

Something I Am Writing About the Rapture

“In the name of what God or what ideal do you forbid me to live according to my nature and where would my nature lead me if I simply followed it?”

Gide, A. (1951) “If it Die...”. London: Secker and Warburg. pg. 254.

One doesn't usually have footnotes in a poem.

I know that.

You may think that I am a dummy but I have failed to understand more things than you have ever wondered about and that alone puts me in the company of giants like Socrates whose measure of wisdom was that he knew he knew nothing and like Carroll Monroe who was a guy who lived down the street who told the funniest dirty jokes I ever heard and who tried to live by his nature and who died from emphysema before this prison we live in was able bind the last free synapses of his brain.

But this isn't really a poem.

It's an autobiography.

And that thing by Gide wasn't really an autobiography.

It was a poem.

Or maybe an essay.

I don't know.

The truth is this is just something I am writing and which maybe you are reading and which even more maybe I may be reading to you.

But, yes. Yes.

Now it comes to me what genre it was that Gide was writing.

It was prophecy.

Listen again!

“Where would my nature lead me if I simply followed it?”

That was “the truth that will set you free” posed as a question because we don't really know do we?

Gide relates how once a young and lovely half naked boy in Tunisia guided him up to a flowered hillside where the boy flopped down invitingly on his back and and Gide just looked at him for the longest time watching the laughter fade from the boys countenance and an expression of sadness cloud his face and finally the boy said, “Goodbye, then,” and he left.

How angry I was at Gide when I read this but then he was young himself and had not yet grown to his own truth or so it would seem but then there was an omission in the text which was designated in brackets [Omission] like that by a translator who might have been reluctant to translate the best part with no

explanation so maybe the story had a happy ending after all.

And indeed how should I presume to criticize Gide as a young man when for sixty years I struggled to learn to live by my nature and when I finally did so they threw me in prison.

It was on the evening news.

This was just a little before I was raptured.

They took me out of the court room and provided a brief reprieve in which to say goodbye to the sister/spouse who was my one friend and was loyal to me as I took not so willingly the hemlock and we talked about trivial things and she did not cry because it was not yet time for that after which they took me out and displayed me briefly to the press because after all we are talking about theater aren't we,

And they took me to the jail which was conveniently attached and there leaving the tale-tell little pile of clothes behind me I was raptured out of this world in an orange jump suit and while I would have preferred nakedness and indeed had always thought that being raptured might be something like skinny dipping this was the best arrangement that could be offered given that budgetary restraints had to be balanced with the need to humiliate and with all the requirements of this terrible modesty that plagues us,

You may ask then why if I was raptured are there reports of me lurking in the shadows of my village like a legless beggar in one of Bruegel's paintings.

But I am not seen.

I have not been seen since the day of my trial the day of my rapture the day that I was taken out of this world.

They dressed my remains in the clothes of a monster modeled on their worst nightmares and I was leaned against a prop in their theater of the absurd to act out a major part in their collective psychosis all this without my participation.

I assure you.

I have not been seen since the day of the trial.

How it must piss them off all those pious ones that it was me and my kind the poor in the world and the lowest on the rung as was prophesied who got raptured and not them who are rich in their righteousness and their powerful friends who are rich in their yachts and helicopters and who as we all know have their pomp and glitter in this world and who cannot possibly slip through the needle dragging all that wealth behind them.

Not them but me.

God is not rapturing the micromanagers nor the megamanagers nor the Bank managers nor those who are writing behavior plans for others nor those who are monitoring our thinking errors or who would put our love in a bottle.

Being raptured let me tell you is not all that it is cracked up to be.

For three years following my rapture I had to encapsulate myself against hell for like Jesus we first go there for three units of time before ascending,

Yet even there in that almost total darkness where fire gives off no light even there I felt a small ember of joy that flickered precariously like those fires I meticulously started proudly without paper when I was a Boy Scout honoring God and Country but skinny dipping when I got a chance,

It was a feeble burning full of hope passing from one tiny branch to another until by adding slightly larger sticks I had a fire that could warm my hands and cook my hot dogs.

Being reborn is not such an easy thing.

After they released me from their deepest level of hell and it should be noticed that it was their hell for God doesn't create hells of this sort I lifted up my head and looked around.

God was it lonely.

For miles it was no one.

My friend and I hovered around the fire that almost cheered us now and when night fell we discovered what is most important that in the distance we could see other faint glows and we knew by this that we were not alone.

I did not ask to be raptured but was beginning to think that perhaps it was not so bad.

Though we knew it would be lonely for a long time yet and that the hells of this world from which we were protected by only the thinnest and most fragile warp of space/time were heaped around us blocking the way to our rag-tag family of others who had also been raptured.

Still

The sun as it rose the next morning...

How can I tell you about that sun?