

POST-MORTEM

AN ANTHOLOGY OF DISSECTIONS

Anthony Delaney

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SATURN'S DEBT

Kiln-fired ceramic birth, emerging mummified,
glazed in silken alkaline which dies and putrefies;
I bat the hand that's wiping amniotics from my face,
& thrash to crack the half-baked clay
forbidding it to harden.

Writhing now I'm breaking ground, raising diaphragm,
to decontract defence is a cruelty mandatory;
breathing deep into the heart to feel my ribcage flare,
raising high the flailing chest of shallow-gasping hare.

I Don a plaid and thicken my veins, I germinate my jaw,
sculpt myself down to the quick until I'm scapelled raw,
spiting chondric forms I dread, threat'ning Chronos' pass:
there'll be no past to call to
upon incineration.

Always thought a beaten track, always borne a tax,
to labour on Plutonian Shores to 'ford an amputation
is unjustified, Saturnine; beware to steal the credit:
your righteous war to tally score finds it's you indebted.

ABATTOIR

I rake my brain across the coals
the matter chars, it dies

I tie myself down to a rack
am winched up on a hook
rust breaks off, embeds itself,
I claw the metal noose

we slather along the lineage
a maw awaits the end
mechanical tongues lap and lap
eyes back in their heads

skin encased, polyurethane,
we all get sprayed on by
creak to my neighbour, utterance,
already mummified

with low-pitched whines a muffled plea
jaundiced, shattered coat
he begs me to stop hitting him,
I hit him all the more

belligerent, I clench my fists,
dried veins stand out in ropes:
this way I look when I am hurt
by hurting someone else

I rake my brain across the coals
the matter chars, it dies
I rake my brain across the coals
the matter chars, it dies

THE WORLD WHICH HAD SCORNEH HIM

He's collar-starched and has misplaced his links.
His French cuffs quite miserably demand them.

Concerned by disposition as a whole:
what angle will that bastard attack me from?
That bastard, of course, being any creature
who takes an interest in him at all.

Overcalculations, predicting slights,
a grandmaster wracking his own nerves.
Indulging in fallacies, conspiracy is effortless:
an unresistant path for the flow of thought.

Ruminating on his predicating.
Snapping at the empty air like an alligator.

ANGUISHED PRIMATE

Christ, *no!* Never in my life have I yearned for such a thing,
a lacerable styloid shall not be shackle-lined
nor fractured in the members all torn by fishes' spines,
why at all accept that which condemns your sensing?
Absence could there not, my consentation make,
nor in relevance, drive down that pilgrim's stake.

Thereupon, thereupon, the Meister snatched the gas-rag,
rolled the floor in trottered grasp not to tumble leadlight,
but shatter slag on the crag, make the jutter seabright,
dangled cloth now folded 'cross to mark a three-point-garland:
donning as it singes, your mucosa'd snout
tarnished by the benzene, which your pocket flouts.

Shallow breaths are less expense than heaving in the gulflink,
to emerge at all from the caul shudders out a loan,
allowed oppose in but one mode, to illudes we owe:
waste away or waste my life on emaciation's brink.
Fabricates extend, beyond a folded square,
merely is civility, from a doubled ere.

FORBIDDING MOURNING

The intimate masks consolation's contempt,
as the tethers entrench in their barrow:
on delicate spines my finger did stroke
down the back of a shallow-breathed sparrow.

Cruelly thickening vines, such wretched pipelines,
turned me blank at the death of my cageling;
for my hollow heart panged with far harsher clangs
throwing dirt in the grave of the strangeling.

THE VIEW FROM HALFWAY UP

God directs the scene. He critiques.
Sits there in the black folding chair,
hands steepled like a church. The cross
has never been used against me, yet
I hang like a marionette.

Hands up, arms out. Jesus beckons
in welcome and crucifixion.
I don't trust him. Jesus, that is.
Emaciated, bloodied, he
hangs agonised in broken homes.

