

Day 5

Keynsham

Saturday 5th November 1842

Abdju

2 (Payni). Shemu. XI. 6 Thutmose I

Separating swirls sing sweeping life amidst the fluid – fallow – flowing forth ‘cross cradle’s
chan’ling folds to primordy. Awash: abundance pours in lapis, lifting silt ‘n sediment, and stripping
off life-lacking lay’rs to free new, virgin ground.

A liquid plain unstilled; the sky in mirrored tumult: the wawtry gleam unmade the girl’s reflection.

Between the narrow ends of the prow and stern she lay, upon the planks of cedar, her hands
pick-picking at the bundled reeds stuffed tight within the woodless seams. Rope around ‘n lashed
together cedar from the land of the white-capped peaks, sailed o’er across the Wad-ja-Ur and
formed into the masts and their sail-flow’r’d beams.

She rolled away from herself re-forming in the movements of the river Nile and lay with her back
against the boat and her unkempt hair’s frayed-black between the water and the sky.

Take passage with Iteru.

She will bring you, with her waters,

to templed hills beyond the river bend.

The Terrace of the Great God waits.

Walk the town abreast the harbour.

She reached out/reached up/reached on with her arm and the hand that led it skyward,
whipping, with her index finger, up cloud-wisps into grey-white ink.

Place your fingers,

fast,

around the pen you’ll write with.

Obliging me, she makes her fingertip wispy and ready, her neuro-muscle-mem’ry poised to recall
her dancing lessons.

Now,

decorate the sky

with its own abstract expressions.

The eye within her mind

leads light-stepped strokes

(A hippo trots on stubby legs!)

o’er canvas blue.

(A crocodile head snaps

about his leath’ry heels!)

A serpentine line

b’comes a hill; hand

placed upon a woven basket.

She wraps around the

sun-disc cloth ‘n rope,

tethered to the east that birthed it.

“Now you cannot fall into the West.”

Her wisp-wov'n tether 'n her braided cloud tear 'n turn a risen red. The sun slips bounds 'n moves toward the height of day.

"Abdju up ahead!"

Watching, all the while, th'Egyptian sky, she breaks upward, stands, and steps over and between baskets of fish 'n grain, moving past the masts and their blossom'g beams to look upon her destination.

A harbour swept by a bracing, racing wind, a-whooshing eastward, carving up the water's surface, swelling 'neath the ibis wing's – soft, single feather undulates, airborne, across the panoramic – plumage, playing the percussion of the creaking planks of cedar and the crumpuhling of canvas o'er the stockpiled stash of fish, brought fresh by fisherpeople finding bount'yus these primord'yul waters, whence the boat from Wa-Set wafts, now wav'ring in the dying gusts that race – it braces as the whooshing wind falls silent.

Reeds – lush-green – in glintsome gath'rings, corralled by the river, mark – amphibious – the border 'tween the body and the blood. Floribund in shades of emerald 'n moss 'n chlorophyll (of sunshine soaked) sway, swerve: resilient; disturbed; e'er undestroyed. Alight upon the stoic stem: an insect, in its winged way, waits – weary – whilst, between the plants, a fish winds 'gainst the current. Preening, pressed together, gesturing their gentle messages, a pair of lovebirds lull a-by the bank.

The girl steps off the boat onto the harbour.

vweeet!

pyoot!
pyoot!

vweet!
vwit!
vweeet!

prprprprrrrrrrrr

tuhweeee?

vweet.

vweet.

woohootwo!
wohootwo!

zwoot?

prprprrrrrrr

kah.

vweet!
vwit.

whoot?

pah.
pah.
pah.
pah.

twee.
twee.
pyoot?

twee!
twee.

prprprpr

zwit! zwit!
zwit!

puhahihuhahihuhahihuheeeet.

zwit!

puhahih.
puhahihuh.

twitwitwi?
twitwitwi?

'Midst birdsong
was he sat upon
the grey-stone Chris'tyun wall.
From th'dockyard early morn'
he'd walked on homeward.

The late 'n dying birdcall throes of a grey day's dawning chorus came to scattered, broken silence
thr'out the churchyard.

By dying dandelions lay
his boots 'n cotton socks;
by boots 'n cotton socks died dandelions.

Hudd'ling whilst the winter's whipping wind, its flaw expelled only for th'slabs of mem'ry stone
close by the wall – patched; pieced – beneath him, he absorbs, e'en through his layers, th'chill that
settles 'bout his bones and then decides he ought to move along, on homeward.

