter of minutes to the proper texture and mouthfeel is to be prepared."

A member of the research and development staff at General Foods, Ms. Siems was instrumental, her sister Suzanne Porter said, in arriving at the precise crumb dimensions - about the size of a pencil eraser.

Ruth Miriam Siems was born in Evansville, Ind., on Feb. 20, 1931. She earned an undergraduate degree in home economics from Purdue University in 1953, and after graduation took a job at the General Foods plant in Evansville, where she worked on flours and cake mixes. She moved to the company's technical center in Tarrytown, N.Y., not long afterward. Ms. Siems retired in 1985.

Besides Ms. Porter, of Copley, Ohio, Ms. Siems is survived by another sister, Rosemary Snyder, of Chicago; and a brother, David, of Milford, Mich.

As a mark of just how deeply inscribed on the American palate Ms. Siems's stuffing has become, there are several recipes, available on the Internet, that promise to reproduce the taste of Stove Top from scratch, using fresh ingredients.

HIROKO

I'm glad to see you again.

CATHERINE

So you say.

And yet

I don't know how it could be true.

HIROKO

How could it not be true?

CATHERINE

Because if you were glad to see me
you would never have left me.

HIROKO

Of course I would.

CATHERINE

No, because

if you love someone

you don't leave them.

You hold onto them for dear life

you hold onto them forever

unless you are a stupid person

which I don't think you are

so

what else can I think

except you never really loved me

I was just another one of your flings along the way

whereas I loved you

I knew

if you love someone

you don't let them go

HIROKO

And yet you did.

CATHERINE

I never did.

HIROKO

You said:

if one day you are going to leave me

then go now

don't just keep tormenting me.

CATHERINE

And so?

JACQUEINE

And so.

It's not that I left you.

CATHERINE

Excuse me.

I didn't leave you.

And yet, you are not with me.

What else happened?

HIROKO

It turned out

we were at different points in our lives

we couldn't go on.

CATHERINE

I could have gone on.

HIROKO

Shall we talk about something else?

CATHERINE

I see

in the world

people have wars and they die

entire countries come to an end

Etienne has died of cancer

HIROKO

I didn't know.

CATHERINE

How could you?

And yet

there it is.

And one day I will die

and so will you.

And yet

you could leave me.

I don't understand.

I will never understand

how it is if you have only one life to live

and you find your own true love

the person all your life you were meant to find
and your only job then was to cherish that person
and care for that person
and never let go
but it turns out
you can still think
for some reason
because this or that
you end it
you end it forever
you end it for the only life you will ever live on earth.
Maybe if you would be reincarnated
and you could come back to life again and again a dozen times
then this would make sense
to throw away your only chance for love in this life
because you would have another chance in another life
but when this is your only chance
how can this make sense?

Do you think
there will ever be a time
when we could get back together?

HIROKO
No.

CATHERINE
Not ever?

HIROKO
No.

CATHERINE
Not ever at all
even ever?

HIROKO
No.

CATHERINE

And yet
this is so hard for me to accept.

More than anything
I love to lie in bed with you at night
and look at your naked back
and stroke your back slowly
from your neck to your cocyx
and let my fingers fan out
and drift over your smooth buttock
and slip slowly down along your thigh
to your sweet knee
only to return again
coming up the back of your thigh
hesitating a moment
to let my fingers rest in the sweet valley
at the very top of your thigh, just below your buttock
and so slowly up along the small of your back
to your shoulder blade
and then to let your hair tickle my face
as I put my lips to your shoulder
and kiss you and kiss you and kiss you forever
this is what I call heaven
and what I hope will last forever

[Hiroko stands to leave]

HIROKO

I love you, Catherine.
I have never loved anyone in my life as I have loved you
and I know I never will.
But we cannot be together.

[she leaves;
Catherine watches her go.]

