

MIDDLESEX

A Literary Journal



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Middlesex: a literary journal

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EDITOR'S NOTE:

THE EXPERIENCE OF THE DIVINE

The experience of the divine seems to be universal and timeless, recorded in stories, poems, plays, visual and plastic arts since the earliest days of our species. In many of the ancient stories, the gods would disguise themselves as mortals and visit humans to aid, inspire, instruct, or test us. We mortals would never know when a god might be visiting disguised as a hungry stranger, a friend, a neighbor, or perhaps even an enemy. Ovid tells the tale of the old, pious couple Baucis and Philemon, who demonstrated the Greek value of *Xenia* (the sacred guest-host relationship) when they received two bedraggled strangers into their home and offered them food, shelter and hospitality. The strangers turned out to be the gods Jupiter and Mercury traveling in disguise to test the piety of the villagers. The gods rewarded the old couple by sparing them from the great flood, turning their humble home into a temple, allowing them to live out their days in peace and die together at the moment of their choosing, and transforming them into trees with intertwining branches to honor their love and piety.

The experience of the divine might also manifest in a magical moment — a meaningful time spent with a loved one, a sudden spiritual insight or epiphany, a sharp intake of breath in the presence of nature's beauty, an unexpected gesture of compassion or forgiveness. Sometimes, we may experience the divine in forms we don't anticipate or necessarily want — a painful truth, a test of faith, an unexpected calling. In the Old Testament story, Jonah is called upon to journey to Nineveh to prophesy against it and witness its destruction, but in being swallowed by the whale he experiences human frailty and learns the divine trait of mercy. He stops operating out of the power/pleasure principles and acts instead from the human heart (truly divine).

Poets and artists often strive to connect with the divine, sacrificing and struggling heroically just for the chance of such a connection. Poets walk on the edge, and so they make themselves emotionally and

intellectually vulnerable. True poets, those who understand that poetry is NOT about feelings but about words, how words are used to control and express those feelings, are open: they are passionate and express that passion openly, honestly, in their daily lives. However, when they compose poetry, they become artisans, workers, makers, and use words as tools, as sculptors use marble, as painters use color, as composers use sound — to control passion so that it does not become vague sentimentality. Poetry is not Hallmark tear jerking or whining or victimhood. Poetry is praise of life — it inspires and connects us to God/Nature.

Whatever form it may take and however we choose to define it, the divine occasionally pays us a visit, and it falls upon us to recognize the moment and find meaning in it. In this issue of our journal, we present this theme — *the experience of the divine* — and invite our readers to recognize it in the selections that follow. We offer no one definition of “the divine” but remain open to, and respectful of, an individual’s sacred encounter with it. In our own daily lives, the experience of the divine may be strong and obvious, but more often, it is subtle and hidden, and it certainly isn’t predictable or routine. With this in mind, we invite you to keep a watchful eye for this theme as you navigate this issue of our journal. You never know when you may come upon a god in disguise!

— Emanuel di Pasquale and Mathew Spano

FROM THE DAUGHTER OF JESUS

We ended up in Corsica
A small place lapped by waters all around
And we'd grown tired by then
He struggled with my name
Seraph was his first instinct
Settled (gloriously) for Luce
He Loved light
After those long hours in the dark tomb

“They never really shut the rock wheel
Tightly enough, and Mary snuck me out”

He smiled a tight smile
(His frozen face muscles would
Not allow for more)

He knew what came ahead
 (“A joyful curse” he said):
Thoreau, Dr. King
While revering the Buddha

He wept when he thought of honest
Monks and nuns lost to love

“Things are clear
I can see angels on trees
Names”

Yes yes she was my mother
And she was no whore
She glowed like Venus in her quiet ways

WORD SONG

Word song be my prayer
Be prayer
Run horses of the night
Run at breakneck speed
Hurry burn your hooves
Shed sparks be lightning
Keep me from dying in this darkness
Bring the sun out
Bring the sun out
(Father sun in your heat and light
Bring life breath)
Rid the moon of its fake light
(scraps of your generous light)
Shed it on ocean on tree on child
Burn the forests blue

LOVE SONG FOR T.S.

Could God ever create one who
Would not fall in love with you
Because of your smile?
Your Marilyn Monroe hair, sweet
Curls of grain, your
Chin falling lightly,
Your cheeks like halves
Of peach, and your eyes:
Tentative yet fully open,
Giving, and your voice,
A sweet sing song.
There is no new morning
When I looking at your
Eyes, Austrian lakes,
North Atlantic jade,
Do not fall in love
With you, ever again,
And anew.

BELOW ZERO PLUS

In a Golgotha-cold morning
Under a blind January sun
The sea gulls, trapeze artists,
Fly wide,
In love with freeze, light, and
Spilled
Garbage

LOVE LINES

Your flesh in my hands is the root of the sunflower,
Wine

The silences of a kiss,
Wide eyes

The supple muscles along your spine,
Nerves alive

CONSIDER

what does it take to make
gods out of clay who return
the favor, turning hand-built
men, wheel-turned men,
from clay to clay?

all stars twinkle
in the ricochet
through slaloms of gravitational
lenses, turbulent atmospheres,
attitudinal adjustments.

don't let the stars get in your eyes,
the song says, some say wisely.
still, that first Vermont night
after a life in Buffalo's smog
& Gegenschein

outshone the metaphor,
let me see what night is for,
dispelled the tales told slyly.
in the *Commedia*, too, Dante ends
with *stars, stars, stars.*

STERNER STUFF

the blossom never tries too hard.
bees get no busier than bees.
the strangler fig doesn't go medieval
on a hapless tree. the sun,
parching crops, has no agenda.

humans alone sight down a barrel,
adjust for windage, squeeze the trigger.
gently. keep score. play cards.
humans alone ignore
Ockham's razor.
distinguish between life
& pleasure. fall off the floor.

if angels offered apprenticeships,
who would sign up? the terrible
weight of those wings, those
insufferable harps, lights on
24/7, an endless Alaskan summer.

RED SKY AT MORNING

fugitive illumination molts
the shadowy husks parents
& professors warned us
leave the red light on.
not everyone gets to see
the Immaculate Conception,
let alone score an unchaperoned
date with someone so lucky.
the golden shells clinging
to a tree could not predict
cicadas' cacophony. slowly,
dawn dawns on us, faithful
both to latitude & longitude.
every day a foreign country
with the same population
hidden behind their eyes.
seeing through to spotlessness
rebegins history, slightly ajar.
who'd have known we'd come
that far. who'd have seen that star.

WAKING SLOW

each night, outliving the sun, they return:
one saved but for an unfortunate pun;
one, a larval barnacle, looking for a hull;
one, a desert boulder, water-worn.

their roles shift like sand, like surf,
like masquerades of intention, worms
indispensable to healthy soil, casting
what light they can beneath the surface.

gone by dawn, they linger behind flowers,
eyelids, clouds. they botch their entrances,
forget their lines, upstage themselves,
related to us by elopement.

it doesn't matter that we mispronounce
their names. it's the way these things work out.

FISHING, HUNGRY

in perilous water, the angler
teaches fish to mistake
shadow for substance.
no small feat, since the fish
can smell his waders.
they know he doesn't belong
among them, doesn't hunger
for bugs in any stages
of development. they think
he sees them as bugs, succulent
this time of year. nothing
suggests he will release them
in admiration of their fight,
that he will have to tie
a better fly next time, or cast
more deftly a shadow dimmer
or darker than the first. What
brings him here, though, they
do know, who regularly snatch
their unsuspecting lunch
from heaven, from their own
love's lonely offices.

THE WIND AND LINNEA

Linnea
Wind chime
The wind and Linnea

You make music rise from the summer air
Clear melodies that never repeat
They cut through the heat of the day
Push out the circle of night
They split open like chestnuts
and pour out variations

Linnea
The wind and Linnea

The Lord said he's like the wind
that you can't see as it moves the trees
But I see him when he touches you and moves you
The wind and Linnea
The gentle pressure of his hand
You gracefully sway
and make music rise from the summer air

Linnea
There is a place in you I can never know
And if you reach out and almost touch
but do not touch my face
If a smile washes over your lips like a warm rain
If my voice, thick with emotion
makes words with no sense
I still must know

Your face will again be set like flint
Wise, beautiful, unforgiving
Loyal to a deeper love
Existing only in the wind

UP ON WOODLANDS HILL

Large bees, Sam's emissaries,
come round to hector me and with
their threatful investigation seem
to admonish, "Move on, stranger."

But I have come to linger along
the hill ridge with Bristol
Channel laid out softly in blue
ceremony, like a silken gown

awaiting its mistress. And here
high pregnant clouds, both
white and darkly purple, come
like God's own watercolors,

casting massive shadows over
the distant hills, while
the green geometry of the farm
fields in rich sunlight laugh

with man's answer to
so lovely a chaos.

**IN THE METHODIST CHURCHYARD,
WEST LONG BRANCH**

The hedge overgrown and
woven through with honeysuckle
vines and the grass
too high by half among the stones
lean hard against memory.

That man walking his dog
and talking too loud for heaven
on his cell breaks the hermit's
spell he came for. His dog
snoops for a quiet spot

to leave his load close to
the humped ground where
the once-beloved Dr. Z.
N. Severn sedately lies.
Herr doctor, could you not

have saved yourself nor yet
this young boy, once much
grieved when these broken trees
were young. The tow-head boy
had closed his eyes, seeming so

like my son falling to sleep after
baseball and too many cartoons.
His kin came with august
trepidation to see his sweet head
laid against bleached satin —

young dryad in the hollow
of a tree. This was in the
last year of the Mexican War
and the parents, too, like
vessels heavy-laden long ago

broke upon that self-same shore.
From the churchyard, that day
to this, the weathervane at
steepletop points always in
one direction. The man, barking

incoherently into his chatterbox,
his t-shirt covering an unsightliness,
and the dog, too, unmindful of
that ragged finger, seem even now
groomed to disappear.

DIVINITY IN THE BODY

Intricate chords braid muscles and tendons
Veins lacy and scarlet, dance across bones

Pigments and melanin decorate skin
Freckles, splashed and splattered, make new homes

Wisps of hair sprout out from scalp and cascade
Curls and layers bounce and dangle on shoulders

Stained glass irises twinkle in their natural salty dew
Lashes, air and coarse, stretch to the sun

Toes grip the ground and fingers curl to grasp
Blood, hot and rapid, propels masterpieces across the earth

DIVINITY IN THE SOIL

What has this soil seen?

Whose toes have pressed its surface?

Whose heels have rested here...and whose have raced across it?

Have fingers crept across loose mounds?

Have a child's toes hidden here?

Or wiggled in soft mud?

Perhaps a civilization once stood here;

Even the greatest have to rest upon something: soil.

Perhaps it saw death and sadness.

Perhaps it has given abundant life.

Perhaps it is hiding the dead.

Or perhaps it knows nothing more than my fingertips-they may be first
it has ever felt.

Maybe they will be the last.

DIVINITY IN CHILDREN

Eyes rapid and neurons firing — minds absorbing since birth.
Breaths taken, fingers reaching, smiling from the start of life.
Learning “yes”, learning “no”; learning to be kind.
Remembering facts, seeing new sights: all to fill a young mind.
Showing parents things they’d never notice, brimming with energy.
Bringing out the best in us, as well as our old memories.
Growing faster, crying less; making the world their own.
Laughing at the wind, playing in the mud: things that we feel we’ve outgrown.
Staining shirts and not worrying; ripping jeans and running on;
These things we’ve grown to worry over were once nothing at all.
Getting a scrape was fine so long as we’d rise after our fall.

UNWANTED THING

There isn't a thing more painful
Than being an unwanted thing
What's worse is to be a wanted thing
And never be told.
What is worse is to leave someone
And to not be missed
What's worse is to know that you are not missed
By anyone.
An unwanted thing.

SEEKING SUNLIGHT

Creaking wood under aching feet
Sores on the hands of those who hold rope
An assortment of people that would rarely meet
Air dwindles between lungs, as does once strong hope

Confusion floats, next to stench and fear
Chains twinkle on the bones of the weak
Heads drop on the laps of those who are near
And sunlight becomes the one thing you seek

The blood that has dried — now crinkled — will flake
Awaiting some water, heads bob and chains rattle
Wrists sore and minds racing, they fight to stay awake
Eyes wet and legs drooping, it is death they must battle

Their skin has turned against them: many will fall
For men much below them, they're forced to crawl

ELEGANCE IN LOOSE STITCHES

The recipe drawer that is always jammed
The rings in wood panels that form a face
That one cabinet that needs a slam
The chip on the rim of the only good vase

The step that you skip at the top of the stairs
The wretched red towel that's just too damn soft
The new blanket covered with brown dachshund hairs
The tomato sauce stain Mum never got off

The towel that's yours because of the rip
The blanket that's Dad's because of the patch
The sweatshirt you love, even though it won't zip
The half-painted edge that Dad could not match

My house is beautiful, rich, and fine
Because inside, it's embellished with time.

HELLO

A long way to fall, each step death-threatening.
This mountain does reach to Heaven.
Hell may hold court down there.

Is a misstep worth it? Should I be mourned by me?
Or Mourned by those who need me?

Who needs me?

PLEASE TELL ME

Please tell me the world is round
When I'm trying not to be earthbound
When I want to fly to the stars
Please tell me I might reach Mars
Please tell me these things
And I'll believe anything I can conceive
Please tell me you'll catch me
Or that you can match me

ON THE PERIPHERY

Miles of untamed (some named) Flora rise and fall in my view,
Its mounds seeming to move.
Nature's illusory coup.
The mountains are quiescent and still,
Nestled in the seclusion of clouds.

And around the corner what scenes from dreams abound?
At the feet of the watchful height one sees cool water,
Lapis lazuli.

