



THROUGH
OLD BIFOCALS
I

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ANGRY MONKEY

windswept monkey
flits away with my eyes
in vermillion rain

my spectacles now
bridge his eye sockets
through which
I can vaguely see
very thin trees
in the distance of pain
pulsing a despairing sun

I offer up bananas
one by one
and get back
acrylic bifocal lenses
one by one
and then
the monkey wears
my spectacle frame
over empty eye sockets
in whose hollow
the sun goes down

after sunset
his rage twists
the mangled emptiness
of the spectacle frame
I walk away subdued
with retrieved lenses
that do not break

this was a nervous moment
I would have had to take
a rabies shot
had he scratched me
but now I will go
to a spectacle shop
with the acrylic lenses
that do not break

no I will not go
to cacophony with you
even though I know
you can rent a car

I would rather walk

WASTED

in your eyes
I see
defeated flowers
printed
on paper
peeling off a poor wall

perhaps it is
the numbing
of the incessant chant
or the suffocation of incense
perhaps it is
the child already suckling
at your adolescent teats

metastasis
from an small town Mall
to these fly infested
monkey threatened
pilgrim paths
two continents away

the lost sophomore summer
the memory of
an overloaded cone
from Coldstone
frayed tennis shoes
on virgin grass

drowned in the metronome
of an alien name
which someone said
is also His

perhaps it is the garland
that you thread
with flowers that already
turn from white to brown
in the humid heat

while your husband in arms
the father of
your child that feeds
at your budding breast
goes slowly mad
in front of your eyes

beats frenetically
on a foreign drum
with tonsured head
and shouts His name
again and again
from a vegan mouth

GECKO

I spotted him straightaway
above the looking glass
in a triangulated shadow
on the bathroom wall

this gecko had finished
graduate school
was on sabbatical
in 'Krishna' land
and raring to go

I went off
on the 'idol trek'
he must have slept
I had left
the air-conditioning on
I wonder where he got
his dinner though

but that night
as I sat down
to meditate
off he started
with his 'clickety clack'
and went on and on
in rhythm with my chanting
the name
of the local Lord

it was after the monsoon
by the river
in the fields
the sugarcane was tall
and sweet
it was mating season
for pilgrims and geckos alike

I meditated long
and long he persisted
with his mating call
and then fell silent

perhaps he had found
what he was looking for
I continued
I had not

SNIPPETS

this moon that lit up
a whole hill top
and went to sleep

this walking stick
is like lipstick
like young poplar
in a woman's purse
it bends my back
give me an anorak
for iced lemon tea
let my teeth
be what they were

before I sent
that epochal fax

now I am lax
I even forget
to water my rose
my false teeth
are in retreat

like monsoon clouds
like Moscow shrouds
like so many whys
like hazel eyes

now you will turn
the other way
and douse this fire
that had to burn

we'll see the world
in the interim
with our SIM card
she died in the charity ward

so what if
my tires still grip
cloud mystifies
lots of lies
I told bees
about my knees

when I'm older
I'll buy a stick
to beat you with

this is meat
seasoned with salt
and wherewithal
as sung to Lancelot

I will eventually joust
with wood that died

when eucalyptus fell
logs were sized
prized conscience
assuaged by the incongruence

of a morning
warded off from charity
by a convenient clot
in your parking lot

the bar will open at eleven
until then let me observe
the midriff of the sugarcane
or retreat
into the forest of teak and sal

this undergrowth is rife
with monkey offspring
that is learning to deal with lice
to entice
white butterflies who climb trees
in this sparse wood
infested with locusts that devastate
my line of bespectacled sight
the upper leaves are light green
with light
pathetic pink-green flowers
offer worship to an ambivalent sky

why should I not switch off
the car air conditioning
rescue my prayer beads
from itinerant monkeys

here the river eddies
swells and flows back
hits black obstinate mountain
becomes a sea
momentarily dies
and is born again
as it has been for centuries

raindrops wet her water lilies
on a suspension bridge she stands
the waters are furious
a bunch of tube roses wilts
in her calloused hands

here dragonflies rule the land
such as it is
defined by razor hills
that unfurl back
into a womb
guarded by icicles
that will shard
retarded snowlines
browbeaten
by the arrogance of time

it took a while
to understand my profile
hour glass sand
needs inversion
like the band
that will always sing
Hotel California
so marvelously

come evening
temple bells
will renew me
at the confluence

let the poetry commence

RAG PICKER

our rag picker has genius

into one used
polyethylene sack
that once had cement
he neatly packs
the following

