

Day 9

Bristol

Sunday 3rd July 1843

Wa-Set

2 (Phaophi). Akhet. XXVIII. 7 Thutmose I

And what is written there,
upon the walls; upon the quarried stone
delineating Ma'at 'n Issfet?

The mossied-rust,
their spores heralding time.
The rustsome moss tells tales of passing.

What do the mud-brick rooms
of houses hold, secure?
What do they keep of here 'n now?

They strain to hold their form;
to keep inexpressible moments
from being lost to non-existence.

And now I'll tell you

what I see
as I

do wander...

There are houses 'long these cobble-stricken streets, their red-tiled roofs adorning stone that stands here – faithfully repeated 'n yet ne'er the same – in rows of ragged, smoke-topped homes which hold their humans close; a family, preserved in amber, laugh.

They sit beneath the sun-shade canvas stretched across four beams of lumber placed – upright – beside the date-palmed corner of the courtyard. Mats of straw below the baskets brimming; cats nursing their young; the thund'rous buzz of flies confined to the air that sits above loose fruit; the passing of pulled-carts that carry clay 'n straw 'n brick by men in shades of copper, black, 'n sun-touched olive.

From out the horse-drawn, human-guided, dual-wheeled wood-cart fall iron fittings, crooked nails, slight-splintered timber, 'n the debris of a now-retired scaffold hard upon the well-trod planks – the men in ripped trousers let lie what's passed. A rodent checks for edibility but moves on – swift – when she does catch the scent of feline piss left, recently, nearby.

And what of all
these moments, now they're passed;
now that they're done?

Ink not spilled
is ink
that never was.

And yet... what of
those moments w'thin their
scenes, so surely gone?

Reincarnate,
they live
as long as us.

A flower opens.
Carried to the next life –
its poetry.

Lumber, lying laced with seagull shit 'n th'scars of iron bolts 'n blocks of stone, listens to the footfall future flitting past upon the day of rest. Rust 'n detritus tattoo the timber, telling tales to the rhythmic rain; the sun seeps in through the canyons, cracking glayshully from knot to knot. Logs linger as th'alliteration threads its way, a-whilest a wind-swept river, wrought with lines of unrhymed mem'ry, muses o'er its absent tide...

Oh, where've you run, springing forth
to stream your consciousness o'er
the unwrit land with its tale-untold,
terra-form, shifting sands?

As you, I've been – engraving onto
rocks, compelling earth to move
in narrative, and bringing to my
banks the siltsoil song.

Have you now beaten back the ice-cut
cliffs, their chasm widened by
your ranging tidal climbs 'n depths
that turn the primal mud?

Just as you swell to inundate the land,
I rise to reach the cratered moon.
E'en as she calls me close she
gives me to the earth...

Your river –
she keeps the land black
with the floods of life?

We keep her level.
Her body contained,
we divert her tidal urges.

So she is kept...
as she is?
Not growing, nor reverting back?

She floats as she bleeds
her essence. She sits
in a stagnant lack of change.

"Change..."

"It's the only thing. It's the only thing there is."

"The flow of the river, to strip the banks 'n lay new life..."

"Look at the sun. Meridian is but the pause between two breaths. For a moment, for an age – it writes its presentpast, then to the west it gladly falls."

As the future flows 'n seeks to reach the mouth that feeds the ocean of the past, it washes o'er the deltic present, leaving behind the unremembered. Settled there, where the river rushes out, in infinite deposit, lies the wond'rous, vast expanse of the depths of meaning.

What, then, has all this been?

Its sketch-scattered notes play a fragment-mottled light upon the storied surface. 'Long lines less tethered, moments mused their 'mergent scenes 'n in their blurred transitions brought their disp'rate forms to eddy, coalescent.

A breeze wafts about the water-centric cities.

In these penultimate pages – ultimately penned – I know not yet what scenes they'll dance in tandem...

The nearest tower perched 'pon its abutment – stone of the Age Of Man Industrious secured atop a sculpture of the Age Of Ice. Configured in a grotesque show of domination to the trees of th'adjacent woods, the nailed 'n knotted cuttings of dismembered trunks stood, scaffold-bracing.