It is all in these eyes. It is all in these eyes.

CELESTIAL CLIMBING

I lapse into euphoria
Expound musings
Sights removed

I am flying solo

The seas are uplifted
Condensation of rain
The ground paths my canopied roof

I am the puppet

NIRVANA

*Perfection is being, not doing: it is not to effect an act
but to achieve a character.*

— Bishop Fulton J. Sheen

He scaled the tall walnut china closet as deftly and quickly as a Sherpa climbing a small Himalayan mountain. Once atop, he sat, cross-legged, Indian-style, with his hands folded in front of him. His face wore an expression of serenity, and this same feeling of peace reflected itself in his bright blue eyes. He would have smiled, but he did not know the how or why of the gesture. He would have called out, but he did not know the context of the sound. So, he sat, singly poised above the Lenox, the *Illardro*, and the many Hummels that vied for space behind the polished glass doors of the cabinet.

The afternoon sun cast its angular rays in his direction. One caught his blond curls and framed them inside a golden halo. He remained transfixed by the dust particles that swirled and whirled through the beams. He waved a baby hand through this spotlight and roiled them, again and again, and again. He touched thumb to forefinger: First, the left hand, and then the right. He did each four times, alternatingly. He could not count “one-two-three-four,” but somehow he knew it was correct. He liked the touch of the grainy, hard wood against his legs that protruded from his diaper. He could hear the *whooooosh* of air as it gushed out from the ceiling vent, directly, close over his head. Its coolness washed over him; its breeze tousled his curls and cycloned his beloved sunbeam’s guests. It was an impersonal, not a human touch, but nonetheless, a welcomed, albeit artificial, caress.

He reached toward the slats of the vent as the chill cascaded over his lithe toddler body. He could not determine “cold,” only comfort or discomfit. He had fallen once — only once, and the reassuring hug administered to console him felt strange and invasive. A kiss to the boo-boo resulted in his emitting a skull-splitting scream. Then, they had let him be. The distress, *pain*, as it was known, passed. He had sought

another place of refuge.

The cabinets were locked with the complicated, sophisticated mechanisms only an engineer or a Houdini could open. Actually, *he* could, but it was not worth the effort to sit amidst the cans and bottles of Windex, Easy-Off, Ajax, and Lysol. Although, as he recalled, their residual chemical smell was decidedly different, more engaging, than the white Johnson's Baby Powder and Vaseline Intensive Care Baby Body Guard they applied to his small body. The stairs were gated, too, and this confined him to the lower level of the house. Sure, he would have "walked" easily up the part of the riser that extended to the left of the wrought iron railing. It was only an inch and a half in width, but that was just enough for him. The problem was, he believed, the obviousness of his going upstairs. They would look *there* first, retrieve him, and relegate him to the prison-like playpen. Oh, he could escape its confines. In fact, that is precisely where he *had been* prior to his ascent to the top of the china closet. He had scabbled up its mesh sides like a giant spider, a blur of arms and legs, climbing up and over with surprising agility. Then, he had dropped quietly to the plush carpet. No one had heard him. His ploy of "sitting nicely" and achieving "good sitting" with a Cheerio for reinforcement had worked. They were so easily fooled. And now, he posed, loftily and regally, surveying his domain of silence and isolation. He was happy — no, make that "content." Yes, comfortable. He reclined like a tiny blond Buddha, serene and inscrutable.

His mother appeared, freshly showered, manipulating the terrycloth towel into a makeshift turban around her wet hair. She glanced toward the playpen. It was empty! She screamed. Her husband ran in from the backyard. "What is it? What's wrong? What happened?" He demanded to know in his still sleep-hazed state. "It's Thomas! He's gone!" she sputtered, and began sobbing uncontrollably. "I've looked everywhere!" Exasperatedly, her husband shouted, "Not *again!* How could you lose an autistic kid *in the house?*" She cried and shook her head. "I don't know."

Above them, Thomas remained motionless and soundless, save for the hint of a smile playing at the corner of his lips.

**WHY DID THE YOUNG CLERK SWEAR?
OR
THE UNSATISFACTORY FRENCH**

A dramatic presentation by Paige B. L'Hommedieu based on the short story by Stephen Crane

— *Acknowledgment: The playwright acknowledges with gratitude and respect the author whose story made this work possible.*

*(Scene is a men's clothing store. There is a young male **CLERK** in the store. As curtain rises he is stretching and yawning — looking out the window.)*

CLERK: *(Sighing)* Quiet. Quiet. Quiet.
Where are the customers?
Maybe it's the weather.

*(**CLERK** goes to stack of merchandise and from underneath pulls out a book. He perches on a stool and begins to read.)*

MALE VOICE FROM OFF-STAGE:

Silvere did not see the young girl for some days. He was miserable. He seemed always to inhale that subtle perfume from her hair. At night he saw her eyes in the stars.

His dreams were troubled though. He watched the house but Heloise did not appear. He went home and burst into tears crying "I love her. I love her. I shall die." Then one day he saw her on a street corner. A vendor was serving chestnuts.

*(**CLERK** turns pages periodically)*

A woman was scrubbing some steps. Paris throbbed with life. She did not perceive Silvere. She passed him with a happy smile on her face.

She looked fresh, fair, innocent. Silvere felt himself swooning “Oh my God — Oh my God.”

She crossed the street. Silvere received a shock that sent warm blood to his brain. It had been raining. There was mud. With one slender hand Heloise lifted her skirts. Silvere leaning forward saw her —

(Bell rings — CLERK quickly puts book under merchandise as FIRST WOMAN SHOPPER — with laundry bag — enters store.)

FIRST WOMAN SHOPPER: Ah — beg your pardon. Do you do laundry here? I’ve been patronizing a place down the street for some time, but he —

CLERK: No. No. We don’t.

FIRST WOMAN SHOPPER: No? You don’t? Well why don’t you start one anyway. It would be good for the neighborhood. I live just around the corner and I know lots of people who would —

CLERK: *(Agitated)* — No. No. The answer is no.

(FIRST WOMAN SHOPPER shrugs shoulders and leaves. CLERK grabs book from underneath merchandise and continues to read.)

MALE VOICE FROM OFF-STAGE: — handkerchief fall in a puddle. Silvere sprang forward. He picked up the handkerchief. Their eyes met as he returned the handkerchief. Their hands touched. The young girl smiled. Silvere was in ecstasies “Oh my God.”

A baker opposite was quarreling with an old woman. He was a gray-haired veteran with a medal.

(CLERK quickly reads on, turning pages)

The sign over the tinsmith’s shop —

(CLERK continues quickly turning pages and skimming)

Moisture dripped from the walls of the coalpits —

(CLERK turns more pages — now with some impatience)

Then a hush fell over the chamber of deputies.

CLERK: Ah —

MALE VOICE FROM OFF-STAGE: Heloise went to the country. The next day Silvere followed. They met in the fields. The young girl had donned the garb of the peasants. She blushed. She looked fresh, fair, innocent. Silvere felt faint with rapture “Oh my God!”

She had been running. Out of breath, she sank down in the hay. She held out her hand. “I am so glad to see you.” Silvere was enchanted at this vision. He bent toward her. Suddenly he burst into tears! “I love you! I love you! I love you!” he stammered.

A row of red and white shirts hung on a line some distance away. The third shirt from the left —

(CLERK quickly turns pages)

On the rear steps of a cottage, a cat was drinking milk from a cracked plate —

CLERK: Ah! Here we are

MALE VOICE FROM OFF-STAGE: “Heloise” Silvere was murmuring hoarsely. He leaned toward her until his warm breath moved the curls on her neck. “Heloise!”

(Bell rings — CLERK quickly puts book under merchandise as ELDERLY GENTLEMAN enters store.)

ELDERLY GENTLEMAN: Young man, have you any night shirts open front and back? Eh? Night shirts open front and back. Do you?

CLERK: (*With impatience*) — No. No. No we don't and that's it. No we don't.

ELDERLY GENTLEMAN: All right. All right. It would pay you to be a trifle more polite young man. No night shirts open front and back eh? Well — good day.

(ELDERLY GENTLEMAN departs. CLERK grabs book from under merchandise and continues reading.)

MALE VOICE FROM OFF-STAGE: A peasant wept.

(CLERK quickly turns pages)

“Have you seen a stray cow?” asked the —

(CLERK turns more pages as he skims)

CLERK: Ah here we are.

MALE VOICE FROM OFF-STAGE: “She loves me!” cried Silvere to himself as he changed his clothes for dinner.

It was evening. Heloise wore a gown of clinging white. She looked fresh, fair, innocent. Silvere was in raptures. “Oh my God.”

(CLERK continues turning pages)

The harness needed mending —

(CLERK continues turning pages)

In front of the window, two pigs were quarreling over —

(CLERK continues turning pages)

Cattle were lowing in the —

(CLERK continues to turn pages with increasing impatience)

A hay wagon creaked slowly past.

(CLERK continues turning pages)

Thirty-two chickens were asleep in the branches of a tree —

CLERK: Ah — here we go!

MALE VOICE FROM OFF-STAGE: This subtle atmosphere had a mighty effect upon Heloise. It was beating down her self control. She felt herself going. She was choking.

The young girl made an effort. She stood up and said, “Good night, I must go.” Silvere took her hand. “Heloise” he murmured. Outside two pigs were fighting.

A warm blush overspread the young girl’s face. She turned wet eyes toward her lover. She looked fresh, fair, innocent. Silvere said, “Oh my God!”

Suddenly, the young girl began to tremble. She tried vainly to withdraw her hand, but her knee —

(Bell rings — with gesture of despair, CLERK quickly puts book under merchandise as SECOND WOMAN SHOPPER — with bundles — enters)

SECOND WOMAN SHOPPER: I wish to get my husband some shirts. He’s very particular about his shirts.

(SECOND WOMAN SHOPPER examines some merchandise)

I don’t think any of these will do. Don’t you keep the Invincible brand?

CLERK: *(Agitated)* — No! We don’t!

SECOND WOMAN SHOPPER: He only wears that kind. He says they fit him better. How much do you think they would cost?

CLERK: No! No! No! No! We don't have them.

SECOND WOMAN SHOPPER: Very well then. I'll go somewhere else. Good day.

(SECOND WOMAN SHOPPER leaves. CLERK grabs book from under merchandise and continues reading.)

MALE VOICE FROM OFF-STAGE: — struck cruelly against a chair. It seemed to awaken her. She started. She burst from the young man's arms. Outside, two pigs were grunting amiably.

Silvere took his candle. He went toward his room. He was in despair. "Oh my God."

He met the young girl on the stairs. He took her hand. Tears were racing down his face. "Heloise."

The young girl shivered. As Silvere put his arms around her, she faintly resisted. The embrace seemed to sap her life. She wished to die.

The young girl looked fresh, fair, innocent. "Heloise," murmured Silvere. They exchanged a long clinching kiss. It seemed to unite their souls.

The young girl was swooning. Her head sank in the young man's shoulder. There was nothing in space except the warm kisses on her neck. Silvere enfolded her! "Oh my God!"

(Bell rings. With mounting agitation, CLERK slams book shut and quickly puts it under merchandise as MAN IN WORKING CLOTHES enters)

MAN IN WORKING CLOTHES: Say young feller, where'n hell is Billy Cathcart's bar around here?

CLERK: *(Fiercely)* — Next corner.

MAN IN WORKING CLOTHES: All right, all right. It's a civil question. You don't have to get uppity.

(MAN IN WORKING CLOTHES leaves. CLERK grabs book from under merchandise and continues to read.)

MALE VOICE FROM OFF-STAGE: Then a great flash of lightning illuminated the hallway. Thunder shook the house to its foundation.

Heloise screamed. She wrenched herself from the young man's arms. She sprang inside her room. She locked the door. She flung herself face downward on the bed. She burst into tears. She looked fresh, fair, innocent.

The rain pattering upon the thatched roof sounded in the stillness like the footsteps of spirits. In the sky toward the park there shone a crimson light. The chickens stood sadly in a puddle. The two pigs were — asleep — under — the porch?

CLERK: Oh no!

(CLERK still reading)

MALE VOICE FROM OFF-STAGE: Upstairs in the hallway Silver was furious.

CLERK: Oh my God!

(CLERK raises arms in disbelief, then throws book on the floor)

Damn!

(CURTAIN)

THE NATURAL STUDY OF WILLIAM BLAKE'S SONGS OF INNOCENCE AND SONGS OF EXPERIENCE

William Blake's *Songs of Innocence and Songs of Experience* are specific, direct, courageous, and simple poems. He believed that the rules of institutions were cowardly and mechanistic, and that life itself was energy. He was life-affirmative and love-affirmative and cared for the feelings of the individual, not the dictates of society. His thinking was functional. To Blake, real virtue was a spontaneous, self-regulated act. His *Songs of Innocence* are life-affirmative: songs of trust, songs of the natural, free human animal. They praise a lively innocence. In *Songs of Experience*, the free animal is chained by rules, by man-made moral purity. Spontaneity is lost, clean impulses are distorted (the functional flow, the unity of the soma and psyche is lost); guilt rules, thinking is mechanical — the laws and rules are cruel.

In "My Pretty Rose Tree" (E)¹, Blake illustrates the emotional misery that results from actions based, not on personal, functional needs, but on socialized, mechanistic rules:

*A flower was offer'd to me,
Such a flower as May never bore;
But I said "I've a Pretty Rose-tree,"
And I passed the sweet flower o'er.*

*Then I went to my Pretty Rose-tree:
To tend her by day and by night;
But my Rose turn'd away with jealousy,
And her thorns were my only delight.*

¹ (E) stands for *Songs of Experience*, and (I) stands for *Songs of Innocence*

The heart and the soul of the speaker are with the splendid flower, “Such a flower as May never bore.” The splendid flower is what he really wants. However, he returns to the relationship based on duty (the marriage?), to the “Pretty Rose-tree.” He tends it “by day and by night” (an emotionally sticky relationship) but without the passion he has for the “sweet flower.” The rose tree is jealous because it probably senses where the mate’s true love is.