(i)
thirty pounds
of used
newspapers
with views
and quotable quotes
opinions
price of onions
cinema
war
what stars foretell
suicide in a well
games people play
and loose
ecological threat
to mongoose

(ii)
pints and quarts
that make this
horrible empty sound
of sin
that will again win

(iii)
keys to locks
that used to open
onto garden plants

that are so old
they are herbivores

(iv)
old clothes
that belonged to children
who now have children
and regularly give
to the Salvation Army
to save on tax

this will go on
but no one will read poetry
which is that long.....

he loads his sack
onto his bicycle
and vociferously bargains
he pays me
in the end
enough for one more quart

his investment
in emptiness for
the next time he comes around
he kicks the ground
and finds his balance
precariously
he resumes his litany
you see
he hawks

NOTE: In India, rag pickers pay for old newspapers, empty bottles and almost anything else that is used and empty. One day, soon, they will bid for me. They actually come to your doorstep, and plead with you to take away all this. They, in turn, sell the stuff to a wholesaler, who sells it to a recycler and so on.

The rag pickers just survive, but the wholesalers are big fish.
India is charmed.

ACCOUNTS

if this agony
stems from a balance sheet
of lives I maybe lead
in some parallel universe

or if it is a measure
of righted wrongs
evil that has stalked me
through eons

these silly sums that you etch
in permafrost
are too complicated
I fail your exam

or if this is just the way
the dice rolls
why then
let me tell you
this dice is also made
of dust
like vice like lust
like idols in your image

into which I breathe life
even as I loudly laugh

PYGMY TREE

I have imprisoned a pygmy lemon tree
in a concrete flower pot
it lives in damp earth and compost
in its shadow flourish
a small family of toadstools
the color of flesh

tomorrow the gardener
will turn up the earth
so that the lemon tree can eat
toadstool flesh and compost

MIRROR

how foolish
that I look in the mirror
and fervently pray
that you should deliver me
from my sins
when all I can actually do
is slash my wrists
and watch
as you profusely bleed
while in the mirror
I crumble up
and slowly die

WATER COLORS ON WASHED PAPER..... AND SOMETIMES AN OIL ON WICKED CANVAS

1

this crane meditates one legged
or maybe sleeps away
the malnourished afternoon
others look for earth worms

I meditated before it dawned
with rain from the rising sun
I heard the rain on my window pane
my prayer beads were moist
with perspiration from my palm

it is serious mango country this
the road is heavy with over-ripe fruit
on a buffalo cart with inflatable wheels
urchins play with the common house fly
peasant revolutions wither away in humidity

sometimes towns erupt like chicken pox
from a small minaret the muezzin calls
women lift their hijab to spit out
betel nut juice and butt-ends
of sexless nights in open fields
pregnant with sinful sugarcane
that wizened husbands will sell for cash

2

this gnarled boy of twelve surely masturbates
he is unlicensed master of a one horse cart
that runs into beggar cripples who topple
and wish him leprosy followed by amputation
he in turn refers to a part of their sisters' anatomy
which their sisters cannot possibly possess
and thus they all have immense fun

like school children at luncheon time
like pigeons at afternoon tea
like Oprah on sanctimonious TV
like psalms darkly parodied for Bush
and fervently colloquially sung