A gull alit, a-lightly, on a length of timber as the timbre of its undulating call caused crashing waves of echoed sound to bridge the Avon. It preened at its grey-tinged feathers before pacing the abutment's edge.

"Are you waiting to cross, my friend? You'll be here a while. The bridge construction is suspended. Get it? No? Yes?! Oh. Well, you didn't laugh, is all. Unless you wanna take your solitary way along these solitary sinews, stretched in iron o'er the chasmic void, I suggest walking. Best come back when the towers are washed in white 'n topped with the gaudy sphinxes Brunel dreams of adding for to crown his tow'ring feat. He should go all out 'n line the bridge with obelisks... Walk the woods; give those wings a break; make your way unto the harbour. And if you still have your sights set fast on Clifton, where the wealthy wend their leisure, you need only traipse the incline, b'yond the walks 'n walls of Brandon Hill, and find yourself right there, atop another ice-cut giant, longing for to cross the Avon Gorge."

The gull unfurled its mature wings 'n chased the scattered rain to the river's surface.

Like a simile's sudden song upon a sea of only metaphor, the man sat starkly present in a lasting moment.

Against his unsupported back, a gentle pressure faded in, falling trustsomely 'n giving o'er, at last, to rest its being – pure – in life-affirming, silent gifting of a bond apart: the bond between a child 'n one who cares for children.

He had upon his left-side lap those leaves of mind – glue-bound; collected – that he etched his essence onto; that I paint myself upon. My knee, within its brace, absorbs the cloudedge-crested sun; beyond the floating harbour, here I write.

With the wind in the south-west city sailing cold in intermittent sweeps, the blue before the black wisps cloud to drift 'n scatter. My coffee's surface searches in its s'ramic confines – curved; clouds scatterdrift in cold wispswind; I write.

He moved his pen o'er the uncut stone; unblanking lines, he wrote the moment. Accepting that bond of given trust with his being 'n supporting back, he/me/I/she we, human souls, were c'nnected.

She wrote in tandem-time, her right-side index finger tracking life alluded-to as water filled her marks in the wet sand. Blue lotus of the Nile, emerging from the mounded bank she crested, bore the scent of life created w'thin the dark 'n wawtry chaos – a chemic spark in th'catalytic deep to gift a surging, self-propellent bloom, mutating into meaning.

The child; The woman –
amphib'yusly, she sat
on fertile soil.

In a brace of lines unplanned,
a tanka forms.

Behind her, the scaffold-laden stone of Karnak clung to the clear, blue sky. Ahead, where Iteru's floodplains traced the limits of the prosp'rous Khemet, climbed the coarse 'n desert slopes that plateaued; peaked – a red-land rise. A pyramid of Earth's own making, musing ancient o'er the valley vast: The Peak marked death memorialised, standing eternal where the Sun Disk falls. A desolate field of millions of years lies layered 'bout the valley wide – there (alone (unheard (unseen))) the architect ensures that the ground is broken; that the rock contorts to contain a royal tomb. Hidden majesty... a City Of The Dead. In time, the valley paints its rock with kings.

To her bare, brown, calloused, muddy feet fellfloated an Ostrich feather, its form in coloured flux – white, grey, 'n black – with a haggard tip. With her bare, brown, calloused, muddy hands she raised it; cradled; smoothed its form. Aloft, examined by the piercing light, it stood.

She smiled.

Ruffuhling her free-form, free-verse hair, she placed the feather – firm – into the tangled-truth of her deep-dark locks 'n sat on the prow of the sun boat, sailing on a timeless sky.

What'll you do now, em'rald-eyed child?

And what'll you do now – eyes, blue; manner, mild – ?

Und'sirous to end, your end is yet written.

Not conceived; unknown – is your third iteration.

In fire 'n starlight, your pastpresent's speaking.

Your presence is precious, enduring, 'n fleeting.

Brief sketches of lives that're danced by the water,

as the sun shines on river, 'n city, 'n daughter,

where the load-cranes 'n walls of a captured-tide harbour
see, in their reflected forms, a date-palm arbour.

In visions, a girl, without mother or father,

gifts life 'n life's meaning to a mind that's unanchored.

There's a meadow of wild-flow'ring words just to thank her

and it blooms where the ox-bow lies mistsome 'n gathered...