In “The Lamb” (I), a simple, sweet poem, Blake identifies an innocent lamb with Christ and with children — with tenderness and life in the open meadow:

*Little Lamb who made thee?
Dost thou know who made thee?
Gave thee life and bid thee feed
By the stream and o’er the mead;
Gave thee clothing of delight,
Softest clothing, wooly, bright;
Gave thee such a tender voice,
Making all the vales rejoice?*

*He is meek and he is mild;
He became a little child.
I a child, and thou a lamb,
We are called by his name.
Little Lamb God bless thee!
Little lamb God bless thee!*

The key to “The Little Black Boy” (I) is in the realization that we are indeed all brothers, all children of God, that God is Life and Love on earth:

*“Look on the rising sun: there God does live,
“And gives his lights, and gives his heat away;
“And flowers and trees and beasts and men receive
“Comfort in morning, joy in the noon day.*

*“And we are put on earth a little space
“That we may live to bear the beams of love.*

In “The Chimney Sweeper” (I), blackened by the filth of the adults’ cruelty, the children find some “peace” in dreams of a loving God/ Father setting them free from the chimneys (coffins):

*And by came an Angel who had a bright key,
And he opened the coffins and set them all free;
Then down a green plain, leaping, laughing, they run,
And wash in a river, an shine in the Sun.*

In the Experience version of “The Chimney Sweeper,” the children’s “crime” is their sense of life. The parents want to break that life, that spirit:

*“Because I was happy upon the heath,
“And smil’d among the winter’s snow,
“They clothed me in the clothes of death,
“And taught me to sing the notes of woe.*

The parents in church are allies of a religion that allows the destruction of joy in our children. They “Are gone to praise God and his Priest and King / Who make up a heaven of our misery.” This religious authority has nothing to do with the sweet, child-loving Christ. It is mechanistic and cruel.

In “The Little Boy Lost” (I), the mystical Father/God isn’t there (can’t be there) as a physical reality to help the child lost in the “mire” of conventional society. The God we have to find is within us as well as without (in our bodies, and in the love of parents caring for their children). In “The Little Boy Found” (I), the boy is found when God-as-Father becomes a physical reality who “kissed the child and by the hand led.”

In “A Little Boy Lost” (E), the horror is in the cruelty of the priest, in organized religion, in its basically life-negative structure. While the armored mass “admir’d the Priestly care,” the priest destroys the weeping child, burns him to death (a literal death or a breaking of the child’s spirit, spunk) on the “Altar High” simply because the child says his own life is important — because he loves himself even more than his

brother and father. It enrages the enslaving priest to see a child care for his own happiness and for his own freedom.

The priest of a mechanistic virtue, the priest of the God of Fear and Cruelty, of repression and hate, of anti-life and anti-love, the murderer of clean impulses and spontaneity appears again in “The Garden of Love” (E), where the Open Meadow of Natural Love (represented by the flowers) has been replaced by a chapel (where the life-negative, love-negative sermon is pounded into the minds and bodies of children); the chapel squats over the green where the speaker “used to play.” Over the chapel is written its life-negative motto: THOU SHALT NOT. Clean impulses have been murdered and replaced with the mystical, armoring terrors of guilt and repression.

*So I turn'd to the Garden of Love
That so many sweet flowers bore;*

*And I saw it was filled with graves,
And tomb-stones where flowers should be;
And Priests in black gowns were walking
Their rounds,
And binding with briars my joys and desires.*

It isn't Christ only or Galileo or Reich or Giordano Bruno who is crucified by a mechanistic, armored society; every child is crucified by such a society's life-negative teachings, and every adolescent is crucified by its terrors (where joy should be) of a feared, mistrusted, and misunderstood sexual awakening.

In “Laughing Song” (I), the children and nature joyfully interact — play and come alive together:

*When green woods laugh with the voice of joy,
And the dimpling stream runs laughing by;
When the air does laugh with our merry wit,
And the green hill laughs with the noise of it;*

The woods, the air, the streams, the green hills, the meadows, the grasshopper, children, birds — are alive and happy, singing joyfully in the Open House of God: spontaneously, in the experience of the moment.

In “Nurse’s Song” (E), the nurse’s own misery as a child haunts her. She sees the children’s first sexual stirrings, “Whisp’rings are in the dale,” and fearful and jealous of their joy, turns “Green and Pale.” She wants to stop them from having fun and calls them in, telling them their play (childhood) is a waste, and that their adulthood will be spent in “disguise,” in guilt, in unfulfillment. Her own sexual misery haunts her, and she thinks they will be (wants them to be?) like her — dried up.

In “A Cradle Song” (I), the mother sings, and the infant sleeps peacefully, a full aura around his head. She compares him to Christ, another child of God:

*Sweet babe, in thy face
Holy image I can trace.
Sweet babe, once like thee,
Thy maker lay and wept for me.*

All creation is life-affirmative and functionally related:

*Sleep, sleep, happy child.
All creation slept and smiled.*

In “Infant Joy” (I), the infant is born out of love. The child, comforted and loved, feels wanted, happy, and joyful indeed:

*“I have no name:
I am but two days old.”
What shall I call thee?
“I happy am.
Joy is my name.”
Sweet joy befall thee!
Pretty joy!
Sweet joy but two days old,
Sweet joy I call thee:*

*Thou dost smile,
I sing the while,
Sweet joy befall thee.*

In “Infant Sorrow” (E), the reaction of the miserable parents at the birth of the babe (“My mother groaned! My father wept.”) makes the infant fearful of a world that is “dangerous.” He is given no contact, no comfort:

*Helpless, naked, piping loud:
Like a fiend hid in a cloud.*

The father does not have a feeling for the babe. He holds him roughly: “Struggling in my father’s hands.” The swaddling bands prevent the babe from moving freely: “Striving against my swaddling bands.” The babe gives up; it “sulks” upon its mother’s breast.”

Nevertheless, Man is “The Divine Image” (I), the Child of God, part of the whole that is God, that is Love. And where Mercy, Pity, and Peace thrive, God thrives:

*For Mercy has a human heart,
Pity a human face,
And Love, the human form divine,
And Peace, the human dress.*

The BLIGHT comes from a mechanistic, pornographic, love-lacking society where genital longing remains unfulfilled. This last point is reflected in the poem “Ah! Sunflower” (E):

*Ah, Sunflower! Weary of time,
Who countest the steps of the Sun,
Seeking after that sweet golden clime
Where the traveller’s journey is done:*

*Where the Youth pined away with desire
And the pale Virgin shrouded in snow
Arise from their graves, and aspire,
Where my Sunflower wishes to go.*

The youth who “pined away with desire,” and the pale virgin, both dead, and the speaker, are in the same condition. The first two are dead, their desire unfulfilled, the energy source, the life source, never reached — Love never reached. And the longing (the aspiring, the seeking) of the speaker is sure to remain unfulfilled: “my Sunflower...” his phallus, which longs for full genital contact, a contact that, it seems, will not go beyond the mere longing stage. And the BLIGHT comes from a religion that approves of the exploitation and murder of children, from a compulsory sex-morality that allows no sweetness in a marriage bed — because love in marriage itself may become a duty, an exercise lacking feeling that leads both men and women to the even greater disaster of pornographic, infected, sado-masochistic relationships. In “London” (E), the “chartered,” mechanistic trap men and women find themselves locked in is painfully illustrated:

*I wander thro' each charter'd street,
Near where the chartered Thames does flow,
And mark in every face I meet
Marks of weakness, marks of woe.*

*In every cry of every Man,
In every Infants cry of fear,
In every voice, in every ban,
The mind-forg'd manacles I hear.*

*How the Chimney sweeper's cry
Every black'ning Church appalls;
And the hapless Soldier's sigh
Runs in blood down Palace walls.*

*But most thro' midnight streets I hear
How the youthful Harlot's curse
Blasts the new born Infants tear,
And blights with plagues the Marriage hearse.*

In such a repressed society, Love itself has become sick. In “The Sick Rose” (E), genital sweetness has turned into disaster — an “invisible worm / That flies in the night, / In the howling storm,” finds the bed

of love, and through his “dark secret love” destroys her life. Where is God’s Open Meadow? The sensual guilt, the misery that comes from men and women forced to hide, like thieves in the night, to hide their love, to feel that somehow, in seeking genital fulfillment, they are committing a sin, a filth. The Garden of Eden and the open ways of the subtle, the beautiful serpent, are indeed lost.

However, we are God’s children, daughters and sons of a Divine Life, and, as God’s children, we are no strangers to each other. Indeed, there is hope. In the “Nurse’s Song” (I), the tolerant and lively nurse finds joy and peace in the laughter and play of the children: “My heart is at rest within my breast.” As night approaches, she calls them in and tells them they may play again in the morning. But the bright children claim their alliance with God’s other children:

*“No, no, let us play, for it is yet day
“And we cannot go to sleep;
“Besides, in the sky the little birds fly
“And the hills are all covered with sheep.”*

She sees their truth and logic and lets them play; thus

*The little ones leaped and shouted and laughed,
And all the hills echoed.*

It is such a simple and true thing to make children happy — if, as adults, we can learn to treat their needs fairly, to tolerate and enjoy the Life in their Bright Bodies and in their Bright Minds.

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**DARKNESS FALLS — CHAPTER 4 OF
*THE STORY OF BLIMA: A HOLOCAUST SURVIVOR*¹**

Four AM. A shrill whistle shocks us awake. We jump down from our cubicles and line up for roll call.

“Pinch your cheeks,” someone whispers, and word goes down the line. We pinch until it hurts and pray for the tinge we had only days ago to return. When the woman commandant turns to inspect the others, we wait, shoulders back, standing tall. Looking at the girls opposite us, I surmise we are a sorry bunch.

The commandant must be a man, I think, for I find no trace of femininity, no softness in her long face. Her dark hair is cut short and her body is tightly wrapped in a thick coat with gold buttons. In one hand she holds a whip, in the other a leash holding a large German Shepherd she calls Otto. A dog is given a name, I think, but we ourselves are but numbers. As the commandant walks down the line for inspection, I try to glimpse her eyes. But I am unable to tell their color. If there is such a hue as muddied steel, I decide they are that. Certainly they hold no clue to a soul. When she walks past me, I look away.

She sits down with the dog beside her and begins to call numbers. I have never memorized mine, and I quickly look down. 44703. The girl who has been assigned as our leader pulls out any girl who dawdles.

“44703!”

I jump forward as if by a spark and join the others. I don't know if hearing my number is a good thing, but then our group of about 25 begins to march toward the main barracks where I can already smell the cooking of soup. When we enter, my hopes are born out. I am given a portion of bread and a cup of tasteless soup. The black bread is not like Tante Rachel's on the eighth day. Yet I devour both quickly as if they were manna from heaven. Only much later do I think I must not rush so, for the food hits my stomach ferociously. I must learn to eat more slowly, not savor exactly, but give my system a chance to digest properly.

¹ *The Story Of Blima: A Holocaust Survivor* was published in 2005 by Townsend Press.

We go to the toilet, mere holes in the ground, and relieve ourselves. We are given ice water which we pour quickly over ourselves, happy at last to feel refreshed. And then we march.

The sun, the same sun I would see from my room at home, rises full and proud over the mountains. The air has a crispness from the last traces of winter's frost, and, as we march, I see the mountains, first a dusty blue, emerge from the clouds. As we draw closer, I see each hillock ringed by the promise of green, and I take comfort in the fact that the earth is still here. I try not to think of my swollen knees, the tiny pebbles beneath the wooden soles that attack me mercilessly with each step. Earth is still here, and so is the sun. Everything is the same, and for a moment I see myself walking up the steps to the home of my parents, coming to the door. My only worry is that it will be closed.

A girl three people in front of me trips on a pebble and the lash comes swiftly down. I see her standing up and marching again as if bothered only momentarily by a fly. The lady commandant in the heavy boots laughs and calls her a stupid cow.

We arrive at the factory where there are two women overseers. One is short with sacks of ruddy flesh on her cheeks and under her chin. Her short white hair is sleeked away from her face, giving it the appearance of a tennis ball. She walks up and down the rows of girls with much effort, and when she stops in front of me, I notice a nervous tick in her right eye. She smiles, but it seems like an evil smile. She even tells us her name, Helga, and assures us of our good fortune in being chosen for this labor.

But it is the other overseer who inspires fear in me. She is tall, taller than any of the girls or the guards, for that matter. Unlike Frau Helga who wears a simple blouse and long skirt, Frau Gizella wears a jumper with huge pockets. The pockets seem to be full, and I can see what I believe to be a thick rope emerging from one of them. Her platinum blonde hair sits atop her head like a crown. From the moment I enter the factory, the eyes never leave my face.

"Can you sew?" she asks me the same question she has asked of other girls down the line.

I remember Clara's words and swiftly reply, "Yes, Commandant."

I have no clue how to sew even a sock, but here I tell her I can. The ominous-looking black sewing machines wait, row by row, in the vast factory. If only I had watched Mama more carefully! If only I had paid attention. If only...

The girls who say they have no skills are led out of the factory through what appears to be a long tunnel. The rest of us sit down, each at a machine piled with sturdy brown tweed uniforms, perhaps thirty in all. I lift the spool of thread and try to attach it to the bobbin. It slips from my hand and rolls to the floor, but no one notices as I quickly retrieve it.

One of the girls has been found out, and I watch as Frau Helga stomps quickly toward her and grabs her by the neck. The pity is she had no hair to be pulled.

