

Day 3

Bristol

Thursday 9th June 1842

Wa-Set

3 (Phamenoth). Peret. X. 6 Thutmose I

Solitary swan.

Drift among the chorus and the urban doves.

Take off in a torrent of the wing-beat-broken sky.

Thus flock the fowl, ungainly, 'bove the river.

River, river, riverrun, past even a dammed Frome, swirled – azure – to blend the Avon: sing us, by the coal-moved industry collage, shriek-undulation, hand-toil, south-west England, spring-tide songs.

The tall brick-stacks stood stark against the smoky skyline; there, refining houses backed their chimneys 'til they brought them low by flame. A lone cone – modest pyramid – spewed subt'ly from its furnace, mould-melting glass to blue shapes, shipped 'n sold decreasingly. Uncut timber lazes, log-like, on the stone-rise, hut beside, looking at the regiment of spears held still 'n stoic, covered – cobweb – down from nest to deck.

Saint Brandon's Hill hides the dist' horizon with its new-built walks 'n walls. The green'ry of its slopes backs the cruciform cathedral; the stark-red cross on white – raised – waves atop the tower.

The past: t'was present, as the present: t'was pushed passed. The world: t'was floating 'midst the passing future.

He felt for the notebook, well-within the tattered tote, as the steam streamed from the all-too-sugared tea of milk-lightbrown.

"Whatever would you do if you, just the once, left home without those lined-leaves?"

Half-smile; breath-laugh.

"Suffer you, I imagine."

His companion snatched his pen a-from its perch upon the notebook that was lifted out 'n free to serve its purpose.

"And what would, whatever would you do if you had the pages... but not the pen?"

"Write in fag-burns 'n milk-tea stains."

Breath-laugh; half-smile.

"Now, then you'd almost be a painter!"

Gathering the pen from its suspension in the sky between them, the writer nodded thanks and started writing.

"I'll converse with the gulls, then..."

"That'd be grand."

Time passed;

time took its place.

A moment settled.

A notebook was placed – open – onto the lap of he who laid back, smoking, looking at the sky. Elbowing himself to sitting, to one side he flicked the charred remains, its ash dispersing as it fell.

He turns the notebook upside-up.

"Unseasonal..."

The writer shapes his forehead into: what?

"To have leaves falling down upon me."

Now the other smokes and laughs while lighting.

What's a
ten-page poem
to a splash of paint/
a muscle moved/
a light directed?

Six strings neglected, yet
~~get~~ the voice: it comes out clearer.
Frets beneath an e-string
fingers held, re-placed, re-placed

What's a
ten-page poem
to a splash of paint/
a muscle moved/
a light directed?
~~Six strings~~

Six strings neglected, yet the
voice: it comes out free-er, clearer.
Frets beneath an e-string, fingers
held, re-placed, re-placed...
One note on the guitar's
a mind translated.

There's a rhythm
on the blank page,
I just fill it ^{as} best I can.
As best I can, ~~edit~~
I fill the blank page
with a rhythm.

T'wasn't words in th'ephemeral
~~flame~~ flare light of our infant night-time.
~~It was~~ T'was utterance ~~astride~~ ^{perceptive} percussive,
primal movement.

"What's a tin-page poem[...] to a[...] foolish at[?] paint, a muscle moreal[...]"

"Fuck, it's not that illegible!"

"Hah! Here. I'll listen."

His companion dumped the open leaves onto his lap as he sat back, closed his eyes, anticipating. Smirking, th'author uptook the leaves, breathed, and began reading:

"What's a
ten-page poem
to a splash of paint/
a muscle moved/
a light directed?"

Six strings neglected, yet the
voice: it comes out free-er, clearer.
Frets beneath an e-string, fingers
held, re-placed, re-placed...
One note on the guitar's
a mind translated.

There's a rhythm
on the blank page,
I just fill it 'sbest I can/
As best I can,
I fill the blank page
with a rhythm.

