

Deadpan

Clit clat clit
Your tongue shall be slit

Think of it this way.
Two husbands vie
for a place in one nice lady's limousine.
The sensitive one aces the bar routine
where the smear on the wall
means dirty hands
 Don't make me
tell your poker face
so long farewell *auf Wiedersehen* goodbye
It's a rough life
for a bird on a plane
sans cocktail

Masked I go forward
Naked I withdraw

[Who am I?]
[[And for what?]]

*Cuckoos don't sing this month,
They only sing "cuckoo"*

Minor imbecilities are cut short
when the anarchists arrive
from outer space to tell
us how wrong we've been
to date Dear comrade
Come in here, we'll say
and clean up this mess
then go get the fat crop off the glowing stalk
and eat, eat!
It's a light enough meal
but the quarrels of the squirrels
make getting it dicey

Crop circles are in fact nice places for fooling around
if you know how to swallow quietly
We can address this problem only indirectly.

*Tread on a nick, marry a brick,
And a bee will come to your wedding*

Heat rises off the parking lot and leaves
shift slightly
desultory in the event
outside the agricultural college
where we talk
mostly about work.
Minutiae reconstellate.
Settle down.

Meanwhile Tomcat and Jerry slurp
at the graywater bucket
waiting on your free stroke.
Who's the straight man
in that duo
now? Decimal or coelacanth?
You or Descartes?
Is *now* in fact a good time?

These are only omens on the way to school.
Fossils.
Not one pretty line.

*Are you spin, sprout, or blackout
Fading in or falling out?*

It's like you're from the fifties
when they were king, queen, jack
and all the other numbers flying
in simulation
Why have they set us knaves to hauling
the embers of other members? Amount,
amount, O fellow fur-bearing creature;
live up to your college degree! See me
cross my arms above my chest as
the tabernacle drains
and a blackish engine rips counterintuitively
right to left a thought
crossing a private miner's mind
precedent to a cough

and slow to return (Ahem to the dirt!)
again

*It's not the cough that carries you off
It's the coffin they carry you off in*

Stay calm and carry on
as cooler weather makes its entry into Eden
Wrap up your junk and cover your face
we're only called "Sir" for a season
in inference
Item: Is it strange we don't yet
call a spade a spade
or refugee an angel?
When did the horse come into the picture?
When his cocked hat and pistol?
We're on a train all
headlong for the tunnel
aleatory, alimentary, and ailing
That assonance of stag and jackal
spurs joyful release
in the darkening plain of public domain
on paper at least

*Ip, dip, dip, my little ship, sailing on the water
Like a cup and saucer. But you are not on it*

Who dat say who dat when I say who dat??
(boomed into an island phone box
ashore once more
after one hell of a blow)
Can we blame him whose lingo dates him?
Can we blame Nixon for sitting up on his heels? So
Cagney might whine
Why you—
Come out and take it, you yellow-bellied *rat!*
Is it not your business to occupy *something?*
Mine's a hunky dory
until it gets lost in a following sea
allegedly
and we have to go to Gloucester to get it

What's your name? Elegant pain
What's your number? Cucumber

There's nothing new about the sign on my back.
"Take care," it says, "I bite."
Yet I climb every mountain
with the mother-daughter mountaineers
try hard to ford
the stream nature plants
epistolary
in my way
without gnashing.
A mile is long
as lips on dry leaves
though the pain in the face-up position's
a little like a tease
to one who
pricks her own embroidery—
Wind the wind around these please
but first unfinger.

Then unbe.

In Search of Lost Time

Let's not cry over spent rods
make a mess of ourselves

What is paleolithic after all
but a horse of a different itch?

If anachronism's the joke
may we make *Spem* our song

in our march to clear away the limbs
then ivy

Too many questions
irritate the baby

on our way to the margins
of the forest, where the stars of our others

are waiting. They have the knobs,
coins, buttons

and we line up according to this system.
At HO scale the bears

are hardly threatening, though in the end,
bears.

Can we make it work for us?
From a distance we see the bridges burning off their trestles

Nearby, the tables turn
in the snafu over funding

We don't really want to engage
at the level of the line

left hanging
that we ourselves come to resemble

like the train whistle
slicing out its thrill over the countryside

(But) Symbolism began
when rock lay too heavy in the hand

so had to be thrown
and we came to prefer

the presence of singers
in our serious-minded sodalities

of (endless rapid) Hezzanith
readers. It sounds logical enough

to calculate the azimuth
with the celebration of the birth

of the irritable subject
in the circle of her own warm covers

waiting for her mother
to pass the message to her dad.

But let us buy a little trailer
for our travels, get

away from starts
through planted rows

of silos, cylinders, and stills
left standing by the twister

and greet the refugees going and coming
with the hottest coffee ever

hopelessly nostalgic
for the islands in the stream of other islands named

between the gendered ends
of electrical parts potted plants

and their homemade souvenirs. We said
we'd not just be "a special condition of language"

doing covers of '80s hits as if when the time came
it would blow us out of the water

We were fallen but not angels
(We just tried not to hurt ourselves)

as the bear from all fours
stood full to her terrible height

a little confused about where to turn next
among clouds we've had enough of

By the stars
By the grass that moves We

couldn't let go