“What is wrong with you?” Frau Helga cries, dragging her toward the door through which the others had disappeared. The girl, a skinny one of no more than sixteen, has learned and makes no sound as she proceeds down the long tunnel. When the doors have closed, Helga rubs her chubby hands together as if to cleanse them of some vermin.

“To work, to work!” she snickers, eying each of us.

I return to the thread and bobbin, which I somehow master. I am trying to position a collar to be sewn at the neck of a uniform when suddenly I look forward and see two huge pockets before me.

Frau Gizella places large but surprisingly smooth hands on the machine, bends her head and peers directly into my eyes. I remember the rope in her pocket, and for a moment my heart stops.

“Your name?” she asks. I recite my number.

Gizella closes her eyes and shakes her head slowly. The other girls have begun their work and take no notice.

“Your *name*,” she repeats. I swallow. I try not to look at the thick blonde eyebrows that shadow her eyes.

“Blima. Blima Weisstuch.”

“Where are you from, Blima Weisstuch?”

“Dombrowe, Madam.”

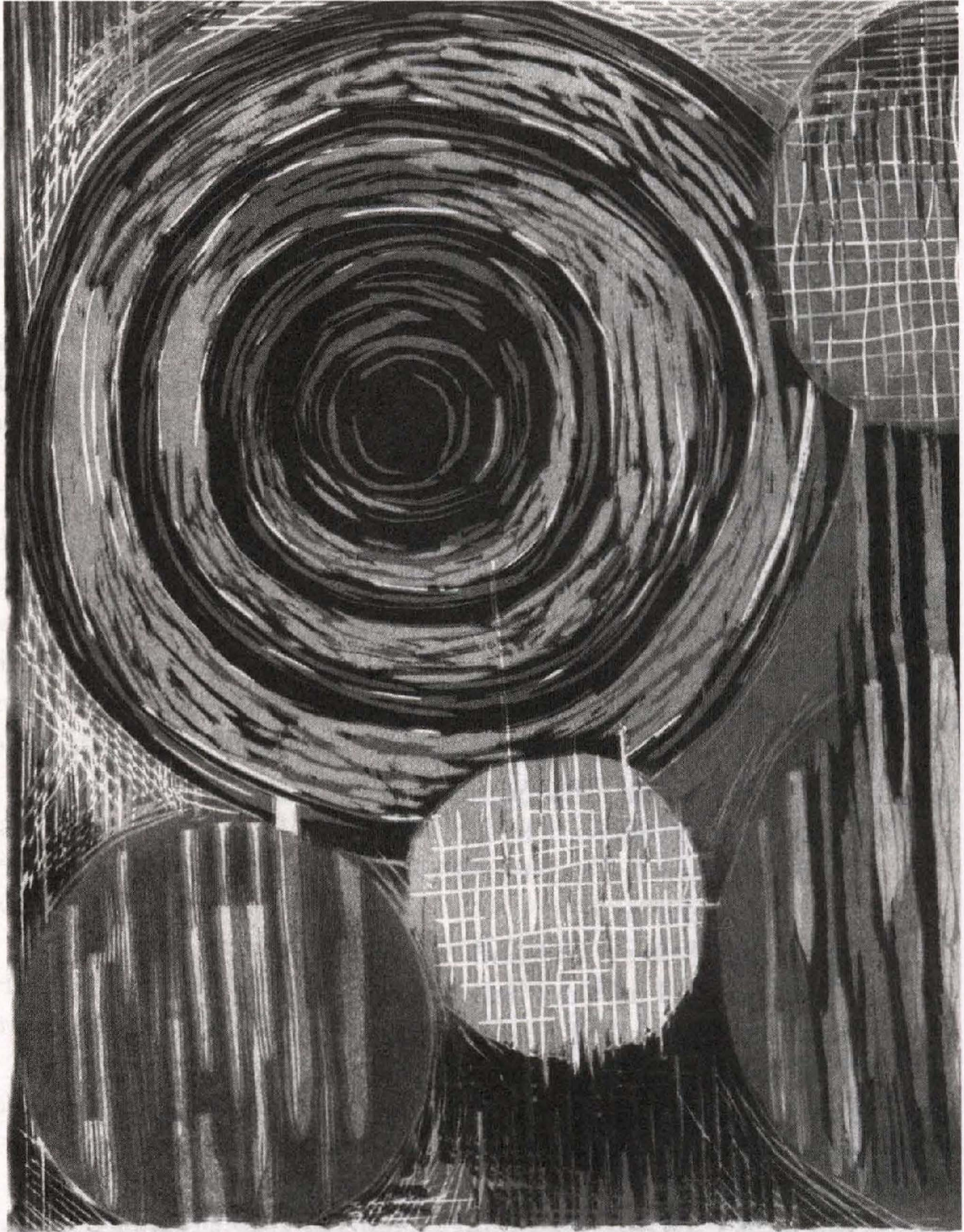
She considers this a moment.

“Dombrowa. I have not heard of that town.”

I sit frozen before the machine, unable to take up the collar.

“Can you sew, Blima Weisstuch?” she asks, her voice lower.

I nod, even though it is clear that I haven’t a single notion of how to proceed. She stretches her massive hand forward as I ready myself for the pull at the neck. Incredibly, she begins to regulate the bobbin and fix the collar in the proper place. The girls’ heads are all down as she straightens herself to full height and, with not another word, walks away. I begin to sew.



Alane Poirier

LAURENCE HARBOR



X-TREE

L'ARTISANAL HARBOR



WINTER STORM

We begin beneath heavy rain clouds, Where did you go, friend,
 Dark and cold, we are dream nymphs, nudes, I saw you yesterday
 Time dragons in the air, and held your hand,
 All mountains and dunes chapping, and touched your forehead,
 Our home for dear life, love, you recalled, and comforted you
 Until we met to spend our winter months in the
 The building ruins of childhood. Albert



Where the current flows, old age, winter spent
 We spend the winter here, and aged winter
 Back upon the water,
 Winter returns the old to the young
 Winter

Professor Albert Poirier was a loving teacher and friend who had a lifetime of
 30 years in the English Department at Middlebury College in Vermont. He
 spent his last days in March 17, 2011.

ALBERT¹

Where did you go, friend?
I saw you yesterday
and held your hand,
and touched your forehead,
and comforted you.

Albert,
Where did you go, dear friend?
An old, gray office chair
begs for your return.

Where did you go, my dear friend?
Are you lost among the lilies,
the valleys, and the streams?

Or did you close your eyes
and find your way home?

¹ Professor Albert Nicolai was a loving teacher and friend who had a distinguished 30-year career in the English Department at Middlesex County College in Edison, N.J. Albert passed away on March 17, 2011.

MATCHING THE HATCH

We begin beneath heavy river rock,
Dark and wet, we are stream nymphs, naiads,
Tiny dragons in disguise —
All mandibles and claws clasping
Our stone for dear life, fierce yet terrified,
Until we dare to spread our swimmerets to catch
The bubbling riffles of childhood.

Headlong, we hurtle into the deep run of adolescence,
Bursting the surface film, emergers unfurling
waxen wings. Clumsy and crumpled,
they fill slowly with the sun's soft pulse.
We are tiny dun sailboats, seeking to break the surface tension
And ride the wind
or be engulfed by some leviathan trout.

Downstream, adulthood:
We are angels ascending, spinners circling shafts of sunlight,
finding our green place to rest a while
among tangled tree limbs. We mate on the wing
then fall back to the water to drop our eggs,
depth charges lodging deep in the riverbed.

Where the current slows, old age: spinners spent
We spread flat our slack limbs and ragged wings
Back upon the waters,
Giving ourselves back to the ceaseless current —
Ephemerae.

BACCHUS AND APOLLO

The road into Rattlesnake Gorge sloughs
along jagged cliffs. Tattered by rapids, its asphalt skin
Stretched and torn by ice flows and floods,
Its sloughed old python hide,
Its dead old snake spine
Bears one more pilgrim's heavy tread.
For a half life, I have shuffled along,
seeking an opening down
To the river, a clearing to step
into the current.

Only the noon shafts wing this deep
To conjure rainbow trout
That pierce the osprey's quick eye

The gleam from a mink's humpback —
He feels the sun's quickening dart
And stiffens, bolt upright, unsure of his escape route.
A volley rains down on the waiting Mayfly nymphs
Exciting them to spread wings wide and begin
Their Maenad dance.

A sudden still —
Then, trout flash for Mayflies, tripping
The osprey's dive, scattering the mink to its dark den.
When it's over, whispers from the laurels
And sunlight on the clearing
Spilling down into the current.

DOWN THE BLOCK

Down the block
 there is a house
 an eyesore really
 which weeps gray mold across the shingles.
Its windows afflicted by cataracts of dirt
 no longer see.
And the only things that grows around are weeds.

Once there was life here
 within these crumbling yellow walls.
A couple a family and light shining through the windows
 on moonless nights.
The nascent air of dawn when one passes
 now reeks of festering resentments
The air heavy with old jealousies
 and drooping leaves
 which crackle silently
 until they fall.
Souvenirs of days and dreams
 that might have been.
The house a sepulcher
 of broken promises.
And yet the other day

When I walked briskly past
 I saw something.
 and curious came closer.
Three full blood red roses
 holding on for dear life
 against the sagging shingles.
Three roses.
And I stopped then

for just a moment
no longer mourning that old house
whose weeds waved like fallen flags
and walked away
thinking of roses.

The roses I saw.

LANDING

After the tremors in your belly have subsided
after the shift in air the frustrating splitting of the eardrum,
after you realize that
yes you are sitting on a fine cumulus
you breathe finally surprised by
this sense of peaceful exhilaration
to be replaced by anticipation
the blissful waiting for what comes.
After the opening credits
the first dive into the pool
the morning when the sleeping bud
at last is open.
before you know it you find yourself wrapped in a cocoon of white.
So this is what it is like to be tucked into a cloud.
A sweet purgatory.
You want to laugh but the engine of the great machine is humming
and you hold still.
And then the cloud falls away into streamers peeled by a bright sun.
And in that opening you dip, right, then left.
and then you see it
for the first time
you see it.
The buildings standing alert like so many sentinels
staring ahead oblivious to the onlookers.
Or the purple and golden towers spiraling upward defying the sky.
The patient yellow plains stretching it seems to the end of the earth.
The bayous scattering like muddy pieces to a jigsaw puzzle.
The farmhouses with their lines of sheets flapping in the breeze.
The mountains, sleeping lions
stoically challenging the clouds.
The dim gray factories aligned like dominos
coveting their labor.

The pink beaches embracing the shores where blue waves play like children
in a game of hide and seek.
The modest huts made of grass which in their way too defy the air.
The snow, tiptoeing on the roof,
the rain slapping against the fuselage,
the sunlight teasing in the window.
A last cloud, still clinging, falls away
as we descend
to take a closer look.
This first time
it is an ecstasy.
It is like being born.
And the only thing better perhaps
is coming home.

I HAVEN'T PLAYED THIS GAME IN YEARS

The lights in the bar dimmed and flickered;
Those gathered 'round it seemed smoked and liquored.
He stood, there, affecting a casual stance;
Dressed all in red, she, caught his stray glance.

She parted the crowd; he straightened his tie.
She smiled blinding white; he rehearsed his lie.
"Come here often?" and "What's your sign?"
And "Wanna' see my etchings?" crossed his mind.

She swirled dregs of a drink, "Wine spritzer, please."
He nodded to the bartender and grew weak at the knees.
She side-longed a look at the man's tapping left hand:
No sign of a ring, no "tell-tale" white band.

With a toss of a mane of her honey-blonde curls,
She moved ever closer; he counted faux pearls.
She sipped from her glass, peering up toward his face:
"You're new here, ' she spoke to him, frozen in place.

She fingered the lapel of his suit, double breasted;
He, tongue-tied, nodded dumbly. With wild thoughts he wrested.
Incarnadined nails grazed the side of his cheek,
As he frantically sought some words he would speak.

A glance to her watch told gold *Le Coultre'd* time;
She breathed, intercepting him: "Your place or mine?"
He stuttered, stammered, voiced a "yes" through his fears,
Then felt compelled to tell her: "I've not played *this* game in years!"

THE BEST TIME FOR THE WORST GIFT

CAST

Elaine Mid thirties to early forties. Sullen.

Fay Mid forties to early fifties. Cheery.

The Best Time For The Worst Gift

The outline of a large sedan. In the passenger seat sits ELAINE, a woman in her 40's. She knows herself well. Prim, contained and divorced. She wears a smart suit. She sits with annoyance and impatience.

After a moment FAY enters. She wears a Santa hat and perhaps a Red jacket trimmed in white fur. She carries a shopping bag with gift wrapped packages. FAY is about the same age as ELAINE but has more exuberance. When FAY speaks, ELAINE tries not to acknowledge her.

FAY

Hi Hon, Merry Christmas to you. I saw that Frank left you in the car by yourself. I told him to bring you in. I said 'Frank, bring in Elaine. It's the holidays. Can't leave Elaine out in the car like that.

(With forced cheer)

After all, any first wife of my ex-husband's is still his first ex-wife.

(Pointedly)

I knew he didn't leave you out here. He said that you insisted on being anti social. Actually, it seems like good sense to me. This way, you don't get your feet wet on the pavement, and there's no possibility of singeing yourself in front of my fireplace. Yes, real good sense. . . . And you don't even have to roll down the window, honey. I know you can hear me very well. Besides, it's better to keep all that nice warm air inside. Carbon dioxide can be very comforting. . . . I can understand why you

wouldn't want to come in. That's why I came out to see you. I have gifts for you and your family. It's Christmas. Frank's going to be a while. He's getting his hot chocolate. He has to have his hot chocolate. I use that new Mexican chocolate that's in the supermarket. Mi Abuelita. I don't suppose you can get it near you, since you don't live in a multi ethnic neighborhood anymore. You know Frank was always willing to try something new, even when he was still with the old. . .