I guess it's the figure I don't
trust. The symbol. What people said
when they talked of his death. He died
for my sins? The hell does he know?
He died how you're meant to: afraid.

God is easy to conjure up
when you're too old to nurture your
superego. Father's tethers
fray, the vessel rocks in the waves,
so God makes the waves bigger. Dick.

DYNAMICS

Cage me in my sentiment
stick your fingers through the bars
to your teasing I'm impervious
yet I take it all to heart

This little lake of blood
balanced on my tongue

It creeps between
my teeth and fills
the gaps and I can taste
my sweetened gums

THE LOATHSOME MUSE

Your heart protected as it scorned,
 I grew instilled in tendril's thorns,
 decades may not steal these words,
 for my brackened heart *still* years:
 your majesty's cart did not hitch by mine
 but nudged until it ran me off the line.

Fault, I've found on many nights,
 eludes me not, rather plights,
 for my laid corpse stares entrenched,
 within ghouls of absence clenched:
 that initial kick neither shall forget,
 in hindsight's hollow I lament regrets.

Lashings come from lashings gone,
 despite when suppler flogs are drawn,
 welts will line the innards still,
 drown the mind in blistered swill:
 when love was taught in ways outside the norm,
 my bastard heart could not tell right from wrong.

My accounts repelled this pain,
 suspect tension formed your bane,
 knowing not where love would land,
 frightened as you played a hand:
 I determined hateful rifts to swell, and
 seduced despise to scarify myself.

Ne'er has proposed another
 turbulence to love smother,
 yet relinquish all the while
 phobics in place of a smile:
 from the start no intent to hurt did 'xist,
 nor to the end did ever this persist.

I claw my eyes, rack my skull,
how I ever? do I mull,
 that blackened love forms at all
 mystifies my Devil's call:
 your eternal loathe will uphold my name,

the crowning wound of my deserved pain.

PULL MY TRIGGER (VOCALS BY TOM WAITS)

File down your teeth and walk a circle of blood

File down your teeth and walk a circle of blood

The devil can't tell	on deciduous ground
<i>(File down your teeth and walk a circle of blood)</i>	
Soil so red	you couldn't never be found
<i>(File down your teeth and walk a circle of blood)</i>	
Rap rap rap	with each battered knuckle stuck
slide on the hinge	declawed with nails plucked
kick down the door	mark the planks with clotted rune
find God gagged	in the centre of the room

File down your teeth and walk a circle of blood

File down your teeth and walk a circle of blood

The witch haunts the copse	with a bundle of sticks
<i>(File down your teeth and walk a circle of blood)</i>	
Lights up on sage	trims systems of their wicks
<i>(File down your teeth and walk a circle of blood)</i>	
Shave your hair right down	in case the spines are sharp
care in your stagger	fumbling in the dark
fall into a ditch and	shatter all your limbs
hope you don't go rotting	hope you don't make nothing sick

File down your teeth and walk a circle of blood

File down your teeth and walk a circle of blood

ESPINOZA

Downs the leadlights, parting, scrapes the glass into the veil,
they ought to fire up a vase
from fragments of the grails.

Desecrated collars, he confesses through the clerge,
so golden diamonds mark his cheek
and warmth backlights his curls.

Such atonement, wretched, slicks mahogany to scour,
with head inclined, an upward tilt,
asks *god?* to billowed lour.

Takes that silver'd lecture, cutting tongue down at the root,
the blade has fractured from itself:
as stilted as it's smooth.

Aberrated fingers, stain their nail beds with blood,
release their clutch from injured mouth,
and mirror owner's judge.

Lines his eyes with scales, blinds himself with clotted scabs,
he spits his teeth into a bowl,
sticks glass into the gaps.

This conscience can't be just, functions not a mind so harrowed,
one can't seed his barren earth by
turning up his barrow.

For if this person's sins manifest in troubled thought,
his victimhood would stand alone
for all the hell he's brought.