Along.

"Mawnin."

"Mornin."

Away, the church and its peakless tow'r; his foot fell 'tween the wetted cobbles.

"ffuckinell..."

The patter of the raindrops dropping – pat – returning for their cradle-death; springing forth
a-from the splat, primord'yul – trav'ling drops to trace the stone.

Trees,
roots along the hamlet path.
Canopus.

And there's the field, its floodplain meadow-marsh spread grassy-green; dew beneath the sky-fled
water washed away. The banks, held together by the reaching roots, erode in fits 'n starts. Weeping
o'er its futile task, the willow stands.

He walked beside the meadow-marsh. In the gusts of wind, he walked on by the houses. The rain
stopped when he knocked upon the door.

Low harvest waters.
Sweep, sickle; falling flint.
The cattle trample o'er.

She walked along, alone, beyond the dock 'n jettied gateway, past the fishery 'n stockpile house, unto the market plaza. Cartwheels 'long the roadway; bustle, busy, buzz: delightedly, she looks at all around her.

"Kid, you have a smile on your face like the shoots of corn just right before the waters drown 'em!"

A man, gently ravaged by the sands of time, leans, looking from his left-hand perch, at his post behind the posts 'n poles 'n canvas – stretched – of the porch outside his small bazaar. The elbow of his left; the forearm of his right: make contact with the flat-lain wood. Standing at the shelf of the outside stall, he lifts his brow in punctuation.

She side-steps as a zebu's driven past, its nostrils flared in exhalation; she ducks the horn 'n pats the sinewed-side 'n flinches at the tuft-tail whip.

Pulling on her gaze, her body takes slow steps toward the old man's stall.

"And what I mean by that's..."

"I know what you mean." Still gazing out 'n o'er 'n off, she comes to a stop as she interrupts.

Smirking as he makes a mark in the wood of his stall with a dull knife blade, he pours, with the other hand, beer into a bowl and places it beside her arm. While offering her thanks – surprised – to him, she lifted; poured – the thickly-yellow, sickly-sweet scud flooded t'ward her empty store.

All the meanwhile,
whist she gulped,
amongst her moments drinking,
her eyes – world-wide –
watched, bustling by,
life's sacred, simple drama...

Drama's
simple, sacred life,
by bustling, watched worldwide...

Her eyes,
drinking moments;
her, amongst...

Meanwhile,
she gulped,
whilst all the moments met her.

She hands him back the clay-mud bowl that never left her lips.

"Parched, were you then?"

"Parched, was I then."

He smiled,
she smiled,
'n Ra remained indiff'rent.
Their soles, bathed in Aeypshun sand,
held shadows.

They talked of holy Abdju, then – his home 'n her unknown.

"and" (he said, gesturing with one arm beyond her sight) "there, following the sun on its descending, deathward road, Ahk-Mo-Ses – lah is Born, the Lord of Strength is Ra – placed his – Hah! – *pile* of ascendance!"

He laughed to himself; she raised an eyebrow.

(She) "Well," (spoke once he'd wiped his eyes,) "I" (asking him her question:) "am looking just for a house, somewhere. It's not on the harbour, but not far beyond."

“Not for the mer nor the sacred temples have you journeyed!” Sarcastic shock; sincere affection.
“From gold Wa-Set you’ve come to walk our harbour stalls ‘n streets!”

“ppuhhah! Well, I can hang out at the Most Select of Places anytime I want, so... But I’m sure”
(She winks.) “your temples are quite adequate.”

He makes a bow – it’s insincere; amused, he plays along – and then he shows her where she’ll need to go.

“At least: most likely, I suppose.”

Ah, blow, ye winds, over the ocean!

Oh, blow, ye winds ohvvurr thuh seeeeeea!

Buuuuhlow, ya winds, ohvvurrr thuh ocean

aaand bring back ma bonnie ta meeeee!

Brrrring” (She stood,) “back,
oooh bring” (washing,) “back,
oh brrring back ma bonnie
ta me, tooo mee!” (at the)
“Briiing (hearthfire,) “back,
brrrrring” (crooning.) “back,
oh bring back ma bonnie
tooooo...

me!” As she stated-sang that final word, she pressed a finger to his nose. He gurgle-laughed in ar-tickle-ation at the finger ‘n the face she pulled. As for the flames, they lived in their reflected dance upon the dented copper, carrying their futile heat in the glor’yus flow of full-lived life regardless. The kitchen ‘quipment kept their light ‘n carried it – an age; a moment – before it slipped – heat, light, ‘n life – onward into the ink-blue past.