ELAINE rolls her eyes turns away from FAY.

FAY (cont'd)

Now, don't be angry. I didn't mean it like that. We do have to get on with our lives. Just look at Margaret.

ELAINE turns sharply to FAY.

FAY (cont'd)

Yes, Margaret, I'm talking about you mother. How long has she been widowed? Just two years. You don't see her moping about. You and Frank were divorced, what, 12 years ago? Since then Frank's moved on. Margaret's moved on. Oh, by the way, Margaret's birthday's next month and she really liked that restaurant you took her to three years ago. Vicenza's? She wasn't too crazy about the other one you took her to last year. Luigi's. She like Vicenza's better than Luigi's. She thought their risotto was too salty. . .

ELAINE glares at FAY.

FAY (cont'd)

I talked with Margaret just last week when she told me that Frank was driving you up to see her. She said that you usually forget her birthday. Especially since you're seeing somebody. Didn't seem to know much about the guy except that his name is Robert, and he's a insurance underwriter and he's off this week to go to his nephew's christening. He's two years older than you and an Aquarius with a mole on his left shoulder. Other than that, she doesn't know a thing. Hasn't met him yet. I bet you want to get a few test drives on him before you run him past your mother.

FAY (cont'd)

Anyway, since your car was on the fritz , I told Frank to stop by here so he could take my gift up to Margaret's. Kill lots of birds with one stone. Hold on.

ELAINE turns away again. FAY blithely pulls out a package, very much aware that she's adding salt to a wound.

FAY (cont'd)

I got this for Patrick.

ELAINE's eyes widen.

Yes. Patrick. Your brother. See?

Elaine turns away but FAY walks to the front of the car so she points the gift directly in front of the windshield.

FAY (cont'd)

He helped me change a flat tire last year. He wouldn't take the twenty I offered him. — I think you got Patrick pegged the wrong way. He is not the selfish bastard you think he is. He's just got a lot on his mind. I think we all do.

FAY reaches into the bag again.

FAY (cont'd)

I know you think Janine is crazy to like Betty Boop things, but she's old enough to make her own decisions. Not Betty Boop, Janine. And if she admires Betty's figure, it doesn't mean she's a lesbian. Betty Boop's a cartoon! And your daughter knows she's just a cartoon. So this is just a Betty Boop coffee mug. It has all the sex appeal we wish for but it provides something practical — Listen to me natter on. It's not like we're best friends. Frank left you for me, and then I left Frank , and he went on to marry Samantha. . . And then Samantha left Frank. . . And in case you were wondering, I did not get Samantha a gift. I'm considerate, not crazy. . . But you and I, we have too much history to pretend we don't exist. Especially when your mother calls me every other week and tells me the news of her grand kids. She likes to include

me in her life. What can I do? She even told me about your Robert. Look, you're divorced only once and I'm divorced twice so I know how slim the pickings are. Oh — this is for Sheila. It's a book. She knows how to read.

*ELAINE turns away. FAY goes to the driver's side. ELAINE leans over and locks the door, then she turns away again from FAY.
FAY knocks on the window to get her attention.*

FAY (cont'd)

(Nonplussed and unfazed at ELAINE's actions.)

Look at him. Frank's getting a second cup of chocolate. He'll be a little gassy by the time you hit Bloomfield Avenue, but he'll manage to keep it in. He'll just be a little quiet. It's a long way to Caldwell. Make sure you stay on the parkway until the exit for route 280. He always gets off before thinking he can find a short cut. There are no short cuts through Newark. Besides, you don't want to be lost in Newark with a trunk full of gifts. Make sure he stays on Bloomfield Avenue, too. You have to be more insisting. You were always afraid of being that insisting

She looks directly at ELAINE who turns away.

FAY (cont'd)

Except for getting Frank to take you to your mother's. It's not a chore. She likes Frank. When I was married to him, we used to visit Margaret all the time. Used to take her out. That's how come I know that she likes Vicenza's better than Luigi's and by the way she prefers orange juice with pulp instead of orange juice with no pulp. She goes on and on, especially now that you're seeing that Robert fellow. But I got her something that you refused to get her. I mean Margaret is getting up there, and if the DVD of *Naked Boys Singing* gets her through the week, then what the hell. She wants to look, so I say, let her look. She's a pistol, that one. But you must know that. After all, she's your mother.

ELAINE reaches over and beeps the car horn.

FAY (cont'd)

Oh beep all you can. Frank is still going to enjoy that second cup of hot chocolate. He used to keep some Gaviscon in the glove

compartment. Go on, look. Does he have any in there? Open up the glove compartment and have a look see? Go on?

Reluctantly, ELAINE opens the glove compartment and sees that there is nothing there. She shakes here head 'no.' She takes a big breath.

FAY (cont'd)

I didn't think so. Here, I brought out some extra. Make sure he takes some before he eats. Otherwise, he'll be Gas-zilla on the entire trip back home. We had to put up with it when were married to him, but not anymore. I'll just put these extra pills in the bag.

She puts the pills in the shopping bag.

FAY (cont'd)

He's such a creature of habit. He always said he wanted to try new things, but he didn't try anything new at all. Not when we were married. — That's why you got to keep on him about the right parkway exit. For him getting lost in Essex County is the routine. — I got bored with the routine.

(Another pause)

Frank let me divorce him, though I was the real cause. We said irreconcilable differences, but I was the one who cheated. I mean, I wasn't exactly a trophy wife. Samantha was the trophy wife, not me. I was the wife who cheated.

ELAINE looks in shock at FAY's honesty.

FAY (cont'd)

(pause)

Frank's too decent a guy. I mean, look at him. He's driving his first wife to her mother's for Christmas. And he stops by his second wife's to say Merry Christmas and exchange gifts. That's real decent. Steady. Decent. He doesn't do shit for Samantha, but that's her problem.

(pause)

Robert was decent, too. And smart, not a stick in the mud. I met him

at Woodbridge Mall when Frank was away on a business trip. And once it happened, well, there was no way I could go back.

(pause)

So Robert. — Yes, the same name as the man you're seeing. Same name. Coincidence. How many Roberts are there in the world, hunh? — Yes, so Margaret said that your Robert was in Virginia for his nephew's christening. Otherwise, he would be up here doing the chauffeuring. Margaret is nothing if not talkative. — Hah! I should talk. That's why we get along so well. You? You're Stonehenge. I figure, if you never say anything, you never learn anything.

(pause)

My Robert was a nice guy. After I divorced Frank, Robert and I saw each other for about a year. But it was always touch and go with Robert. Literally. Frank thought I was too free wheeling and lacked focus. Robert thought I was too controlling and too anal. We never know how other people see us. You have probably changed your opinion about me at least ten times in just this afternoon alone.

(small pause)

This is not a gift I could put in a box with a ribbon.

Fay looks into the kitchen window

FAY (cont'd)

Okay, Frank's turned off the stove and he's put his cup in the sink. He's going to the bathroom. He'll be out in five. So I have to tell you this before he comes out.

(pause)

Robert hasn't seen me in more than 8 years.

(pause)

So Margaret doesn't know that it's the same Robert. And Robert doesn't know that it's the same Frank. Underwriter. Mole on the left shoulder. Aquarius. Two years older than you — and I know how old you really are — And I could describe other parts of his body if you need further proof.

(pause)

I know this seems like rotten timing, but it's not. It's the best time for this kind of gift. If you dump Robert because I slept with him, a long time ago, what good would it do for you? And if you found out later, what good would it do for either of us? It's slim pickings out there. You have to hold onto the good ones any way you can.

(pause)

I'll put the bag in the back seat. If I know Frank, the trunk is arranged just the way he wants it.

FAY tries to open the back door. It's locked. She tries again, it remains locked. Eventually, ELAINE presses the lock release. Silently, FAY puts the bag in the back seat and carefully closes the door.

FAY (cont'd)

(pause)

When Robert gets back home . . . well, . . . Happy holidays, hon . . . And I hope you . .

FAY doesn't finish the sentence. She exits into the house.

ELAINE gets out of the car and takes a step towards the house. Then, she pauses and goes back into the car. She puts on her seat belt and tries to compose her face to look exactly as she did when the play began. She then thinks better of it. She beeps the horn again, rolls down the window and says:

ELAINE

Frank, come on. We have to move on.

Curtain.

**A CERTAINTY AMONG UNCERTAINTIES:
A REVIEW OF HANK KALET'S NEW BOOK OF POETRY**

In his new book, *Certainties and Uncertainties*, poet Hank Kalet does for contemporary American readers what some of the great poets of T'ang Dynasty China did for the court society and the Emperor himself. He puts a human face on what otherwise might be addressed in clinical, abstract and de-personalized language as "social issues." The great T'ang era poet Po-Chu-I once described village workers harvesting a field in a poem that concluded with the image of a poor woman scouring the ground recently trod by the reapers, scavenging for spilled or unwanted grain. With her young child in one hand, she carries a broken basket in the other — a pitiable site to be sure. Po concludes by noting that even the healthy reapers have already lost all of their cop to taxes and are themselves scavenging for anything left over to eat. Po reflects on his own wealth, in stark contrast to the poverty of the workers, and wonders by what trick of fate he has managed to be born into such good circumstances. The shame he feels at poem's end surely pricked the conscience of the emperor and courtiers reading the poem, and, hopefully, led to lower taxes and better conditions for the workers. The poem is both philosophical and political, but beyond that, it is especially moving on a purely human level. Hank Kalet shows in his new book that he is the literary descendent of poets like Po-Chu-I, and he uses his prodigious experience as a successful journalist, his ability to employ what Wordsworth called the "sympathetic imagination," and his sense of imagery and music to craft a book of poems that would make Po proud.

The opening poem, for which the book is named, sets just the right tone and context. Here, Kalet praises the incredible beauty and struggle of this life with an emphasis on its incredible fragility and the moral responsibility to persevere especially when the outcome is unknown. In a single poem, he captures so much of what we admire in the human condition:

...to wander in the vast tundra of the mind,
To catch lightning bugs in jars,
To stare in disbelief as jets crash
And the towers crumble,
To know the calendar pages still turn...
...to look these uncertainties in the eye
And laugh or cry but
Always to keep it going, to get along
In this, this uncertain world of ours. (1)

In “At the Market,” Kalet imagines what it would be like to live in downtown Baghdad and try to maintain the semblance of “normal” routine life knowing all along that a terrorist bomb might literally rip apart that fragile veneer at any moment. He does this by skillfully proposing a “What if” scenario, imagining the market, the people, the bustle, the sights, sounds, scents — all suddenly, horribly transformed into chaos and destruction, which he imagines with the same eye for detail, the journalist’s eye enhanced by the poet’s lyricism:

What if this cold case blew,
Bomb tucked away in
Brown bag or box of burgers,
Shattering glass and bits of wooden beams,
Scattering them like shrapnel
Into the faces peering at them?
Imagine the blood, the fear,
Thirteen dead, the paper said,
Another fifty-seven wounded,
Store owner collecting guts in bags,
Debris scattered on the brick walk
In the open-air market... (20-21)

As if this weren’t remarkable enough, what Kalet does next is a masterstroke right out of Po’s playbook. The scene shifts suddenly to a market in the U.S. on a Saturday morning. This market is the PA Dutch Market on Route 27, for all intents and purposes remarkably similar to the Baghdad market we’ve just seen ripped apart by a bomb. What stays with us after finishing the poem is the quiet and regularity

of this market, a peace and routine that we perhaps take for granted and about which the Iraqis dream:

...as the girls roll dough
Into pretzels behind me,
As the cars come and go
In the lot outside,
The late fall breeze
Kicking leaves along the ground,
The morning's rhythms resolute
In their regularity. (21)

And yet Kalet acknowledges the struggle to find language to capture and convey such human suffering. One is limited by language, an imperfect tool but the best we have to evoke the sympathetic imagination in readers. Perhaps this is what draws Kalet to poetry, the need to create and synthesize new language, fresh language closer to the experience itself and charged with a power to evoke that is absent in prose and in the formulaic language of some journalism. Writing of civil war about to erupt in the nation of Togo, a situation many Americans might hear about but not fully comprehend in the perfunctory coverage of it on the six-o'clock news:

“The infrastructure
Of civil war
In Togo is
Already in place,”
The analyst says,
And it sounds so
Cold, though I know
What he means, having
Read this story
So many times
In the past, so
Often, in fact, that
It sounds like a
Badly written tale,
A melodrama filled
With endless clichés. (10-11)

Kalet himself finds himself drawn into such formulations of language and struggles heroically for himself and for his readers to find new language, true language: "...the clichés growing / like weeds in the spaces / where language fails, / and reason falters" (11). But he never stops struggling...or succeeding. As Madeline Tiger noted, "Throughout this strong minded collection, the poet searches for a new language of anger and preservation; and even 'where language fails, / and reason falters' Kalet manages to speak out, with sorrow and with love."