MONTGOMERY GENTRY SINGS

This ain't no temporary, typical, tearful good-bye, uh uh uh

This ain't no breakin' up and wakin' up and makin' up one more time, uh uh uh

This is gone (gone) gone (gone) gone (gone) gone

Gone like a freight-train, gone like yesterday

Gone like a soldier in the civil war, bang bang

Gone like a '59 Cadillac

Like all the good things that ain't never coming back

She's gone (gone) gone (gone) gone (gone) gone, she's gone

This ain't no give it time, I'm hurtin' but maybe we can work it out, uh uh uh

Won't be no champagne, red rose, romance, second chance, uh uh uh

This is gone (gone) gone (gone) gone (gone) gone

Gone like a freight-train, gone like yesterday

Gone like a soldier in the civil war, bang bang

Gone like a '59 Cadillac

Like all the good things that ain't never coming back

She's gone (gone) gone (gone) gone (gone) gone

She's gone

She's gone (gone) gone (gone) gone (gone) gone, she's gone

Gone like a freight-train, gone like yesterday

Gone like a soldier in the civil war, bang bang

Gone like a '59 Cadillac

Like all the good things that ain't never coming back

She's gone (gone) she's gone (gone) she's gone (gone) she's gone

She's gone

Gone like a freight-train, gone like yesterday

Gone like a soldier in the civil war, bang bang

Gone like a '59 Cadillac

Like all the good things

Well, she's gone

Long gone, done me wrong

Never comin' back, my baby's gone

Lonely at home, sittin' all alone
She's packed her bags and now she's gone
Never comin' back, she's gone
No no never, no no never, no never comin' back

EDMUND

I think you are lying to me, Herbert.
You are always lying to me
because you wish something would be true
but it isn't.
You are a weak spineless person, Herbert,
feckless, feeble and ineffective.

But I love you like a cicada.

HERBERT

A cicada?

EDMUND

Yes.

HERBERT

Like a grasshopper you mean?

EDMUND

Do you know what a cicada is?

HERBERT

I thought I did.

EDMUND

There was a time long ago, in prehistoric times
when cicadas were human beings
back before the Muses were born.
And then when the Muses were born
and song came into being
some of these human creatures were so taken by the pleasure of it
that they sang and sang and sang.

And they forgot to eat or drink
they just sang and sang
and so,
before they knew it,
they died.

And from those human creatures a new species came into being
the cicadas
and they were given this special gift from the Muses:
that from the time they are born
they need no nourishment
they just sing continuously
caught forever in the pleasure of the moment
without eating or drinking
until they die.

This is the story of love.
If you stay there forever in that place
you die of it.

That's why people
can't stay in love.

But that's how I've loved you.
And how I love you now.
And how I always will.

BLOG

Wow. More than a month has passed since my last post.

A lot of good stuff has happened,
but a lot of bad stuff has happened too.

You know.
Life goes on.

First of all,
an account of what I've been doing since the wonderful Leiria party.

Well,
on the weekend after going to Leiria,
I went to a free party on the Föbrica das Meias,
an abandoned factory in Alcoitão.

It was a two day party.
On the first day, we were five
(me, Fred, Rita and two more friends)
and we had a nice time.
We enjoyed a bit of the night-time,
listening to some night (darker)
Psy-Trance,
fueled by a bit of MDMA
and,
at some time,
we went to the car to rest for a bit.
After sunrise, I snorted another MDMA line,
and woke up.

We enjoyed the party for a bit more,
but eventually went home.
But not before finding the guys I'd met a few months before
on another party.
After a busy day (as far as I can remember),
we crashed in Fred's place.
I wanted to wake up around 1:00,
but woke up around 5:00.
Fred was feeling sick,
so me and Rita were the only ones to return to the party.
We arrived there around 7:00,
and it was a great thing to do,
since we caught the party from the sunrise.
I had a great time.
The ambient was very nice,
the place was full of good vibes.
It was a great morning.
We found some of the people we had met in Leiria,
and we managed to buy a Hofmann blotter.
We had a quarter blotter each,

then chilled out for a bit
under the sun,
outside.
I liked this party a lot,
especially because
of the second day
(or morning).