Punishment is torture, though he doesn't know the line:
that guilt and sin must both expand
to self-inflicted crimes.

AN ADDRESS

Absence compressed by synonym'd presence
is yet nothing less of a vacuum.
Channels run dry even when river-flanked,
diversion may well serve to enrich.
I unfurled my hand, laid wake to a hole,
fell from my palm, an absence of All:
the last curtain'd lace, torn down from its rack,
one final doily, smouldered to ash.
Yet I am wanted, to my disregard:
fireside as the lightened Descartes.

Loveless, I said, with a stake in the stead,
turned my back on feebled response.
Occupied hands: as good as disabled,
in heat I yearn then to recoil.
Gouge honey out from my sun-stricken eyes,
lay my face down on iron-torn lines,
won't be a you, nor an us, nor an it,
tethered I'm not to fabric'd commits:
the heart is an organ, functions as such,
stave that halved-eye, I'd never begrudge.

Please never ask: you'll discomfit yourself
to pour over the lip of the chalice,
and wettened laps in no form concern me.

WE'VE GOTTA PROVE WE'RE ADULTS NOW!

In the atrium, to my Brutalist spite,
I've cocked back my shoulder and
I'm gripping a knife,
and the Thatcher lays, lays me down in the hay,
the Populist crowds ask
why my blood isn't gray.

TO TELL THE LAITY

I've edged closer to the planar cavity,
my last corner of the universe. Lacan
would clap his hands at its unravelled rift..

At length I've spoken of gossamers, how we
all must drape ourselves in the silken fibres
of the audacious threaded leave of others.

The gossamer lays on the plane, yet is distinct,
though silk may tangle with each conceived voice,
the tempered plane cannot ever know contort.

My crown tears the sheet, the glass my soul carries,
it's allowed just myself to slip beneath, thus
in awe I watch you, somehow, stand by me.

Pale eyes caught in light, you
lean toward my vacant sky.

BORZOI AND OROBICA

Orobica is ruminant. Two great horns spire
from beyond its black face,
lustrous coat dappled in the pine-light.
Borzoï is elegant. Its narrow grace, frilled neck,
with rain behind its eyes,
kinked and silken and pallid-golden fur.

Orobica blocks the sun from its subdued crag.
Borzoï asks each dead star after the wanéd moon.

Kneeling forthright on its joints does Orobica
inspect each blade of grass,
one's fault alone befouls the meadow.
Borzoï stoops down to rest beside the trickling brook,
each autumn leaf swept off
away, away, from Borzoï's conscious.

Orobica on the earth, Borzoï on the sea.
They're on the boat, they're on the shore: same, but different.

AS THE GOLDEN PHEASANT FLIES

If I a latitude take, and stray,
with antique brass sextant's annals,
could the almanack I make,
thy celeste it navigate,
archive the longitude of angels?

My dead reckoning's seasonable
charting loses out when overfraught,
a ship's ballast drowns its hull,
pure reason belies rationale,
when airless horizon's land be sought.

Cartographs harbour veridical
moors to scorn this found repentance,
verier be I 'ligible,
to dismayéd clerical,
colliers anchor not my heart's pinnace.

Air and angels orbit body's whisp,
thou centred, as both celestial guides,
haloed spheres share an ellipse,
in gilded lens and eclipse:
as thou set, thou still remain to rise.

CUPULE

Men opposed must not preempt rejection,
for autumn complements its sweetheart's blooms
and Tao's faces orbit in reflection
to enrich pale creams with burnèd hues.

The darkest roasts may approach confection,
my bitter tongue your sweetness could but skew,
our cavities built with gold affection,
opulent through confides of our secludes.

You've reigned a fortuitous direction
to my hands which flit through paged mildew,
inverts conventioned fixèd distinctions,
lays patience for the blend of I and you.

Good faith is laid in autumn's droppèd seed:
he cannot prove it blooms in darling spring.