3

this high road has opposing bill-boards
one extols the god with the phallus symbol
the other advertises remedies for male vigor
or the absence thereof

that the god can't but observe
these are pressing times
ruled by warm laptops breeding impotency
and cellular phones in breast pockets
chatting indiscriminately with pacemakers

this is the age of clairvoyant widows
who haunt virtual brothels
stocked with monoliths of the gods

4

this rainy season is disastrous for the snakes
it waters holes and chases jungle rats away
now on the road the snakes run naked
and slither hate at the geriatric sun
but it's pathetic how they rear up their heads
just as I squish with my tires
I assume they hiss or cock their ears to hear

death which has sharp edges
like a rough blanket on my hotel bed
or pilgrims dressed in faded red

5

this river is fat ugly and amazingly fast
for someone who has left the hills behind
and will now bare all for men
and women and irrigation canals
hydroelectricity for the national grid
carrier of national garbage
pollutant of the virgin bay
this river is
playground for my sweet water dolphins

I will ride my river leisurely
in return for seduction
with her glacier mouth
when she sparkled in an exuberant sun
and I was very young

6

so google me
set me afire
in this rain

read my poems and pretend

'but this is not it
this is not the languorous armpit'

afternoon sunlight
yes
but not through that window
certainly not on chintz

not dusted
this language of a nut brown Indian
not legitimate
this pain

in my mountains
I eat up my pillow
and shiver Darfour
my spell-check tells me
it is Dafoe
genocide is Caucasian

Eliot
you read my scriptures
now read me my sacrament

I WALK MY DOGS

passing shower
a fresh pile of sawdust
fragrant

a cobbler stitches
soles
one door-mouse
peeps out of a crack
darts back

into fallen foot-soldiers
made with red hibiscus

between blades
of verdant green
my lily blooms
late afternoon

come dusk
parrots will nibble
at a half-baked moon
my frog leaps
it is not quagmired

WE WILL DRIVE UP

(a)

floods have washed away
their pots and pans
mud colored sarees
vests with two or three holes
and one half-pant
they have lost little
they had no land

a family of three children
two adults
one mongrel
and two malnourished pups

(b)

every year the rains
leave hill stations weepy
and pot-holes
on the picturesque roads
glowworms are in heat
monkeys retreat

(c)

the family has come
to re-tar mountain roads
equipped with new
'flood-relief' pots and pans
the dog and pups
have monsoon ticks

(d)

at dusk
the frogs come out to eat

the woman has lit
damp twigs with kerosene
profuse smoke
that quickly blackens
their brand new pot
and brings tears
to the woman's eyes
on three red bricks
rice boils in the pot
garnished with salt

the children are intense
on the grass
the mongrel plays
with her trusting pups

THEN

Watermelons
Caught
Taught
Taut
In her brassiere
Fraught
With droplets
Sweat
Between eyebrows
That hide eyes
Lies
Which sag

Groans
That could be pain
Again
Moist
Smells that shriek
Knees that will talk
To arthritis
Breathing short
And hard
In the 'English' rain

MOODS

1 - Beginning

as soft as a word
mis spelt
in a tucked in afternoon

with crosswords
the sun hid in loud
clouds

rain
into paper boats
that had pain
in rain

drops
will mop up
the dromedary stop
after this
the battery drops

a camel
twists its hump
the lump looks unread
where we tread

we dread
lumps
and donkeys

camels are the beasts of burden in this hard desert part of north-west India,
the vegetation is thorny stunted Acacia, camel fodder, colors are soft,
sun is harsh,
rain is always a gift from heaven

2- Aamer* Fort

thorough
this fare
empty ware
that echoes
who cares
for woes

let this
mist
insist
that we
will go

to that nowhere
which is beyond
the trucks
the wayward buffaloes
and the refrain
of woes

where the frail waif
blows
empty water bubbles
into the raked up sand

and land is a myth
lit up
by aeons of worship
to the mother
that floods blood

down steps
up which
elephants
carry tourists

near Jaipur, north west India,.....used to house some of the most significant rulers in erstwhile Rajputana.....grandeur, wealth, history, exploitation, intrigue, poetry....now a major tourist destination traversed on underfed, overworked elephants

3 - The saint of Ajmer*

beaten silver
and petals
of martyred
red rose

she ululates
wants

I metronome
his name
and beat my head
against merciless marble
littered
with the meaning
that then rose
from his endless name

ultimately
they have to cover my head
and my shame
at the usury
the sheer purity of greed
with which

I look at his face
beneath the modernized lamps

revered alike by Hindu, Muslim, Christian.....