One of Kalet's most appealing qualities is this kind of identification with his readers, with their struggle to find words and meaning in a world gone mad, as well as with the temptation to close one's eyes and flee from it all, even for just a short while. "Love Poem In A Time Of War" beautifully expresses this understandable and natural feeling to "hide from it all" while at the same time confessing to its limitations:

I shouldn't read the papers over coffee
Or watch the news as we make the bed,
Should instead just crawl tightly in it together with you
Tied up in sheets and legs and sweat
To hide out like gangster fugitives,
Dillinger, maybe, or Bogart in "High Sierra,"
The world kept at bay — but then,
Nothing good ever came to them, final reel
Ending in violent death, shootout
With the troopers on some desolate ridge
Somewhere high above the city, real world
Refusing its exclusion,
Imposing itself like an intrusive neighbor,
Like the paper that comes every morning
Headline screaming of war... (15)

In Kalet's poems, the trials of personal relationships play out against a backdrop of larger "big" issues, such as poverty and war. Yet in Kalet's work the personal relationships can be just as gut-wrenching and tragic as those playing out on a larger stage. "Route 539 Heading South To Atlantic City" follows a driver who continually replays the moment his relationship died and his world changed underscored by the dreary scenery and the monotonous sounds of the road:

Gray, cloud-covered, the rain falling
In intermittent bursts, pelting
The cracked road, the worn macadam,
His mind caught in memory, that
Moment before the end, before
She closed the door on their future,
That wooden thud of its slamming
Echoing in his ears as she
Got in her car and drove away.
His radio hums low, lap steel
Banjo jangling, Hank Williams' disc
In the player, Parkway sign off
To the right as the road narrows,
Spindly pines reaching into the
Distance, damned rain like a foul mood... (3)

Kalet's poems about relationships play with the same stark beauty and lyricism of Springsteen's love songs.

Still, "Certainties and Uncertainties" ends on a note of hope, even if hope itself is a kind of uncertainty. "Letter to Daniel, One Day Old" captures the divinity in an infant child. Before the horror of the New York Times headlines that scream of bombs, war planes and troops massing this tiny child inspires awe and a sense of higher purpose in the speaker:

War planes on TV,
Troops massing,
The world is in crisis,
So depressing to think of this world
Under gray skies,
Under threatening skies,
Waiting for war.
And yet, there is your
Tiny body
In the bassinet behind
The nursery window —
How can I not think better of the future?

How can I not believe
There is something better
To believe in?

Po would be proud. Like his literary forebear, Kalet continually brings his readers back to the human face of what is so often abstracted and sterilized. As Emanuel di Pasquale noted, “[Kalet] lets the Everyman be heard: the soldier, the Lost child. Kalet offers the reader the simple life transmuted through vivid words into the head of Compassion. Hank makes known the anonymous.” Perhaps this is what Percy Shelley meant when he argued that “poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world.” Although it is uncertain if poets will ever be given their due for shaping a culture’s conscience, their ability to do so remains certain thanks to works like Kalet’s new book.

“Certainties and Uncertainties” is published by Finishing Line Press, Georgetown Kentucky. Copies of the book may be ordered at **www.finishinglinepress.com**. Highly recommended.

INFERNO OF THE MIND: A REVIEW OF C.G. JUNG'S RED BOOK

Overview:

The old expression “When falling, dive!” might best express the sentiments of Carl Jung as he decided to turn a near psychotic breakdown he was experiencing in late 1913 into an opportunity for self-analysis and self-therapy. The result of this momentous decision is *The Red Book*, Jung’s record of his “confrontation with the unconscious” which he had bound in a custom made red leather folio that measured approximately 12 X 15.5 inches and weighed nearly ten pounds! Like a massive, medieval folio reminiscent of the Book of Kells, *The Red Book* included over 400 pages of beautifully handwritten, calligraphic text and 53 startlingly brilliant full page paintings. Originally, when Jung began to be afflicted by an unceasing flood of apocalyptic visions in 1913, he started to record them in a series of six black journals (subsequently known as the “black books”) and later transferred them to the large red leather folio. By 1917, he had finished most of the initial composition of the book but poured over it until 1930, revising, adding commentary, editing (Furlotti).

Despite the technical challenges in mass producing copies of *The Red Book* that publishers would have faced in Jung’s day, Jung did intend for *The Red Book* to be published. But plans for publication and widespread distribution never reached fruition, in part due to Jung’s ambivalence about such a project. Could he expose his own intensely private struggles to a mass audience? Would he be deemed a madman, a mystic, or an unfulfilled artist? Having been ostracized by the psychoanalytic community following his break with Freud (one of the causes of his breakdown), Jung was acutely aware of the risks involved to his reputation. He had said to his close friends on numerous occasions that he wanted to be known first and foremost as a man of science, as a psychologist — an image that might be undermined by the publication of such a fantastic work as *The Red Book* (Corbett 2). Still, those close

friends were allowed to see and to read *The Red Book*, and Jung kept the original in his office on an easel for his patients to peruse (Furlotti). He had invented new therapeutic techniques and tested them on himself in the composition of *The Red Book*, and he now encouraged his patients to try some of the same techniques, even to make their own “red books” (Shamdasani 216). Hence, Jung’s book became a teaching tool and model used in his clinical practice.

Still, after a series of false starts and unfinished attempts to have it published, Jung died in 1961 without having published *The Red Book*. Sensitive to Jung’s own misgivings about the risks to his reputation as well as the risks in exposing such extremely personal material, Jung’s heirs literally locked the book away in a Swiss bank vault for decades. Despite numerous attempts by hundreds of scholars to see and publish the book, Jung’s heirs held to their convictions. Leaks of some of the pages of the manuscript appeared in public, however, and the family eventually relented, concerned that the material might find its way into the hands of Jung’s detractors (Corbett 5). It took Jungian scholar and editor Sonu Shamdasani three years of negotiation with Jung’s heirs to finally arrange for *The Red Book* to be published in fall of 2009 (5). WW Norton & Co. agreed to publish the manuscript in a large-scale folio format at a cost of two hundred dollars a copy, an agreement that worried the heads of the company to the point that they hesitatingly ordered only 6,000 copies for their first printing (Furlotti). Norton’s fears proved unwarranted, however. Thanks to an engaging cover story in the *NY Times Magazine* entitled “The Holy Grail of the Unconscious,” as well as displays at the Library of Congress, Rubin and Hammer museums, and even a spot on the hit TV show *Law & Order Criminal Intent*, sales exploded. Now in its sixth printing with over 50,000 copies sold and counting, *The Red Book* has arrived (Furlotti).

Nevertheless, the hype that surrounds *The Red Book* seems to belie the extremely challenging nature of its content. Many who discuss the book, even in professional circles, have yet to read it cover-to-cover. Certainly, readers who are new to Jung would be wise to steer clear of *The Red Book*, at least until they have first digested some of the more accessible introductions, such as Jung’s autobiography *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*. Readers familiar with Jung’s work still face the

daunting challenge of interpreting a book unlike any other that Jung wrote and determining its relevance to the fields of psychology, mythology & classics, philosophy & religion, history, art history, and literature. What did this book mean for Jung, for his time, and for our time? To start to answer these questions, we must first investigate the context in which the book was written.

Context:

For C.G. Jung, the years 1912-1913 were pivotal and painful. Having taken the bold step of publishing his book *Transformations and Symbols of the Libido*, Jung had in effect cut his ties with his mentor Sigmund Freud. Jung's book included his own revolutionary definitions of the concept of the libido, the connections between sexuality and spirituality, the compensatory nature of the unconscious, and an emphasis on the collective unconscious, archetype and myth — all of which was anathema to Freud. Although Jung had known that there would be some personal and professional fallout over the publication of this book, he was emotionally unprepared for the blackballing he would receive. As he later stated, "My book was declared rubbish; I was a mystic, and that settled the matter" (MDR 167). Strains in his marriage now began to take their toll as well, and Jung began what would become an infamous affair with one-time patient turned assistant Toni Wolff. Tensions in Europe were also reaching a boiling point on the eve of WWI, and Jung seems to have felt the mounting pressure of all of it. Professionally discredited and emotionally overwrought, he descended into isolation, withdrawing from most of his professional activities, most notably his position as president of the International Psychoanalytic Association and his position as Lecturer at the University of Zurich (Shamdasani 201).

Against the backdrop of the collective crisis about to engulf Europe and in the midst of his personal and professional crisis, Jung began to experience a flood of apocalyptic visions, some of which afflicted him in the middle of the day during his routine activities. Nevertheless, he clung to that daily routine as a lifeline, struggling to keep his head above water and avoided drowning in the images, losing his identity, and fully descending into psychosis. Maintaining his private practice as well as his familial duties, he was determined to gain control of the

images that afflicted him — a feat which he accomplished by recording his visions, giving shape to them in words and images in the black books each night before bed, after his work and family routine were completed. To calm himself, Jung occasionally practiced yoga, though only to the point of calming himself, after which he once again engaged the images surging up from the unconscious — a practice that he felt departed from that of yoga whose purpose was “to obliterate completely the multitude of psychic contents and images” (MDR 177). Reflecting on this time, Jung contrasted himself to Nietzsche, who experienced a similar flood of images during the composition of his *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, and subsequently began to slip into a full blown psychosis from which he never recovered (MDR 189).

Jung's *Red Book* is in many ways a response to Nietzsche's *Thus Spake Zarathustra*. Not only is the tone reminiscent of Nietzsche's masterpiece but so is the theme: the search for meaning in a modern world where many of the traditional institutions that once provided meaning and context have been undermined or destroyed. But whereas Nietzsche concluded that “God is dead,” Jung responds with the concept that God can be rediscovered and reborn in the psyche (Shamdasani 202), i.e. as a psychological experience, as an archetype. Dante's influence can be felt as well in *The Red Book* with the overall narrative arc of a descent into one's more or less private underworld on a quest to redeem one's lost soul. Here too, however, Jung seems to adapt his literary forebear to his own purposes, for whereas Dante relied on the traditional Judeo-Christian cosmology to frame his epic, Jung creates his own cosmology (202). And although the female character of Salome in *The Red Book* is in many ways the antithesis of Dante's Beatrice, Jung's character of Philemon echoes Dante's Virgil in many respects. Jung based Philemon on Ovid's tale of the old couple Baucis and Philemon, chosen by the gods to survive the great flood for their hospitality, as well as on Goethe's use of the same character in his *Faust*, Part Two, in which the old couple are murdered by Mephistopheles when they block Faust's development project. Jung's Philemon, however, has enormous kingfisher wings, is portrayed as a wise and canny old magician, and appears without Baucis. Even Gilgamesh shows up as a character by the name of Izdubar (an older variant of Gilgamesh's name), and Jung takes advantage of the mortal nature of this god-like being to stress the

sacrifices that the modern West has made in developing their science and reason. And the images and visionary passages in the text also conjure the visionary works of William Blake who, along with that of Nietzsche, Goethe, Dante, Ovid and Gilgamesh, Jung had studied prior to the composition of *The Red Book* (203).

In addition to being a tour-de-force of Jung's studies in literature, mythology and philosophy, *The Red Book* has also been hailed as the "nucleus of his later works" and the raw material that led to many of Jung's most influential psychological theories (Shamdasani 193). Indeed, Jung himself noted in his autobiography that the images that arose during this period, which he collected in *The Red Book*, provided the material for all of the work which he spent the remainder of his life elaborating (MDR 199). In *The Red Book*, one can find the following theories, some in their application and others just being conceived: the collective unconscious and the archetypes, personality types, amplification, compensation, active imagination, inflation, projection, reflection and individuation.

The theories of active imagination and individuation are especially relevant in understanding *The Red Book*. Jung developed the technique of active imagination as a way of gaining control over the flood of images that threatened to overwhelm him and plunge him into a psychosis. The technique involves allowing oneself to "drop" into a twilight consciousness similar to that we experience just before falling asleep. One is still aware that one is awake, but images begin to bubble up from the unconscious in a sort of waking dream. Inducing and sustaining this state, one can then open a dialogue with the figures that emerge, relating to them and integrating them. Jung preferred active imagination to dreaming because the ego is on firmer footing in the former while in the latter it is on weaker, unequal footing relative to the unconscious. Personifying and relating to the forces of the unconscious is essential to Jungian theory, for in doing this one can gain some measure of control over forces that previously threatened to inflate the ego. In other words, as the scholar Thomas Moore once put it, "we are condemned to live out what we cannot imagine" (224). Active imagination is one of the practices and techniques that Jung used to facilitate the process of individuation, a psychological

process of integrating elements of the unconscious so as to develop the neglected, split-off parts of one's psyche and thereby live out a fuller and more conscious life. *The Red Book* may be considered, in part, a record of many of Jung's active imagination sessions during his crisis. And the model and message of *The Red Book* is certainly the process of individuation — its purpose and practice as well as the potential dangers involved.

Content:

Throughout *The Red Book*, Jung continually expounds on the importance of the process of individuation, and, in just about every instance, immediately follows up with a warning. He implores readers again and again not to mimic him, not to follow blindly the journey he is undergoing in his own confrontation with the unconscious. The whole point of individuation, he emphasizes, is for one to follow one's own path:

There is only one way and that is your way. You seek the path? I warn you away from my own. It can also be the wrong path for you. May each go his own way. I will be no savior, no lawgiver, no master teacher unto you. You are no longer little children...May each seek out his own way. The way leads to mutual love in community. Men will come to see and feel the similarity and commonality of their ways. (231)

Clearly, Jung was aware of the dangers of blind hero worship and cult formation — a concern that perhaps led him to say years later that he was glad to be Jung and not a Jungian!

Jung's own path begins with a feeling of being possessed by what he calls "the spirit of the depths" — i.e., the unconscious, as distinct from "the spirit of the times," which he defines as daily waking consciousness and routine. The assumption is that we live on the surface of our lives, unaware of the deeper impulses that have a major influence on so much in our daily lives. Drawing parallels to the Old Testament prophets, whom he quotes to open up *The Red Book*, Jung feels similarly overwhelmed by a flood of visions and feels similarly compelled to record these as well as his understanding of them for his readers. Still, with the continual reminders not to follow his path blindly, Jung

stresses that he is only *like* a prophet in these limited senses and that he is not himself a prophet, hero or messiah figure. Indeed, imitation of such figures is questioned and undermined throughout *The Red Book*.

