Thirst & Surfeit

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THE BOG TRAVERSE
1200-600 B.C.E.
Tollund Man

A name finds itself in a bog, filtered. And then it bears ridicule in relation to the ridiculous. What is it upon which you rest but a skin made, literally, into leather?

Weight has a purifying character. Pelt made metal. Once, your face was a fingerprint: not made for purposes of identification, but for assertion. Time’s serenity borrows its voice from sphagnum, old photos, rubberized bones. A reticule of fuel.
The Windeby Girl

Death is not death but a blindfold. Rock in the crook of your arm. Even in war, when cotton bandages were in short supply, they made substitutions, just as you did. The woolen headband shifts from your bare head and covers your eyes. Stanched with water, the despite of flows. Girl, girl, they called you from time immemorial when you might have swallowed your sexual organs. This burnished skin peeled back from your ribcage to reveal your hips. What grows shallow derives from itself.

Yde

Fear has necessary relation to fact, this red-haired body. Now you run from those brick-like portions you’ve excavated as merely domestic goods. Fear pegged down as a compass tells you which way to run. Away. Not to say you were only a child. Here is a disability of relation. Form preserved eats the DNA entire. One thought the covering layer was the devil and the thing unearthed was fear. Those wisps of hair, not like a face beneath. One thought her slanted spine had a finger’s indication.
“I have great pleasure in sending you the customary, annual bog body...”

Now I should be stepping distant from you, credulous grace. Borremose, we are old lovers in the gaping noose of you. Your semen hemmed in resorbs to peat and deer-skin. Without hands, it’s the grasp of your face that swallows; there is no further clenching I might be able to believe.

The next year, another was uncovered in the same bog. And in 1948, still a third body was discovered there. Incubated in thirst or surfeit. Slowly the stride recesses from the place; and resumes. Its Swabian knot.

Surfaced

I think of the basic quality of infidelity as a perch from which to view. This is a thing a mummy would not know, so long as we discriminate mummies from skeletons. The cause of death, seen from this distance, half immured: the origin of science. No less than the one who betrayed her head as it struggled above the water’s line.
**Meenybradden Woman**

Your conscience has a face, blurred and fibrous. There a hand unfurls, from below expression, to brush the hair back from the brow. Here stood a good wife and here stood her cottage. And here came the angry cauldron to smear her with preservative, a spoon surrounded with itself. And here I came, from out of your cape, by a 500 years’ margin. It is as you wish: by right to be disinterred and by virtue to be cast back. Tendered to the true face and disclosed.

**Wiedergänger**

Where offerings were made.

Some such were insured never to walk there again. Like a scoliosis that affected her gait, that lifted the stain from around her wicket. That’s the solicitude of the maze, sieved with quicksand. The riddles chime, gong, bell, flute. So the wand lifted inhales the banner.

No one. And such damage inflicted in no other ware.
HOVENWEEP

1200-1300 C.E.
You are not now what you were meant to be. And this is why mirages are without irony.

So hurry: the precipitate falls hard onto forgetful dirt. The external, like rain, jars you.

There are stretches of miles, of the unexpected; they menace and recant. You prefer that the haste drop you off like a passenger, into tedium. You are in brambles that annoy but do not scratch.

A cartoonish body waits outside yours, whistling and smirking.

The precipitous

falls sodden-to-itself, to shoulders like yours, piggyback.

Hard. Finally, hurtful: this patience.
The trees named for Joshua pick up their arms, plainly out of obedience.
The ornamentation on the desert falls away, ashamed. Animals pare the infrared light as light made invisible to them. Why would any flock leave these blemishes—here—whereas the light will shrug, give admittance, lay reddened sod carpet over the barrier, a cattle guard when single phrases lining the grammar are stilted, self-conscious. The group which makes them drifts across a site so difficult to disparage. Light untied and undone. The herd, and all excess rubbed out. Hackberry cancels out juniper Travel approximately forty-five miles on a road that is variably paved— There was a testimonial painted on tin, regarding his journey, traversed entirely on his knees. As though the humble man could crawl the entire way, but end up only here. And still mark his disappointment as affirmation. This is what's accomplished in the creek, water rotting away the rock. Your compass: obliges you to take him out briefly to the night, look up, and him crawling and panting in the dark. You, at the base looking flat, see north. See towers. It may take a long time.
We look down, straight down, on you from above. It was forty five minutes of flight over an unpaved road

and we saw that ruined honeycomb

as we were masons

who knew better. The weathertight world

and all that's inclement cast aside: affirmation for assertion.