EVERBEARER

The drupelets of my heart do not break, but burst,
fragmented within ripened states, dispersed
in discordance wherein their shedding pairs
eject from soured neighbour's freight — torus;
how could my embittered hand dispel tension
when razored bones strike white with flexion,
to portray the gentle through its violent palm:
rough clay shaped to Grecian porcel'in.

At times I arc against all reason, feel gods
despite long-form atheism, inawed
by coincidence in the truly senseless,
collapsed to divisive schisms; I laud
half my heart and curse the other's ignorance,
gnash my teeth at seeded dissonance,
spit embedded pits within molar's hollows,
consume bleeding-trailed innocence.

This cage of bramble is encasing, my ribs
with each staggered breath chance breaking, the risk
of sunlight's distraction unfurls my blossoms,
yet my unripe fruit's embracing, for this.
Hesperus, help men such as myself, who choose
Cimmerian paths for themselves, and use
cognition to diminish the glint of trust:
restrain my hand, for these sweet valves I'll bruise.

TO BILLIONS

In every breath, we're symbiotic. I breathe your air, and you mine. With each inhale, you share oxygen with every human that has ever lived. In each exhale, everyone until the end of time becomes heir to your spirit.

When I share your air, your ground, your zeitgeist, you touch my life in a hundred quintillion infinitesimal forms; your hands weaved the rug that lays on my floor, sewed the zipper onto a pair of jeans a decade old, planted the willow that caught the light in a lustrous gold just for a passing moment: you are present, you are ephemera, to reduce your legacy to memory alone is to deny what *'alive'* ever meant at all.

In every instance of time, you influence every part of life.

All that you touch, you change.

TO UNDEFINE PERFECTION

How vitriol could curl my tongue, glint silver
 with a [REDACTED] army of invective words,
 vanquish my heart's blackened, overripe drupelets,
 each daggered slice sheds me of its wither, but
 renders me not desolate: this fosters budding.

Lacan would look upon you with warm contempt,
 Maslow would bow his head, dig fingertips in eyes,
 and Aurelius may well cry. Your held gaze
 carries the spectres of your [REDACTED],
 your exuberance one touch away from crumbling.

You would trample the late buds of darling spring,
 you have assumed there is pointlessness in autumn,
 that a plant's decay or growth needs your pruning,
 dependent on your rescuing, as though you've
 ever tried outgrowing your sheltered [REDACTED] pot.

Rivers only drown you as a consequence,
 disrespecting force is to lack humility,
 if you die it is not on the current's flow,
 for its [REDACTED] will brace if you simply turn.
 Respect the water at each end: it is the *same*.

It's overt you loathe yourself, life's been unkind.
 Suffrage is not inherent to resilience,
 though every battle stays a war without your
 respect for the surrender; to pause, rebuild:
 have mercy on yourself, or else your soul be ruined.

PTOLOMEA

Honeyed tongues boast inadvertent portent,
 for golden parted mouths will ploy:
 sweet bouquets they cloy,
 timidity they laud,
 gentle flavours stale with contempt.

In familiar throes does pleasure pale
 mutual friend's prattled sentiments:
 any word well-meant,
 from airy thinness rent,
 conjures still Hawthorne's blackened veil.

Whittled tales can any shape derive,
 carved in gleaned pith's details,
 but beware what entails
 when ravaging the frail:
 Circle Eight's torment of those who lie.

Lower still is where Dante deploys
 past allies who peridify,
 of all acts most despised,
 Treachery's sphere is Ninth:
 fit for fools who friendship's trust, destroy.

ARE YOU OKAY?

(Or "Black Dog" by AJJ)

You find it compelling when I'm bitter.
 Dare I watch that stupid carmine ember
 flare an iris base, curl its heat below quasars:
 you yearn to turn the light black,
 to gravify my earnest matter's quantities
 of absence. You've been fooled
 by the term 'black hole,' theories on wormholes
 which neglect the fundamental
 function of the celeste, its density,
 the law of conservation of mass,
 you dare call it naivety.