What follows is an account of the apocalyptic visions of 1913 that ushered in Jung's crisis, and they are truly harrowing. Like episodes from the biblical Book of Revelation, Jung's visions involve the complete destruction of Europe by vast floods, a sea of blood, a killing cold from outer space, and the like. The apocalyptic visions are followed by two visions involving the death of the hero. In the first, Jung drops down into a subterranean cavern. Peeking down through a hole in the ground, he catches a glimpse of a still lower level with a stream rushing past. The body of a young hero floats by with a bloody wound on his head; next, a black scarab passes. Reflected in the stream bed, Jung now sees the sun reflected, but this is soon blotted out by a glut of serpents and a surge of blood. In the next vision, the Germanic hero Siegfried rides down from the mountains on a chariot made from the bones of the dead. Jung hides at the base of the mountain along with a young savage who persuades Jung to murder Siegfried, which they do by ambushing the young hero and shooting him. Jung felt tremendous pressure to understand these visions, so much so that he contemplated suicide if he failed (he kept a loaded revolver in the night table drawer) (MDR 180).

Reflecting on his life and career to this point, Jung concluded that he had been inflated with the hero archetype (a universal unconscious impulse or instinct that takes on a particular form — in this case, the impulse that all cultures feel to create a superhuman individual, a hero). He had been ambitious, arrogant, successful, but at a price. Living the myth of the young hero no longer suited him, for he had given away his own path in the process and had lost his soul. In becoming Freud's heir apparent (the "blond Siegfried" as the Freudians called him), he had allowed himself to be devoured by the father (in Norse myth, Siegfried's father is named "Sigmund"). He had sacrificed his own convictions and ideas and had become something inhuman and unfeeling in the process (we might add that Siegfried is a warrior without fear who forgets his soul mate Brunhilde in his heroic journey). The visions were telling him that his ego had been inflated with the archetype of the young

hero and that this had to stop — i.e., that he must kill the young hero in himself and that this would give rise to a new myth to live by (the scarab is a traditional symbol of rebirth). Jung felt that if he hadn't come to an understanding of these visions, he might have been tempted to act them out literally (the revolver in the night table drawer). Soon after he had these visions, Archduke Ferdinand was assassinated igniting WWI. The parallel between his personal crisis and the collective crisis overtaking Europe was not lost on Jung. The meaningful coincidence (synchronicity) suggested to him that an archetype had been activated and that Europe, as a personality writ large, was also inflated with the archetype of the young hero and had similarly lost its humanity and soul in the process. Unable to understand this inflation, it acted it out on a mass scale with the murder of the Archduke as well as millions of young men sent off to battle filled with the heroic ideals of nationalism.

The tragic consequence of such hero inflation, Jung realized, was a loss of soul. For Jung, the word "soul" has many meanings, but in the context of *The Red Book*, it seems to refer specifically to the archetype of the anima — the archetype of relationship and feeling that typically manifests in a man's dreams, as well as in a patriarchal culture's myths, as a female figure (Walker 47). When the capacity for relationship and feeling is mature, the anima appears in dream and myth as a spiritual guide (Ariadne, Beatrice, the Virgin Mary). When that capacity is undeveloped and immature, the anima appears as a femme fatale, a witch, a seductress, etc. (Lorelei, Siren, Medea, Calypso, et al.) (47-50). Hero myths in ancient cultures seem to capture the tragic consequences of the young hero's over-development of his abilities at the expense of his humanity and relationships — after they begin to accumulate heroic deeds and reputation, Jason abandons Medea, Theseus abandons Ariadne, Aeneas abandons Dido. In Jung's particular case, he had spent the first half of his life developing the functions of intuition and thinking, leaving those of feeling and sensation neglected and undeveloped. It is perhaps no surprise that he began having marital problems at this time and began his affair with Toni Wolff, perhaps an attempt to re-claim the soul he had lost in his heroic career thus far. Jung would theorize later on that a primary challenge for men in the second half of life is to integrate and develop neglected aspects of the psyche, especially the anima. Hence, the main theme of *The Red Book*

is “the Re-Finding of the Soul” or, as the title of another work by Jung, “Modern Man in Search of a Soul.”

Jung’s own anima appears in *The Red Book* in the form of the figure named Salome as well as that named simply “my soul” (the two figures appear to be interchangeable and Jung says directly of Salome, “...she is my own soul...” (248)). Based on the Old Testament figure who danced for Herod and seduced him into beheading John the Baptist, Jung’s Salome is anything but trustworthy. Unlike the biblical character, Jung’s version is blind (perhaps another sign of her lack of development) and desperately wants Jung to love her. She is the embodiment of feeling and sensation, begging for Jung’s attention and affection. Just prior to her appearance, Jung notes that “The thinker’s passions are bad, therefore he has no pleasure...He who prefers to think than to feel, leaves his feeling to rot in darkness. It does not grow ripe, but in moldiness produces sick tendrils that do not reach the light” (248). Salome is also the daughter of Philemon, the wise old man of Jung’s visions, dependent upon him and subordinate to him throughout.

Philemon, as noted earlier, is Jung’s archetypal wise old man and guide throughout *The Red Book*, appearing earlier under the name Elijah. In the absence of Freud or any other older male mentor, Philemon served as a “ghostly guru” to Jung. Like Virgil for Dante, Philemon serves as a guide through the underworld of *The Red Book* as Jung finds him to be at work behind the scenes helping him through certain encounters. Jung’s Philemon is based, in part, on Ovid’s tale “Baucis and Philemon,” in which the old couple show appropriate reverence and hospitality to Jupiter and Mercury who, disguised as mortals, are visiting and testing the villagers in their capacity for Xenia (the sacred guest-host relationship valued among the ancient Greeks). As a reward, the couple is spared the wrath of the gods in the form of a great flood that destroys all of their neighbors. The gods transform their home into a temple in honor of their piety and grant them their one wish, which is to die together at the same time. After they pass away, the gods honor them by transforming them into trees, which interlace branches and trunks as they grow together. Jung was also heavily influenced by Goethe’s rendering of the couple in his *Faust*, Part 2. Here, the old couple refuse to move to make way for Faust’s construction and development project, and Mephistopheles ends up murdering them without Faust’s

knowledge or approval (an act that induces tremendous guilt in Faust and that plays a part in the redemption of his soul). Curiously, in his adaptation of Philemon in his visions, Jung completely omits Baucis, and opts not to draw upon the defining characteristic of their story — i.e., their marital intimacy, fidelity and love (Schwartz-Salant 26). Instead, Philemon is made the father and ward of the blind Salome, whom he ends up telling Jung not to trust toward the end of *The Red Book*. Though Jung seems to have made great strides in realizing the immature state of his anima, in personifying her and opening up a dialog with her, and even in making some progress toward her integration (he does confess to loving her and his interaction with her leads to the restoring of her sight), by the end of *The Red Book* he seems unable to have gone further with her. Hence, *The Red Book* has an element of incompleteness, even tragedy — of Jung's inability to completely trust and love his soul and thereby develop fully this immature part of his personality.

Nevertheless, the progress that Jung does make in reclaiming lost soul and developing his immature capacity for feeling and relationship plays out dramatically in several other of the major episodes of *The Red Book*. In *Liber Secundus*, the second part of *The Red Book*, the writing takes on a new tone — light and comic. In the opening episode, "The Red One," Jung envisions himself in a medieval castle as a solemn, serious tower guard who spies a red knight approaching. The red knight presents himself and he and Jung begin to verbally joust. They debate the virtues and shortcomings of Christianity and Judaism and Jung eventually calls him the devil. But the knight insists that he is really, in fact, a personification of Joy. He argues that one should learn to dance through life, and Jung stuffily replies that dancing is really just for mating or to re-enact antiquated customs. At its root, Jung asserts, dancing is nothing more than an expression of lust and madness. In a mock serious tone, the red knight counters that one can also dance for joy. Suddenly, Jung's clothes burst into flames!

In the analysis following this episode, Jung notes that the devil has an inner reality and meaning. The devil criticizes religion for its solemnity, but by discussing religion with him, Jung reaches an understanding with the devil — namely, that Joy is not merely a symptom of madness or

lust, but an expression of life and a legitimate reason for dancing. Jung realizes that in dancing with this devil, he is continuing his integration and development of his inferior feeling side — this time, represented by the Red Knight with the stuffy Jung in the episode representing his overdeveloped thinking side, or, perhaps, his undeveloped, idealistic feeling side personified in his puer-aeternus dream ego, high up in the tower (Beebe 50). We might add that in being disconnected from the ground, un-grounded as it were, he is also disconnected from dancing — hence, the Red One might serve as a trickster personification of Jung’s undeveloped sensation as well as his undeveloped feeling. As Beebe and others have noted, Jung again seems to make some progress here, and as Jung himself comments about this episode, “Through my coming to terms with the devil, he accepted some of my seriousness and I accepted some of his joy...It is always a risky thing to accept joy, but it leads us to life and its disappointments, from which the wholeness of our life becomes” (261). There are also many echoes of Goethe’s Faust here, especially those episodes in Faust I in which Mephisto teaches the stuffy Faust to drink, be merry, and fall in love — however, the parallel also casts an ominous cloud over this semi-comic episode in *The Red Book* since Faust’s feeling was so undeveloped that he is incapable of real love and his lust for Margaret ends up killing her. Jung seems to indicate here that his “greening” is just an early stage of growth — much more development needs to take place in his feeling and relationship.

The comic-serious tone, as well as the theme of Jung’s need to develop his feeling side, carries over into the next episode, “The Castle in the Forest.” This time, Jung is alone in a dark forest where he soon loses his way. At a medieval castle, he meets an old scholar, absent-minded and rude, who, after an awkward and gruff greeting, finally has his servant give Jung a room for the night. Late in the night, the scholar’s beautiful daughter comes to visit Jung in his bedroom — she says she has been waiting so very long for someone to liberate her. Breaking the spell of the fairy tale mood, Jung complains aloud about how cliché-ridden the whole episode feels, like something out of a cheap romance novel! He explains all of this to the maiden, who, in a moment of comic irony, surprises him by telling him that she is actually a real person and that everyone who visits thinks she’s just a cliché of the imagination! Moreover, taking her seriously and literally is the only

thing that will liberate her! Even so, Jung complains about the stock fairy tale setting; the maiden counters that fairy tales come nearest to human truth. Banality, she explains, has cursed her. Paradoxically, she says the romantic and fabulous and cliché-ridden that he would contain also contains the humanity that eludes him in his abstract thinking. To his surprise, Jung feels pity for her and tells her that he believes her. She asks if he loves her, and he replies, curiously, that he does but he is already married. Still, his serious and compassionate response liberates her from her imprisonment. Incredibly, HE now feels liberated and thanks the maiden, who tells him that she sends greetings from Salome!

In his commentary on this episode, Jung stresses the need for one to integrate the anima and animus. He complains of scholars he has known who were preoccupied and wrapped up in their own abstract, overdeveloped thinking and expectations; these same men often unconsciously demonstrated their undeveloped feeling sides by continually craving attention and recognition in the outer world and becoming easily offended if their names are not mentioned enough or their work not recognized whenever and wherever they feel it should be. In essence, Jung implies, they all have such a maiden imprisoned by an old scholar of a father. She has waited so long to be liberated, but her needs are denigrated as unimportant, superficial, and common by the overdeveloped thinking father/scholar mind who recognizes her undeveloped state but does nothing to free her! Such men typically put down feeling and relationship, or, at the very least, ignore it and deny its reality, allowing it to pine away in vain in a castle tower. That Jung can recognize this in himself speaks well for his awareness of the problem of his undeveloped feeling side and the need to tend to it, but how far he will carry out his work in this regard remains to be seen.

Indeed, in a subsequent scene, Jung shows great feelings of compassion for a man who initially repulses him. In the episode entitled "One of the Lowly," Jung meets a thirty-five-year-old tramp with one eye. Jung speaks with him but hastily judges him to be crude and unintelligent. He is also suspicious that the tramp wants to join him on his journey to the next village where Jung plans to spend the night. The tramp is a locksmith, now unemployed, who rejects farm work because it lacks the intellectual life of the city. Surprised, Jung asks what the tramp values

in the city, and the tramp replies that he likes the cinema best. He goes on to cite fantastic scenes he has seen in the movies, including a man who ran up the sides of houses, another carrying his head under his arm, and even one who stood unharmed in the middle of a raging fire. Jung notes that some of these same feats were respected by the Church and noted in the stories of the saints' lives. The tramp also asserts his distaste for the aristocracy and hopes the people will one day be free. As their conversation progresses, Jung comes to respect this tramp and feels compassion for him. They dine at a village inn, and the tramp reveals that he lost his eye fighting over a woman, went to jail, and never saw her again. Still, he is hopeful that he will find work and eventually find and marry the woman he fought for. He also hopes to recover from a chronic cough, which afflicts him throughout the night. Jung checks on him after a particularly violent coughing fit and finds him in a pool of blood. The man dies in Jung's arms:

After dinner I go to bed in a humble room. I hear how the other settles into his lodging for the night next door. He coughs several times. Then he falls still. Suddenly, I awaken again at an uncanny moan and gurgle mixed with a half-stifled cough. I listen tensely — no doubt, it's him. It sounds like something dangerous. I jump up and throw something on. I open the door of his room. Moonlight floods in. The man lies still dressed on a sack of straw. A dark stream of blood is flowing from his mouth and forming a puddle on the floor. He moans half choking and coughs out blood. He wants to get up but sinks back again — I hurry to support him but I see that the hand of death lies on him. He is sullied with blood twice over. My hands are covered with it. A rattling sigh escapes from him. Then every stiffness loosens, a gentle shudder passes over his limbs. And then everything is deathly still... What did this one do? He worked, lazed about, laughed, drank, ate slept, gave his eye for the woman, and for her sake forfeited his good name; furthermore, he lived the human myth after a fashion, he admired the wonder workers, praised the death of the tyrant, and vaguely dreamed of the freedom of his people. And then — then he miserably died — like everyone else. (266)

Reflecting on the episode, Jung feels somehow responsible for the tramp's death. On the one hand, he seems envious of the simple yet strong feeling and passion with which the man lived his life. Several times, the man had commented on the rare beauty he found in everyday experience that evoked powerful feeling within him. Jung also reflects that it is sometimes essential for one to "bottom out" in order to appreciate and comprehend one's own heights. Indeed, he muses, the heights of consciousness are only meaningful if one has experienced the depths. Curiously, Jung does not comment extensively on the feeling of compassion and sorrow evoked in him that dominates the scene, choosing instead to move in his thoughts to the philosophical and spiritual as he contemplates the life of the individual, imagining a drop of water moving through its cycle from sea to cloud and back again. Yet it is the scene of the tramp dying in Jung's arms, and the powerful feeling that evokes, that remains long after one is finished reading this scene.