T'wasn't words in th'ephemeral
flamelight of our infant night-time.
T'was utterance astride percussive,
primal movement."

"Bravo!"

"Cheers."

"Still on that theme, though, I see. Maybe you should, I dunno... learn to dance? Get a paintbrush? Re-string your guitar?"

"It's" (he smiled) "at home."

"Oh, back over innnnn ummmmmm"

"Caine

"Cain

's shhh

e's shhh

um."

um."

A mild and subdued laugh from each.

"The ham o' Keynes'."

"To be sure."

"When you next going back?"

He showed his indecision with his lip 'n brow 'n nostril.

"Eh, winter maybe."

Speaking while taking back the notebook to flick-flicker through, his companion mocked concern:

"So... you're stranded with nought 'n ought but ink 'n pen 'n paper for your expressive needs..."

"Tah bee shurr."

There was growth and emergence throughout the infant earth of Egypt, newly born from 'neath the bluegreen care of Hapi – lotus-laden. Pouring water from the loop-adorned neck of his ceramic vase, she blessed the silt with riches 'fore receding to the Nile.

Swenett calls: *Return*

'long the life-endowing waters!

Crocodiles hold union on the marsh.

Watching silt seethe shoots of deep-green creation – "Crops aboundabundant!" sing th'insects, river-dancing – on perch of tall papyrus, crane doth crane her neck, now, skyward.

Circled by the circus-sands, she's silhouetted – distant – walking near another, not strayed from the pathway. Where the mud meets sand 'n dirt-track trod the two, herself and th'other, meandering the suburb's edges: aimless, with a purpose.

A cry from out the mist...

They looked: she from her shoulders, high, with pupils etched by by-and-bys; she o'er from her pathless way, with mud tracked up her heel. The elder smiled; the younger kept her eyebrow high, kicking off from one wi'th'other the heel-held flakes – primord'yul.

"Creation."

The cry crew, grew, and settled – sudden – found 'n nursed, its ancient call into the not-yet-known expanse: heeded, assured.

(She) "Creation..." (sighs.) "You've..."

"No."

"It's..."

"Yes."

"When?"

"?..."

"...Child..."

"No!"

"Okay." She (Creation...) sighed.

She crouched, then, at the path's blurred edge, the girl sulkily watching, and carved, into the Pharaoh's land, imperfect shapes 'n symbols – leaning one into the other; skill-less, flowful dance.

The nearest star spotlighted the girl as joy dawned 'cross her features, and, all at once, she closed the gap 'n crouched 'n leant 'n wondered. The softly sounding knock of heads rippled as she leant further, resting mind on resting mind to share in secret magic.

All expressed, as nought was spoke, in contact 'tween the one, the other, and the shifting, sunlit sand.

Later and elsewhere, the girl gathered back the bundle bound by string. The grip of the skin-brown, frayed sinews, in strips 'n knots of criss-cross paths, held hard grey, bundled cloth-scrap for to form the ball she threw.

Date-palm pages – green – canopied
out the tree-top, tall;
runs of wrapping bark ran – seamless –
up from soil-sunk roots.

The solar-disc sang amber as
it looked toward the west;
the girl (weight given to ground 'n stem)
tossed out her toy to arc.

Tumbling from its impact-point at
peak of stone-piled rise,
it eked, erratically, rolling down,
a path back to her side.

She gathered back the bundle grip-bound by skin-brown sinews, frayed 'n found in strips 'n knots, criss-crossed about the scraps. Compact's the bundled grey of cloth she throws to arc away; through amber song it – silent – glides; seamless, the sky ekes evening.