I hate the sound of your empty laughter.
 It holds itself awkwardly, it knows its vulgarity,
 it seeds in apathy and says *good* when
 I'm failing, it's the laugh of a drifter, a
 hollow zephyr, I find shame in an inhale,
 to take a deep breath on request,
 I suppose I've jumped the gun:
 how could I not when at every moment
 I'm just *waiting* to be scolded, told off,
 mocked, when I tell you what I want:
 to be assured, to be adult, to override
 console, the urge to reclaim power
 (the propense to be controlled.)

You haven't a clue what upon me dawns,
 what is cross-hatching when I look at you,
 don't you know that to live is to orbit yourself?
 I don't think I can know you, please repay it,
 what are you doing, return me the favour —
 you function so unafraid to burn bridges,
 five years from now people will still be
 recollecting all those things you did,
 aren't you *ashamed* of yourself?
 Aren't you *terrified*?

I owe you an apology. I want to thank you.
 Not that we could ever come to a resolve,

rather the impasse, the deadlock, has been grand
 in the extent of its epiph'd bestow, I do hope
 you understand that I've clutched each critique
 as a lump, with grooves drawn from fingertips,
 smooth slides of dull carvings, the residue
 that curls along each side, roughs up
 the lines as I turn the clay around:

ARROGANCE

I run it through and through and through,
 where in my mind has this lain, is it
 resting in my crypt, I place down the clay

CONDESCENSION

it's surely hardened not to be moulded not
 to be whittled nor smoothed nor worn

PESSIMISM

that's not it I worked so hard

SUBMISSION

that's in your vision

YOU'VE WORSENERED

dark rivulets decorate the cathedral

YOU LET IT HAPPEN

Roll over, heaving dog, aspirate heat
 before the rumbling fireplace, your mouth
 is fenced with teeth, brown cornered eyes,
 right-angled paws, bent above your
 chest, faux invite, un'tracted claws
 that scabble on the wood, scuff upon
 the vinyl, look up with widened orbs,
 the trust is only 'phem'ral, it's been
 ladled from a chalice and dipped
 within its rights, it knows its pain
 it knows its flaws it knows exactly
 how you failed.

Lying on my back,

someone has reached out.

Their hand goes to what's exposed:

it's ripped off in my mouth.

INTERCOURSE

...and I know that I am a mimic;

droste coined my infinity, *mise en abyme*,
 I am not a darkened tunnel by any means,
 when a mirror is shown to a mirror,
 what does it reflect, if not itself?

{

?

}

black glass seas, carved in sun-struck slag,
 tumbled rocks in that gritted grey sand,
 kind of like god is shaking dice in their palm,
 skipping probability as stones on the water:

...so if you see god, tell them I'm dry.

{

flesh: impermissible velvet

coarse? nivea or gillette

mouths: used, wet chewing gum

I can see

the synthetic fibres

and the way the light

catches your structures;

I can hear the tv buzzing

yet, this is all okay to me

I'll never know what everyone else feels

but in my own

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I think I do still get it,
 somehow.

}

TO BILLIONS, PART II: THE RECKONING

I am just like you, albeit my hand is pressed up against the glass. I thought you all saw it too, but you don't. You're not watching your hands age in real time like I do. Yearning for your sixtieth birthday while considering tattooing JUVENOIA on your inner wrist.

They stood me down, a loaded gun. That silver barrel of weaponised righteousness. I could've turned it back on them and held it point-blank between their eyebrows. They'd have smirked, never thought to cower. But blood flows through my pulsing jaws, a rapid undercurrent of the slow-moving surface, and I will suck you under, starve you of the very life I love you for.

IGNE NATURA RENOVATUR INTEGRA

Crematory of decaying life:
a soot-black sky of scattered ash,
the recycling of organic death,
rusted, deciduous woodland
in the withered furnace of its autumn.