At his tomb there is calm, holiness, deep quiet, truly hope.

HER GOA

barges carry ore
no more
what does an ocean care
about lighthouses
that now jail pedophiles

in this land
plankton get together
to gobble up shark
and crabs mutate
into a butter fried mess

gypsy girls
have runaway breasts
and improbable accents
they come
with beads for sale

beached and fossilized
is the whale
rusted the cannon
staring out
at river meeting sea

the plumber
still bids me a colonial 'adios'
he is old school
experiments saunter
out of closets

in the vegetable market
aubergines are drooping wet
the goddess struggles
with cheap plane tickets
sweeper women talk
prawn scales into mobile phones

the pavement is mossy wet
you will have to be guided
by my elbow
even as you gingerly
tread the wharf
to fish for whatever it is
that you wish

ROSARY

Chanting with a rosary
slow deliberate monotonous
then the finger is frantic
and my mind runs away
to nail a few words to a cross.

Fractured throbbing lust
Hydra-headed like the past
encounters arid sand and parched nails
deposited in folds of ancient skin
intertwined mortality strains powerfully
at the purity of your name.

And then the spell is broken
I wander away with memories of hurt
juvenile revenge mitigated by fear
of reprisal curiously mixed up
with overwhelming cruelty
in the interlude before
I am wanted and admired.

Like waves that run back in glee
into an auditorium full of sin
or logic that transcends
my gazing at the open sea
like a wide bodied whale
beached on middle-aged rock.

Back to chanting into my cowl
such quaint patterns
droplets of spit and beads make
on my familiar middle-aged soul.

BY NAME

Not embellished by name
not molded into form
but from just below my nostrils
where breathing starts
I inhale some pollen grain
that tingles my nasal walls
in night's last watch
in the illumined company
of your name.

Specks and dots and crosses
hyphenated multiplied at the rate of
some inter-planetary alphabet
in my cranial cavity
where my third eye should be
motes in kaleidoscopic viscosity
waft and wave about in aimless infinity
then settle down into the complete ecstasy
of your form.

Opaque dazzling whiteness
between eyelid and eyeball
your silhouette cross-legged
with wild hair spewing phantoms
onto a receding singularity
beyond name and form
absolutely conscious
In the total delight of a storm.

ENOUGH

No pedestrian supplication
For faltering sex
A new set of artificial teeth
Or warm affection genial company
Bed-sheet passion
The illusion of health and wealth
And back-slapping wellness
At golf.

Just the elevated call
To let grace fall
The indignant want
That I blissfully chant.

Wordless with fright
Birds take flight.

WE ARE THE SUN

Awake with faculties intact
assorted dreams interlaced
with hemlock and hymns
total sleep as in
death with breath
but keenly conscious
of intervening space.

In this space as in all others
at this time and before and beyond
all is light
day and night
spectral and white and black.

Engulfed in our effulgence
the manifest and the unmanifest
are like foothills asleep
and mountains lit up by the sun.

We are the creator
lord and protector
we seek refuge in the effulgence
of the one.

LOTUS

The current is too strong
here the lotus does not bloom.

Lotus luminous
thousand petalled
lotus cool as the moon
lotus untouched
water fed water groomed.
Here the lotus does not bloom.

lotus at your feet
lotus for your seat
lotus your crown
lotus your scimitar
your proclaimed virtue
redolent in shame-colored sin.

No dead flower
no laurel to win
no swallow flying
out of memory
alive and thin.
Reaching out
For the bend.