On a stool – its coloured cushion-cov’ring pinned in time-torn place – he leant with elbows halfway down his thighs and cupped the tea in tin. Suffused, the shug’ry steam that strained to fight its dissipation drew its death across th’eternal void ‘n sang in soft evaporation.

With sour milk, the black’d turned brown.

“Y’were once this extrovert, too, ya know.” Fussing with the young child’s cloud-white hair, th’mother spoke to her much older son. She looked over at the lad leant ‘pon his thighs, smiling through the warmth of recollection. “Thenyafirgot yer voice someplace!”

“I found” (Smile. Recollection. Warmth.) “a new one – somewhere; someplace.”

“Yadid. Thachadid.”

Conceived w’tin Tipperary’s tundral green, but born within that self-same room, across the surf that separated th’isles she’d borne the babe; the boy; the man.

The sleeping – beauty – border collie, paws beneath the spinning wheel, rested on a ragged rug, tail-end atop the cold, stone floor.

He dreamt, his tail a-twitching

;

he dreamt, his tail a-twitch.

He is so old so soon

;

he was so old so fast.

He’ll only age

;

he’ll only age...

“Yahsawyerdad?”

"Ahsawmadad. We listened to the birdsong chorus."

"Dyarite?"

"Aiallwayzdoo."

They shared then – the sons, their mother, 'n the border collie – the crackling, flicker-flame sounds of tide-eternal-time. As she began to hum again, an idea washed ashore.

"Oh okay, yeh. Where is it?"

She told him it was upstairs, in his room.

Carpetlessness creaking under step 'n under foot 'n under creaking cart'lige cushion holding fast 'n holding on... Unvarnished grain grows – sturdy; split – up, on, and o'er again; the top-stair corner carries 'round onto the landing.

He walked upstairs.

T'his room he tread those boards – going not far; treading not long. A finely crafted lot of letters nailed into its door, the room, so full in retrospect, slept – spacious; silent.

In moted dustlight leant his old guitar.

"Found it..." She softly breathed out air through phonemed chords – her little hands on fat'ning hips; her shoulders sloped 'n forward fall'n – now that she'd stopped her streetway wand'ring, winding – wandrous – wondersome through Abdu's pathway-roads 'n by its fam'lied houses. In grand'yus unremarkability, unbathed in memory, it merely stood, its spacious silence settled on the soil, 'n while she watched that portal-house, a-peering b'yond that present past, she knew not why it was she heard the sound of strings.

"Heh-loh?"

She only heard her question-call sail westward.

"Hell-oe?"

She merely felt its rippled rings recede.

"Huhhigh?"

And so, it seemed, there was nobody there.

It was – at least, it seemed – neglected; empty.

She stepped through th'outer wall's arching break, on through into the tiny courtyard.

Clay pots poised;
thatch-canvas fall'n.
Unwoven wicker waits.
The cold clay-oven casts
its heatless shade.

The walls – still washed in white – that formed the box that made a home gave o'er to steps upon its left-hand side that led to th'rooftop, flat. She placed her hand around the pole that stood 'n held the broken thatch – that canopy in twain above the door.

The sound of slackened strings turned, stretched, 'n tautened...

He felt the forms of the spacious wave-lines wafting through the rippling air, looking 'cross the room at the shapen wood, its dusty surface dull with gathered time.

She passed beyond the threshold of the wood-slat door 'n saw the settled moments scatter.

A workshop in moted dustlight.

Small circle-cymbals;
leather strips.
Woodworking tools 'n sawdust.
Strewn about a mudbrick seat:
instrument fragments.

Consternatal lines lit lightly, laced across her forehead; her eyebrows, borne above lush iris plains,
pushed upon themselves, remem'bring.

Accumulus:
the tide of
risen tears.

Approach, both, cross in tread,
comprehensilently

reaching out to lay your fingers
'gainst the life-loosed strings.

Struck – both him 'n you;
both you 'n her – by rooted time,

suffering... A
sole, immortal moment.

He felt She felt his
fingers hers

touch, tentatively;
tracing

the tension of their
sep'rate stories –

sing, vibration...