Tower is a term of endearment. That you not disgrace your family by insisting they must be pilgrims with you. The names of those places.

And then those who are looking for the structure of honey go in your stead. Fallen rocks, and knees curved. The map consults upward to sweetness, its supplication, darkly sticky.

Ah, now the face got washed away, acequia. Frontispiece or channel, it was called "And." The monks, the brothers, all of us drank strong coffee thickened with sugar. We studied the face. Collision with, that is.

The frontispiece. A building inclined to melt.

Here was a channel by the name of "And" who was filled quickly by a fierce cohort of poplars, shaking intensely. Then they went away. And no one knows what became of this face, an off-hand loss, like a book gone, half-way through the reading of it. The brothers.

The gouge in the flatness of things. And swept through with kinship.

The essence of nature is to be always borrowing. The wing falls from the bird mid-flight and then is affixed elsewhere. Winged stones, winged weeds, and so forth. They jitter around like small dolls. The wind falls off the wing in the semi-deliberate world. Dolls fall into a tableau. Twigs or flecks of dead skin. Little angular dolls flop over, overlapping, making a corral where there was once a corral. The essence of falling is repetition or overlap.

Summer is the most dilapidated season, most likely to stumble from overhead. Most likely, these shabby playthings are ancient. Herding wild creatures into domesticity. A little spit will glue a leaf onto the doll's back, winglike.

But no saliva in a place devoid of mouths.

Toys, they lack their own volition, and for that, they are made to lie down and cover up the tools.
“The shadows walk on sunlight in the air” so said
a child, yellow-headed in the contrast he explicates. Remember to go
to the market, tomorrow, to retrieve what you left there. Go late, when it’s sure
to be reachable, findable. The child will be gone. The fruit, the merchandise
all fine, but without any color. Just the canopy’s flap. The father, who looks on.
You find yourself on the curb, grinding something down with your heel. Butt or pig-
ment, or a gesture that signifies defiance. This you throw over commerce
to imbue, again, with color, your lost holding. You are the historian.

And the color and gesture are genuine, but not the heel. Here’s the child, he seems
to have disappeared from the woods, come back. But this place is hardly wooded,

and even the marketplace is just a tent where itinerants sell soda and candy. They’ve left. Now the child puts on a silence; he’s burlap and dune. A pretend forest leans
sideways to expose wares. The practical opposing irrelevant sunlight. With what’s inside. These shadow’s rocklike containers.

The plan is sticky, and unwinds slowly from around rock, shrub. For convenience, it
abandons its twine-shape and adopts legs and arms. Lies on its side.

Having a greater surface area speeds evaporation. Salt crystals
attract goats and sunlight.

This is not the plan of a parasite. Not a patch of mistletoe, no lichen caught on the
rock’s face. Slow unwinding of arms from the clutch of a self. Unhurried gait.

There are rituals for stickiness. Where no water is available for rinsing, we chew
through barriers. Where the barriers waft off, we call the former people.

Now it is a gummy ball, bouncing in a rut. When it is caught, it will, in turn, entrap.
Boredom has its own mission. Like the purpose of aridity, it preserves.

Here is someone to whom the plan clings as she passes through. The rock and shrub
bow together, confiding.
Someone sits cross-legged before three piles. Tallow, flint, and a mound of unknown things. She twists cotton wicks in her hands.

Elsewhere: she digs recklessly, throwing up dirt in what was, archeologically, a garden. There is a fossil hand grasping a fossil shovel. All this becomes evident in the aftermath of flames and wind. She invokes play

and the mortar falls into heaps. The careful ruins of fruit. The tentative petrification of herbs. Overripe by millennia, the place smells of shit. Evidence preceding a fire.

Some one will come along and counter the smell with another finding. Buried communities are not concerned about weather’s vicissitudes. The cistern dries out into a primitive lantern. She digs not to unearth herself, but to absorb light from the detritus. She clenches her tail with a set of facsimile teeth.

The ruined towers

Now where will I go, as I have completed the task put before me and I am about to sob from frustration.

Maybe thousands of people have put their feet in these same tracks, have been swaddled with fat, and shuddered. What appears to be an endless plain is really rent by deep, narrow canyons that run southwest toward

some more than a thousand feet deep.

Seeps, what you suck from for nourishment, at the trick of source. Do this in such a way as to make the narrowest mesa an errand from which to fall. This falling is part of the comic mask. The gibberish I’ve recited. Something dark and blue trickled from my mouth while a crippled man literally walked on air above the lines recited. The lines:

One of them is called cutthroat ruin. The other admits nothing through a fantasized gate.