No the water does not stay.
The mendicant
climbs out of the shadows
and walks away.

RIVER IN HIGH MOUNTAIN

Outrageous river
Rebelliously grapples
With ordered banks
River dances
Weaves into its music
With bed and rock
Gurgles down an incline
And like reality
Lays bared
To the mountain sun.

Up the hillsides
Amidst pine
Illusion lurks
Over this river
Inclined to delight.

I squint my midday squint
At this ribbon-river
Flowing true
And make sure
That eternity is water-tight.

TONIGHT

What is this quest
at which you hint
with every irregularity
in the roundness
of my prayer beads?

Birdsong and cricket
colored pencil sketches
of flower and fruit.
Is that why
You string afresh
Your lonely guitar?

Your sounds hint
at some alien refrain
you comfort me
with sepia highlights
in leafy glades
of black and white.

Squirrels listen
past their bedtime
night birds hoot
and carry on
doing whatever it is
they usually do.

My prayer beads
have rough edges
and have acquired
immunity to touch.
So now I know
it is the night
of your light
your white night.

LATE

Insanely bothersome
today's version
of my last will and testament.

For whom my frayed vestments
charged with sepulchral fervor
my talisman from TV shop
this fragile necklace of basil wood
that symbolizes premature widowhood?

And who will bear the load
of my rather verbose faith
that now critically rests
in annotated holy books?

Let me at least clothe my feet
in unsoiled virgin white
closely shave my underarms
and perpetually delinquent head.
Now while you hold me tight
let me fight this urgent urge
to donate divinity
to this passing day.

Which way to the taxi stop?

Take me to be pickled
and hung up
on that taxidermist's wall.

GLACIER AND A MULBERRY BUSH

One last nagging word
and we will let this day pass.

Tomorrow in distress
I will think up another phrase
one more oblique way
to indicate I am free
at least for now.

Until the argument
turns upon itself
suffocates and dies
and silence flies.

To perch
on that mulberry bush
and let words fall
from branches heavy with forbidden fruit.

These are boulders
between which glaciers flow
private space we dare not trespass
this day will pass.

CONVERSATION BY THE RIVER

'Look yonder.
Your chariot awaits.
Golden steed
no more strain
against their rein.
Familiar charioteer,
that smile in his eyes,
on his lips.'

'What is this music in my ear;
do you also hear?'

'The chorus beckons.
This is your curtain call.
Cymbals clash in complete light
drums beat to delight,
this music is made of sunlit notes.
Hurry, bathe away all your nights,
let the sky be your garment,
embark on your journey to stars,
to forever dwell
in bliss.'

'But this music sings otherwise.
I am unshackled.
I have no tears I have no fear.
I need no incense no sandalwood,
my fire is ash no smoke
no sadness no joy
I need no toy. I have covered
my limbs with free wind,
the sky is nothing if not with star
and planet, I am not nothing,
will never be,
I am now pure and being pure
I am not this I am not this
I am bliss, forever bliss.

'So let the chariot wait no more
unharness the golden steed.'

HER LORD

IN LAMENT

On the blackboard, neatly chalked,
are the relics of some concepts
of tutorial living,
from when we were young,

‘Memory breeds desire——
for everything, evermore,
possession is cause
for wanting more,
this will set in motion
acceptable sleep patterns
between life and death
and whatever thereafter.’

The devil was meticulous in his ways.

Now everything is power-point
and wanting is not really in fashion
especially after you possess
your bigger house and better car.
Perfumed candles in a herbal bath
after spiritual calisthenics and vegan food.

Renunciation is today’s watchword.

But I am the eternal tutorial man,
Petulantly, I ask,
‘Wither went unmitigated lust?’

In the temple,
the idol is still.
Devotes are waves
in tumultuous unrest,
on his left,
his consort rests.

In a forest of abandon
carpet grass did once bear
the burden of her footfall.
And then when
branches touched lips
he had walked alone
as was his wont.
In his arms
she was silent,
even as her consort
danced to his flute.

