

M

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The Song Cave

Published by The Song Cave
www.the-song-cave.com
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Design and layout by Mary Austin Speaker
Cover drawing by Stacy Jo Scott

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ISBN:978-0-9967786-0-2
Library of Congress Control Number: 2015952752

FIRST EDITION

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for Dan

*As the centuries go by, there is always a crowd before that picture, gazing into
its depths, seeing their own faces reflected in it, seeing more the longer they look,
never being able to say quite what it is that they see.*

VIRGINIA WOOLF, "MONTAIGNE"

I went into M and read there

“If I’d written
to seek the world’s favor”

and if I’d written—

To be strong I thought a lot of different things

POEM FOR M

I came upon a horse in a field; the barn was abandoned behind.
Who was I to question the performance?

Living alone out here, I was small in the eye.

Wore a giant trouser and swung around: there was nothing
down in the cave.

Yet would I be a better writer if I walked more in the woods?

The good smell off the night.

The rage—the flash—the gesturing—

Things happen, M counseled, and tragedy you see vs tragedy
you don't.

So when M begins drinking at five it is with a great deal of self-
possession.

But when M gets wasted on one glass of red wine this also is civilized.

Sometimes M wonders why am I so faraway? And I go, you are close in spirit.

Persist in the little way of adjacency.

Of the burning light of the past, its unknown flickering—I transmit no mention and no lie.

Yet all thought is autobiographical, isn't it?

Persists in the little way of mind.

FEELINGS OF OF

OF SADNESS

An accidental failing, or unseasonable surprise—

“A stupid and monstrous ornament!”

There’s no unfreezing the shock, it’s not a moment or cart

I’m not brimmed with it yet

Ceasing the habit of speech almost completely

Or vivid with misdirection, and love

“The hot alarm of some very bad news”

I might cover my face

Circle the rocks

OF IDLENESS

So in rooms all day and night long
on tablets figuring memory, applying the family, at my job
over coffee, listening to sex—

definition expands
under languor
becomes possible

★

With an audible subject I am which and the making of these
“Mere shapeless masses and lumps of flesh”

No fixed goal but the hither and yon, vague field
of firework boom

In glass books of time
“I put them in writing”

★

In some passion “hoping to make my mind
ashamed of itself”—

so boredom
wrapping his cock
forced my jaw

OF PROMPT OR SLOW SPEECH

Facility and promptness, I have felt them
Burn many times, my face burned
And my belly—a kind of obliging I set flaming in halls
Was I speaking?
I was stoking my eye’s fire
With familiar surprise, some dialogic vigor
Myself at a desk in an office
Inviting discourse
But all these things I did not slew
Because I proceed with deliberation, a kind of dumbness
Or mouth stuffed from want
Because I clack I whine
“Overcome by a listener”

OF PROGNOSTICATIONS

On the driveway caressing an innermost self
I picked up a sharpie and drew on my hand—an honest happening
It meant nothing

Once I had fallen in love, once out of
My dumb hand, fat star
And systems of terrible odds

“By spirits, bodily traits, dreams, and the like”
My ancestors work a public gloss
Their great fond wagers

All infinite, all common:
“A husband-man, digging very deep”
Hits the white

OF CONSTANCY

“Emerging from the shelter of a windmill”: a glimpse of marquis de Gaust, spotted by seigneur de Bonneval, atop an amphitheater in Arles, he is walking the ruin. And aimed a culverin at, and lit the match of one to. In purple-colored fear the marquis blooms and moves, “turning pale and tightening up.” Even the moderate Stoic consents to tremble: “Wear trouble, no remedy.”

Standing in the downpour the marquis inclined a turn of phrase, a useless flowing.

Lavender waves away the world today, every power.

OTHER TITLES FROM THE SONG CAVE:

1. *A Dark Dreambox of Another Kind*, by **Alfred Starr Hamilton**
2. *My Enemies*, by **Jane Gregory**
3. *Rude Woods*, by **Nate Klug**
4. *Georges Braque and Others*, by **Trevor Winkfield**
5. *The Living Method*, by **Sara Nicholson**
6. *Splash State*, by **Todd Colby**
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