PROUST

And so I would often lie until morning,
dreaming of the old days at Combray,
of my melancholy and wakeful evenings there;
of other days besides,
the memory of which had been more lately restored to me
by the taste-
by what would have been called at Combray the 'perfume'--
of a cup of tea;
and, by an association of memories,
with that accuracy of detail
which it is easier, often,
to obtain when we are studying the lives of people
who have been dead for centuries
than when we are trying to chronicle those
of our own most intimate friends.
All these memories,
following one after another,
were condensed into a single substance,
but had not so far coalesced
that I could not discern between the three strata,
between my oldest,
my instinctive memories,
those others, inspired more recently by a taste or 'perfume,'
and those which were actually the memories of another,
from whom I had acquired them at second hand-
no fissures, indeed, no geological faults,
but at least those veins,

those streaks of colour which in certain rocks,
in certain marbles,
point to differences of origin, age, and formation.

It is true that,
when morning drew near,
I would long have settled the brief uncertainty of my waking dream, I would know in
what room I was actually lying,
would have reconstructed it round about me in the darkness,
and-fixing my orientation by memory alone,
or with the assistance of a feeble glimmer of light
at the foot of which I placed the curtains and the window-
would have reconstructed it complete and with its furniture,
as an architect and an upholsterer might do,
working upon an original, discarded plan of the doors and windows; would have
replaced the mirrors
and set the chest-of-drawers on its accustomed site.
But scarcely had daylight itself-
and no longer the gleam
from a last, dying ember on a brass curtain-rod,
which I had mistaken for daylight-
traced across the darkness,
as with a stroke of chalk across a blackboard,
its first white correcting ray,
when the window, with its curtains,
would leave the frame of the doorway,
in which I had erroneously placed it, while,
to make room for it, the writing-table,
which my memory had clumsily fixed where the window ought to be, would hurry
off at full speed,
thrusting before it the mantelpiece,
and sweeping aside the wall of the passage;
the well of the courtyard would be enthroned on the spot where,
a moment earlier,
my dressing-room had lain,
and the dwelling-place
which I had built up for myself in the darkness
would have gone to join all those other dwellings
of which I had caught glimpses from the whirlpool of awakening;

put to flight by that pale sign
traced above my window-curtains
by the uplifted forefinger of day.

SMOKEY RODGERS SINGS

Since you've gone
The moon the sun
The stars in the sky
Know the reason why, I cry.
Love divine once was mine,
Now you've gone.

Since you've gone
my heart my lips
my tear dimmed eyes
A lonely soul within me cries
I acted smart broke your heart
Now you've gone.

Oh, what I'd give for the lifetime I've wasted
The love that I've tasted
I was wrong
Now you've gone.

— Instrumental —

Oh, what I'd give for the lifetime I've wasted
The love that I've tasted
I was wrong
Now you've gone...

SOPHOCLES

In childhood, in our father's house,
we live the happiest life, I think, of all mankind.
But when we have understanding
and have come to youthful vigor,
we are pushed out.

And this,
we must approve
and consider to be happiness.

[A woman in a red silk dress enters,
stands a moment
and then begins to dance.]

No man was ever born
but he must suffer.
He buries his children and gets others in their place;
then dies himself.
And yet men bear it hard,
that only give dust to dust!
Life is a harvest that man must reap like ears of corn;
one grows, another falls.
Why should we moan at this,
the path of Nature that we must tread?

Heaven and earth were once a single form;
but when they were separated from each other into two,
they bore and delivered into the light all things:
trees, winged creatures,
beasts reared by the briny sea--
and the human race.

[A man enters
and dances with the woman.]

Let any man get hold of as much pleasure as he can
as he lives his daily life;
the future will always be unknown.

The best thing is a life free from sickness,
the power each day
to take hold of what one desires.

The time of life is short,
and once a person is hidden beneath the earth
he lies there for all time.

A man is nothing but breath and shadow.

Time makes all things dark
and brings them to oblivion.

A cup without a bottom is not put on the table.

First you will see a crop in flower,
all white;
then a round mulberry
that has turned red;
lastly
old age
of Egyptian blackness
takes over.

THE END

A NOTE ON SOURCES:

Gone is composed of texts from the lost plays of Sophocles, C. K. Scott Moncrieff's translation of Proust's *Swann's Way*, Milton Garver's translation of Alphonse Daudet's *Suffering*, the poems of Philip Larkin, texts of Thomas Bernhard, Allen Ginsberg, Pliny, the obituary page of the *New York Times*, and blogs and other texts picked up from the internet, as well as fragments from several plays of my own.

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