Somewhen, softly, droned beneath by baritone voice alone, flutt'ring vibratissimo made their waves within the sky beside the plucked 'n pulled-taut gut-string, gaining height 'n trav'ling wide 'n wider, windsweep-dissipation drifts determining th'destinedestination notes of haze-held harmonising newborn now they touch these sleeping drums collecting coolcrest air to turn 'n tumble timbre'd tremors – tidal – lapping lapislovelornamental movementary airborne – newborn – borne upon the riv'ring neural shore all swelled to run red o'er the banks 'n plains in painagainagain a gathered gaian fallowpianissimochred-mud in inundated stretches strewnstreamed storyline-ed languor lost last leaping seasons soon to shoots of greengrowth grad'yul crestcreation notes of haze-held harmonising song soon soothes the dreaming child, her starlit form falling in deeper, out beyond the troubled substrate, to rest in silent, sceneless sleep, on sheets of coloured sand.

Summer's eve, maturing into early night – the womb of time re-births the nocturne, borne on dusk's red heels.

He (the writer); him (the man): turning on the cobbled path, kept his solitary way. Dark; dark grey; dark black; deep blue: boots, jacket, hat, 'n trousers tracing silhouettes in listless light that lingers on Luciferous, desp'rate to 'luminate.

The sky sits soft 'n settled – hear a baby's cry: peak; assured – and walk along the Welsh Back way, wistsome while the shape of Redcliffe watches o'er the river, its spire yet to be remade, brought down by 'tack of lightning.

Lighting spread by gas-lamp clothes the corners and the edges of the gabled fronts 'n woodbeamed-walls; trows break the resting surface. Flitflicker 'top a windowsill: a shape of feline shadow drops a tail beyond its watchtow'r edge, swooping slow – flitflicker fast, the tail-tip turns/switch/rest.

There is a black cat watching from the windowsill. There was a man who slowly strolled along toward it. The cat stood on its paws and took some steps and m'yowed a greeting. The man lifts his hand to scratch behind its ears.

<i>The Feline</i>	<i>The Phonic Waves Between Them</i>	<i>The Hominid</i>
Scratch behind my Yep, thank you!		Heoh kahh. Watching the river go by in lamplight...Doesn't need I suppose.
	Ppppprrrrrrrrr.	
I wonder why they babble all the time...		Nighezzz nigh.
	Pprrr.	
Hungry. Movement over there...too loud. Too big. No good. It's probably scared off all th'Hey!		Puheessf... nnohmisstupp othuhwawter.
	Mmmmmuhrrah?	
Don't stop it...	Mmrrah?	Hmm? Prob'ly thinks th'ships come in to provide new rats 'n mice for'm! Her. Cat.
No reason Any food To stop!		Hahhuh!
	Mmmmrrr.	Wonder why they Mmmmyow... Waiting for th'It's so warm Delivery... next ro Next rodent reeeReimbursement!
	Ppppprrrrrrr.	
		I should go on.
		Pppuhhhh...
Well I'll move to you then...	Mmmow!	Need to see'r b'fore I don't She... We'll speak in tanka on the waterfront. Then it'll Then what?
Good. Better. Hungry...		Hahhuh. Then be ? = Over. Have my ear scratched for the price of food...
	Ayeshhgohnmighfren	
	Ppprrrr.	
Flying food upon the liquid ground... Not fair. Can't Huh?		Hmm. Ppprrrrpr.
	Mmowhl?	
		Well...
		Wehluh...

"Onward then, cat. There's metal more attractive. No" (he presses gently on the feline's wettened nose) "offense, of course."

The man stepped 'long the Welsh Back further, boots on cobbled night; the cat's ears sweep 'n scan the sea, paws in guard'yun poise.

He made it, then, t'where King Street hits the river.

The crippled urban rock-dove dances – deft – amongst these muddied soles that sing – stepstep – 'n court – stepstop – abandon-wracked ["To arms!"]. Jovially jumping into the outstretched welcome of the women on the front-doorstep, a young Brist-ohl'yun madolescent clasps rum – bottled – high.

They took him in to take him back 'n up to take him in.

The man's name sailed on o'er the cobbles
between the walls of either side's
slatwoodbeamedblackwhite gabled fronts
and drew his pale-blue gaze.

"Approach!"

"I'll!"

"Join!"

"I'm! Drink?"

"We've!"