Do not misname the fire 'destruction':
it consumes the shed of forests' bones,
and rotting beds which smother growth,
the earth's rebirth through symbiose,
as barren winters serve the coming spring.

Now the pinecone's pitch is melted,
its seeds lay dormant in the snow,
oaks prosper with the thinned-out growth,
and fire protects its dropped acorns,
germinating in the fertile soil.

Hear the heavy thud of muscle,
a tiger tracking through the cinders,
placing paws on heat and rubble,
sooted stripes fragment its vibrance:
corrosion evergreen to fleeing fuel.

Remember that which has burned you,
how you've endured its forged renewal,
in violent change your bedrock's honed,
pruning your mind's decay and moult:
through fire, nature's reborn – *whole*.

THE CURRENT

Centred between my eyes is the dagger's point,
polished and unruined, a ceremonial display,
perched for decades, sealed, in ornate gold case,
balanced and poised as I stare down its ridge,
it is now that I use it, it is now, it is now.

An elderberry branch sways strong on the mountain,
the breeze billows up the green strands, forms ice
from the dew, the flexible grass grows rigid, brittle
in its strength, frozen in its adversity, and it holds
itself up, not in spite of its pain, but because of it.

If the current will barrage me I may gnash my teeth at it,
until I pull myself to the bank and lay sodden,
and watch as it crashes down from the top of the falls.
I yearn for the higher pool, but look below, and note
that there is just as gentle a lake down the mountain.

If the current strikes at me, it is of my own doing.
To disrespect a force is to lack humility,
to drown yourself purposefully, to neglect
the reason of three profound things:
invention, discipline, and acceptance.

In my hand the dagger warms, its handle glints light
like you wouldn't believe, it harnesses the sun,
it turns in my grip, and then it is slashed
against my own clothes, and I shed them,
I am exposed, rid of the heavy, sopping protector.

See me now as I slide in the current,
straight away I feel a force push my bones,
I sink lower and lean forward, the stream
is my vessel, I fly down the mountain:
the water at the bottom is exactly the same.

I AM NOT A TRAGEDY

How do I agnize absence
 & evince what is not?
 How *could* I seek fulfilment
 & contentment without love?

Life is chroma & life is tonic,
 at its crescendo, love is supposed:
 its apogee, where we summit,
 is a hand unfurled to link in ours.
 Dirtied nails from the trials
 of clawing clay: Heaven's Reward,
 a second-half, to our means,
 to ourselves, to our lifetime.

I look at them dancing in the window
 her, pushing the lawnmower
 her, chopping a gourd
 them, checking for rennet
 him, slipping underwater

I look at my hands in a garden
 I'm on a bicycle, dappled under limes
 I have a surf-green Stratocaster
 I'm spinning a vinyl – a 45
 & the night air smells like jasmine.

ENTHUSIASM

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16.

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bereaved of song	he plants berries.
he clutches forward	hungrily: they disperse
flocks feather the listener, and remain; they appreciate his benefit	

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though bespeak erosion	in unparted mouths
Maslow's crowned beings	listen through silence
Golden warblers enthuse	through actualized composition.

TREATISE ON THE STEPPENWOLF

How much longer might I staunch the cries within my soul
to establish in the literal what's felt subliminal;
a *Man Alone* in practice, a misread Mulganism,
to wander as a bygone darkling as forlorned by Byron?

Unrequitement of seclusion, the bedrock of the shoals,
a roiling nebulaic current desolates the stones.
An underflowing's turbulence is masked by tranquil mirror,
and in its sediments are sentiments stirred but by water.

The thrashing self is carried down the carvings of its ancience,
wearing smooth the jagged rocks which once announced its nascence.
Where it marks its snaking path is best deliberated
in deterministic facets: unconscious self-creation.

Still, I'd set my life ablaze to chance an untamed shack,
convention does not translate well beyond the beaten track.