Many a petal
did many gods shower
as their chariots
rode the milky way;
they had tarried
to see the incarnation
at divine play.

Not much of moment,
in this, no great import,
just the giving up,
the being still.

And all the while,
we huff and puff
with human will.

WOMEN BY THE RIVER

Long back,
before stars were born,
this lazy river
flowed through another spatial world
by bathing-steps of sandstone
that was new.

Time had yet to start to tick,
night was fragrant blue,
the lord and his flute
were at water play
with village belles.

Now the river has walked away
hard at chatter on her cellular phone,
the sandstone is weathered
by the gritty wind,
the river bank left behind
is coarse like adulterated cement.

And in the evening light,
the women sit on weathered stone,
pick at lice
from matted hair,
and wistfully stare
at distant boats and dirty toes.

The lord ponders over worldly woes.

LAMPS ARE LIT

My marble idol
takes his evening constitutional
in a silver palanquin
on sorry shoulders
of malnourished assistant priests.

Fountains with rationed water
point gnarled fingers
at the river that refused to stay attached
to a temple that would not change
with changing times.

It is not the time of the year
for fresh flowers,
but my lord will not invoke now,
as he once did, eternal spring.
So worship with wilted jasmine
on an ochre string.

In the sanctum sanctorum,
oil lamps have been lit,
cymbals clash,
and devotees must loudly clap and laugh.
This is as it has always been.

I too grin,
in apology of omitted sin.

RICKSHAW

We pedal pilgrims to and fro,
I have a rickshaw.
I am the pilgrims' charioteer,
I am their hobbled horse,
we ferry the devout
from temple to hotel to brothel....

I spice up pilgrimage with anecdote,
I am the champion of the myth.
I monitor avarice in fervor
I am the devotees' devout.

I am linked to priest and pimp,
parking attendants and vote banks
behind overflowing garbage stands,
I am the prince of caravanserai touts.

I negotiate with stray cattle,
immigrant beggars and mutants,
the hovering housefly in sweetmeat shops.

In all this, and in more,
the pilgrim with me,
is witness to the footprints of the lord.

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Freedom & Strength Press



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Compact Discs: *Mom's Favorite Vase* the demo tapes, *Kuypers* the final (MFVInclusive), *Weeds and Flowers* the beauty & the desolation, *The Second Axing* Something is Sweating, *The Second Axing* Live in Alaska, *Pettus & Kuypers* Live at Cafe Aloha, *Pointless Orchestra* Rough Mixes, *Kuypers* Seeing Things Differently, *SD/SD* Tick Tock, *Kuypers* Change Rearrange, *Order From Chaos* The Entropy Project, *Kuypers* Six One One, *Kuypers* Stop., *Kuypers* Masterful Performances mp3 CD, *Kuypers* Death Comes in Threes, *Kuypers* Changing Gears, *Kuypers* Dreams, *Kuypers* How Do I Get There?, *Kuypers* Contact•Conflict•Control, *the DMJArt Connection* the DMJArt Connection, *Kuypers* Questions in a World Without Answers, *Kuypers* SIN, *Kuypers* WZRD Radio (2 CD set), *Mom's Favorite Vase* and *The Second Axing* These Truths, *assorted artists* String Theory, Oh (audio CD), *Life At The Cafe* (3 CDset), *DMJArt Connection* Indian Flux, *DMJArt Connection* Manic Depressive or Something, *Chaotic Radio* Chaotic Radio Week #1, *Chaotic Radio* Chaotic Radio Week #2, *Chaotic Radio* Chaotic Radio Week #3, *Chaotic Radio* Chaotic Radio Week #4, *Chaotic Radio* Chaotic Radio Week #5, *Chaotic Radio* the Chaotic Collection Collection #01-05 (5 CDset) etc. (audio CD, 2 CDset), *Chaotic Elements* (2 CDset), *Chaos in Motion* (6 CD set).