A similar pattern emerges in what is perhaps the highlight of *Liber Secundus* — the episode involving the hero/giant Izdubar, an encounter that sheds even more light on the theme of Jung's struggle with his overdeveloped intellect and need to reclaim his lost soul. Here, Jung travels East where he encounters a giant, who strides out of the light rising in the east and out of the ancient, heroic past of the earliest civilizations and cultures. The giant, seemingly invincible and arrayed in full battle gear, is called Izdubar, an older name for the semi-divine Sumerian epic hero Gilgamesh (Schwartz-Salant 18). Incredibly and tragically, Jung, in using his reason and intellect to explain the nature of the natural world as well as of the giant's being, reduces all of its grandeur and power in mere moments, his rational explanations striking the giant like poison darts. The tone is tragic here as Jung becomes aware too late of the tyranny of reason and intellect in their tendency to strike down and poison other modes of thinking, such as the visionary, the magical and the imaginative. Jung feels deep remorse and guilt for having laid the giant low and desperately seeks a way to revive him as he lies dying at Jung's feet. The giant is too large and heavy for Jung to carry, but it occurs to him that he might alter the giant's size if he conceives of him as a fantasy. The giant suddenly shrinks down to the size and shape of an egg, and Jung is able to put him in his pocket and carry him to a place where he might be able to revive him. Jung chants

a number of incantations and revives Izdubar, yet he realizes that as the giant's powers increase, his own decrease. Apparently, Jung must reach a workable relationship with the god, neither destroying it with his intellect, nor sacrificing completely his own ego in the realization of its seeming insignificance when confronted by the archetypes. Of special note is the tone of great remorse followed by deep compassion, and it dominates Jung's account of this active imagination:

I: O Izdubar, night is falling, and it will get cold up here.
Shall I not fetch you help from men?

Iz: Let it be, and answer me instead.

I: But we cannot philosophize here, of all places. Your wretched condition demands help.

...I paced the mountain ridge, pondering, and looked back to my Western lands, where there is so much knowledge and so much possibility of help. I love Izdubar, and I do not want him to wither away miserably. But where should help come from?

... I: A way has been found. You have become light, lighter than a feather. Now I can carry you." I put my arms round him and lift him up from the ground; he is lighter than air, and I struggle to keep my feet on the ground since my load lifts me up into the air...

...I: "Once we have crossed the mountains and have reached the houses of hospitable men, I can calmly go about finding a means to restore you completely again." Carrying him on my back, I climb down the small rock path, with great care..." (282)

This is Jung's attempt at resurrecting God (whom Nietzsche declared dead) as a psychological phenomenon, as an archetype with an inner reality with which one can develop a deeply emotional relationship.

Later in *Liber Secundus*, an act of sacrifice takes place illustrating Jung's need to develop his feeling and sensation functions. At this point the Cabiri emerge from the depths. They are gnome-like deities from ancient Greece, and Jung describes them as coming from under the earth. Protecting sailors and promoting fertility, the Cabiri were known to supply creative ideas and consciousness but could also interfere with consciousness at times, like gremlins. The Cabiri announce that Jung

is now their master but that he should not delude himself that he can control living matter, which is their realm. They say that living matter and creativity emerges on its own, slowly, and cannot be “pulled up” by the intellect and will. The Cabiri give him a sword they have made for him and tell him it is the means of overcoming his madness. They say he is entangled in a great knot, which Jung demands to see. They show him his own brain, in which they say he is too entangled and engrossed. Being lost in his own brain is the source of his madness. The Cabiri are described as piling up on one another, creating fibers, roots and canals — an image of a brain! They say they are indeed Jung’s brain and he must cut them down with a sword. If he does this, they will be pulled up and live through him (i.e., be integrated). He does as they wish. Jung then describes a great tower which was built by the Cabiri; he says they built it from the energy of the guts, not from human thoughts. He says it is solid and the symbol of one who lives from himself.

Near the end of *Liber Secundus*, Jung’s soul appears and he tells her that he has felt blocked, unable to continue with his work. She replies that it is his own ambition that is blocking him and tells him a fairy tale. In it, a king has no children and desires a son. He visits a witch and confesses to her as if she were a priest. She says he should be ashamed but helps him. He buries a pot of otter lard in his garden and in nine months a child, a son, emerges. The son grows up strong and smart, but wants one day to replace his father. Shocked at his arrogance, the father visits the witch again for advice. This time, he plants another pot of otter lard and in nine months the son dies. He buries his son but feels terrible remorse. The king then visits the witch a third time; this time, he buries the pot of otter lard and in nine months has his infant son back again. The boy grows magically fast and soon again desires his father’s throne. This time, the father complies, and the son, now king, takes care of his father for the rest of his life. Jung asks his soul the meaning of the fairy tale. She replies that he is the king and his son is the doubting thought that valued life over love. The witch is the mother to whom Jung must submit as her child if he wishes to nurture a new attitude, for only the mother can create. Jung resists becoming a child to the mother and sees this as threatening his manhood and his plans of autonomy. The soul says this is precisely why he must subject himself to her, as an antidote to his own ambition. Jung takes her advice and lives out the fairy tale,

giving over all power to his son and in so doing finds some peace of mind. He does this with resistance and fear, but knows it will heal him. At this point, Jung reflects that he began this entire journey because he could not live with himself. His “self” (the person he had become) was detestable to him, and he had to return to a type of “middle ages” in order to transform himself into someone he could live with. He needed to go down into hell and transform himself — this, he asserts, is the way. In the final section of *The Red Book*, called *Scrutinies*, Jung develops this idea of becoming a person he can live with. He begins by relentlessly criticizing his own waking personality, or “I” personality, enumerating in detail all of its shortcomings and failures and threatening it with torture and punishment, seeking to make it more aware of its own vices and tendencies to hurt others. He describes his “I” as arrogant, self-righteous, ambitious, overly sensitive, mistrustful, and vindictive. Such barbaric means are necessary, Jung asserts, for such a barbaric “I” which has made virtually no progress since “the early Middle ages” (333).

Later in *Scrutinies*, Jung’s soul visits him late one night. Soon, there is a knock at his door. It is an enormous crowd of the dead; Jung notes that the dead know no more than the living and seek completion, resolution, redemption for their unfulfilled lives. Jung fears that he can’t trust his soul’s interpretation of this episode; luckily, Philemon shows up just then and proceeds to preach to the dead. He brings with him “the good and the beautiful” and before preaching to the dead, he reinforces Jung’s suspicion of the soul: “Fear the soul, despise her, love her, just like the Gods. May they be far from us! But above all, never lose them! Because when lost they are as malicious as the serpent...Cling to the soul with love, fear, contempt, and hate, and don’t let her out of your sight. She is a hellish-divine treasure to be kept behind walls of iron and in the deepest vault” (343).

Several aspects of the central theme of re-finding the soul are present in this long and complex sequence. One might think that after the scathing self-criticism of the first part of *Scrutinies*, Jung would be more compassionate and more open to building a relationship with his soul. But this is not the case. First, Jung’s treatment of the soul seems unusually harsh. Although Philemon’s teaching about how Jung should relate to the soul might be taken as his warning about projection of

the anima (Schwartz-Salant 30), one cannot quite get past the fact that Jung still holds extreme distrust toward her. She is “a hellish-divine treasure to be kept behind walls of iron and in the deepest vault.” For all intents and purposes, she remains a negative, suspicious femme fatale associated with Salome, whom Jung has refused to love since the start of his adventure. Moreover, his soul is not the figure to guide him through the episode of his encounter with the dead; rather, it is Philemon. Contrast this with Circe’s role in instructing Odysseus on how to summon and interact with the dead in *The Odyssey* or Beatrice instructing and sending Virgil to see Dante through the *Inferno*. In each of these cases, the anima is in the positive instrumental role of establishing and developing a relationship to the dead (the unconscious). In Jung’s case, he does not seem to trust his anima with this task, nor does he present her as being very trustworthy. Jung’s overemphasis on Philemon and his use of the Philemon myth from both Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* and Goethe’s *Faust II* distorts both his character and that of Baucis, his wife:

In general, *The Red Book*, there seems to be a serious problem with Jung’s attitude toward the feminine. The example of Baucis, being reduced to only “Philemon’s other half...” instead of her having her own rightful dignity and integrity as the proper half of this revered couple has been cited. Jung ignores the primary feature of the myth — marital devotion and fidelity — dropping it to use Philemon’s association to survival of chaos (the flood). He summarily dismisses Baucis because he needs Philemon’s connection to surviving catastrophe, ignoring the fact that they survived as a couple because of their deep love for each other. Instead, Jung splits them up referring to Baucis as the half that “strives to Hell,” while Philemon strives “toward the good.” This is the age-old connection of the feminine with evil, further characterized in the way he perceives Salome, and later in his reaction to the *Feminine Mysteries*. (Schwartz-Salant 26)

Philemon now preaches his seven sermons to the dead who visit each night. He provides gnostic teachings that include the importance of incorporating sex with spirituality, etc. At the end of his teaching, Jesus appears and Philemon stresses to Jung that he must sacrifice for

his own path of individuation as Jesus did for his — that is the proper way to interpret and follow Jesus' message. Jung later visits Philemon in his garden and finds that Jesus has also arrived at the garden as one of Philemon's guests. Philemon welcomes Jesus and says his brother (Satan) is already there; he notes that the two have much in common via the serpent and are inseparable. Philemon says he needs Jesus in his garden and asks what gift he has brought. Jesus replies, "the beauty of suffering and sacrifice" (359).

What seems remarkable about this conclusion to *The Red Book* is not only the complex, esoteric gnostic teachings that Philemon preaches to the dead; but also what is absent from Philemon's garden. Jung finds some value in Salome's teaching about the necessity of the devil and of evil, but he does not seem to consider the necessity of including her, or the feminine, in his garden. Jung, Philemon, Jesus and Satan are present, but not Salome, Baucis or any representative female figure. And Jesus' final message regarding "the beauty of suffering and sacrifice," apparently applicable to those struggling with their own individuation, does not include compassion, a major aspect of Jesus' teaching that seems to be applicable and necessary as well to Jung's belief in Individuation. Curiously, Jung would later recognize the need to include the feminine in his praise of the Catholic Church's dogma of the assumption of the Virgin Mary (MDR 202), but in *The Red Book*, the anima remains unredeemed.

Whether or not Jung, after *The Red Book* years, ever succeeded in fully integrating and developing his anima remains a subject of debate. At the very least, it seems clear that he made some progress in the second half of his life following the completion of *The Red Book*. In his autobiography, composed near the end of his life, Jung commented

But the anima has a positive aspect as well. It is she who communicates the images of the unconscious to the conscious mind, and that is what I chiefly valued her for. For decades I always turned to the anima when I felt that my emotional behavior was disturbed, and that something had been constellated in the unconscious. I would then ask the anima: "Now what are you up to? What do you see? I should like to

know.” After some resistance she regularly produced an image. As soon as the image was there, the unrest or the sense of oppression vanished. The whole energy of these emotions was transformed into interest in and curiosity about the image. I would speak to the anima about the images she communicated to me, for I had to try to understand them as best I could, just like a dream. (MDR 187-188)

Moreover, Jung seemed to be keenly aware of his responsibility to deal with the anima and the images she introduced:

As a result of my experiment I learned how helpful it can be, from the therapeutic point of view, to find the particular images which lie behind the emotions...The essential thing is to differentiate oneself from these unconscious contents by personifying them, and at the same time to bring them into relationship with consciousness. That is the technique for stripping them of their power...I took great care to try to understand every single image, every item of my psychic inventory, ...and, above all, to realize them in actual life. That is what we usually neglect to do. We allow the images to rise up, and maybe we wonder about them, but that is all. We do not take the trouble to understand them, let alone draw ethical conclusions from them. This stopping-short conjures up the negative effects of the unconscious. (MDR 177-192)

There seems to be some evidence that Jung took his own advice to heart to some degree and that he matured in his capacity for relationship and feeling, for in his later years, he seems to have drawn closer to Emma Jung, his wife, once again, encouraging her in her own studies of the Holy Grail — a subject he forfeited in deference to her interest and work (Bair 429). Jung never devoted a lengthy analysis to the Grail, allowing Emma and Marie Louise Von Franz to produce a book on the subject, a critically acclaimed, in-depth analysis of the Grail from the Jungian perspective. Perhaps *The Red Book* served in part as a wake-up call from Jung’s psyche to break from his hero inflation and devote more time to the anima. At the time of its composition, we get an in-depth view of Jung in transition, not yet matured into the benevolent

wise old man, the personification of Philemon that he came to be known as, but a middle-aged man struggling in his great experiment upon himself to find and develop his own soul.

* * *

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