He walked to where his usual band of fraternal friends passed night-time, musing o'er their mead at painted maids from wood-brown stools.

He:

- sat
- drank
- smoked
- spoke
- smoked
- drank
- stood

He:

- moved
- leant
- pissed
- crossed
- entered

Smokehaze-candlelight: a room's aroma enters in and floods the hallway. Searching through scent-sodden air, the lamped-light sends its guidance, glancing rays off shelf-stood plates 'n tilted tomes in dust tracks.

He moved on through toward his destination.

He sought his destina-re.

He seeks his destinata.

He soughks.

He seet.

Sagid.

Se-chon.

Perceived by scent-sense;
seen across the room.

Tables peopled; chairs abandoned; wax 'n flitt'ring flame.

Meandering the clearest cluttered paths (all equi-travelled), he greeted those he knew by hand on shoulder.

A swig of rum from offered bottle; a declined empty stool; a skirted around threat of rambling sinking-sand, barside.

"Hungry for something?"

"How's the food?"

"Poetic."

She sees the world through rings of colour wrapped about her soul, reflecting – small – the inf'nite moment borne on swells of light.

He sat slowly down beside her.

Up she stands; presents her hand.

He laughs – subdued; he stood.

Exit, pursued by a beer-soaked call.

Tis brief, Magdalene.

As a drunk John's love.

Not quite naked, aye-thur or, no, nor not quite settled, nee-thur. She stroked his head (the part he'd really paid for).

The soft 'n scented heat held pressed – perturbed; placate – light life forcefully firm 'n cradled, nurturing innubile needs, lusting after comfort, drifting drowsily now doused in disp'rate sens'ry fires felt in overlapping outward rippling flamewave wand'rings amidst neural nexi needfully bridging binding bonds, unbound by filtered vision, smell, sound, touch that finds the grainy ground, its chill of deep'ning night transferred to exposed skin – gold-brown 'gainst browned-gold.

Shivering, she pushes 'gainst the world until she's kneeling.

Yawning, she rubs two tired fists against her eyes.

Standing, she brushes sand from hair 'n rags 'n elbows.

Wondering, she wanders; wanders wondering.

Under the white, ungentle calls of the warmth of other sun gods, clasping to herself her heart-sent heat, she made her way – alone – along the garden walls and streetways, meeting, in the middle of an empty square, a cat.

"Ou-bast."

The girl knelt – her knees upon the cold, stone floor; naked heels touching her clothed behind. Presenting both her hands – palms up – she asked:

"Where is your royal litter?"

Ears standing tall and still; long limbs, in grace, held closely poised: the restless tip of the night-black tail tapped – soft – upon the paved ground. Slits sang of lapis 'midst her father's golden fire in ferocious eyes; sleek, sinewed sensuality's the shape she claimed.

Lowering her hands – each one upon each knee, gripping at a cresting wave of nausea – the girl-child held her wincing gaze/her wincing gaze was held on/by the stern, maternal crashing sea of flame 'bout lapis song.

The walls of mud-made brick that bind and shape the space they share start to compress – contracting in upon themselves; sharp shuddering.

The girl lent o'er her thighs, debilitated by their pain; the cat, in poise, held gracefully her long limbs close and tall.

A slow, unleashed breath...

Shed latent life in exhalation...

Soothing soft: a gentle breeze now washes through her hair, settling on beyond her shoulders, wrapped about her febrile hips.

Inhaled's the deep'ning night; her tears course fluvial.

Alone, she sits back 'to her heels, sniff'ling as her blood caked to her ankles.

In time, she'll hear
her name called in a
voice not asking, only
calling, gath'ring up
'n guiding o'er the
pave 'n alleyways.

In time, she'll lift
the cupping earthenware
up in her cupping hands
toward her lips and
drink the sour warmth
of unfresh milk.

In time, she'll fall
to sleeping on the
soundwaves of the song
so softly sung to her
in moth'ring tones –
'thout kin yet purest kind.

Upon the pave, she heard her name called softly out: “