

DRAFT

l'inconnu

DRAFT

DRAFT

on plato's expulsion of the poets

#1

he said
I want to make love to you
tonight

and his body spoke the truth

but his lips
sealed

names

DRAFT

#2 *analytic continuation*

'I know the truth.'

'you say i know when i know you assume
and you assume too much'

'I am equations.
Surfaces defined.'

'and i am your em-
bedding space'

'Words!'

(carved
(in stone certainties)
she is armless
intuition and he
is artificially
intelligent)

#3 *dangerous language at the café sophie*

june sun
relentless as the innocent
questions
she asked

*words
floating in air*

*settling
on the table*

*settling
on the concrete*

*settling
in the shadow of a flower
bed*

lying there

when she looked back
into his eyes
she sensed his focus

detaching

as if he no longer recognized
his own voice

#4 *on the death of descartes*

thought-I
therefore
thought I

and vainly I
formed

from clay and fire

sculptured
cultured

a thought machine

man-
i-
festing

hidden idolatry
adultery

the dual godhead
diabolically

revealing

the spirit of truth
is
not thought

#5 *barren tree*

maybe
she
is imagined

in the space
where once the last blossom
is

is imagined

may be

DRAFT

#6 *as glass*

faint smell of leather

beer bottle
pressed
against his blue jeans

eyes of a deer
eyes of a man

watching
waiting
wanting

to feel himself
in her

in him

knowing
unknowing

#7

Our apologies for taking so long in coming to a decision regarding your submission, "On Plato's Expulsion of the Poets." I regret to report that we are unable to use it. The decision was made after considerable discussion and review by our editors.

Your submission raised unique questions that didn't allow for our usual review process. We normally do not have to deal with poetry submissions. While we do not stipulate in our submission requirements that papers have to be written in prose, it is the customary practice in the discipline that they are so written. We did submit your manuscript to a poet for review and received a very favorable response. We also inquired with our Board as to the feasibility of philosophical poetry submissions. There were a range of responses but for the most part unfavorable. Some believed that as a practical matter it would be too difficult to find suitably qualified referees for such submissions. Others opposed such submissions on principle.

We appreciate your interest in *Metaphilosophy* and regret that we do not have better news to report.

With best wishes,

Editor

DRAFT

DRAFT

DRAFT

soliloquies
beneath the lesser light

DRAFT

these words
stone against water

DRAFT

a dried leaf
skids across the asphalt
brittle as the wind

DRAFT

anna

in the moonlight lips
the colour of blue
iris

A dream.

The setting is vague. A city street. Perhaps new york.
Everywhere people. Everywhere alone. I am wandering
aimlessly, not paying attention. Lost in myself. As I
walk, uneasiness grows. Slowly at first. Then
faster. There is a sense of panic.
Undefined.

Ignore it

pointless.

It has power. Taking shape and form. Someone is behind
me. Watching. I continue forward, glancing repeatedly
over my shoulder.

But I can't see.
Can't focus.

The motion is blurring my vision.

No choice. I stop and turn on my heels to face
what's behind.

There are hundreds of people on the sidewalk. Crowded
motion. Immediately I spy an older man. Strangely
familiar face. He is still. Looking at me. Emanating
danger. He raises his hand, arm outstretched, elbow
locked. Pointing directly at my face. At my eyes.

...

I feel a sensation in my feet. Pins and needles. The tingling swells. Up my ankles, legs, thighs. It engulfs my stomach and chest, then spreads along my arms, out to my fingertips.

The man is still pointing.

The tingling continues to rise slowly. Into my brain. My skull is being squeezed. I expect pain. But there is none. The intensity is building. I try to visual the force. To imagine it away.

I see a picture.
There is light.
Thousands of tiny sparks in random motion.
 Flowing.
 Turbulent.
 Continual movement.

I see the picture
 yet I am the picture.

I imagine the sparks extinguished.
One by one I force them to disappear.
The tingling relents.
Control.
Now I can fight.

...

Harder I concentrate.
The sensation ebbs and surges.
The limit of my effort
To stop its progression.

Focused. Beyond space and time. Compressing
all my strength. Just to hold on. A stalemate.
Motionless.

Then weakening. My strength
being consumed. Losing hold.

The sparks multiply
slowly filling.

My head is electric.

Fighting.
ragged spent.

Tingling.
Dizziness.
Ever intensifying.

Finally becoming solid light.

i have lost.

DRAFT

the lowing light ignites
one red petal

all you see is an endless corridor dimly lit
everything is white is grey
doors
to the left to the right

you walk down the corridor
following eyes
steeling
glances past the doors

*white is black
dark
empty*

you
will
spy one door

different

the same

threatening

drawing you
into
fear

...

approach the door

*no one knows
except
you*

touch it

an invisible script pushes your hand
against the door

opening

opening

the room concrete a window a mattress

opening

opening

then resistance

pressure

presence

hiding

behind the door

...

pretend
you are unaware

*don't let him know
you know*

deep breaths

deep breaths

try to leave but your eyes
steal a glimpse
past the crack where the door is
hinged

you see
eyes
a face

your face

you are the one who is hiding behind the door

DRAFT

in a pane of glass

eyes

no eyes

DRAFT

*“You are persistent, like conscience,
always surrounding me, like air.
Why are you asking for an answer?”*

imagine a young man is walking along a dirt road cutting darkly through a forest and movement beneath the sun is flickering light

imagine he happens upon a stone building which is at once a city and a single dwelling

there are no people here

imagine he walks around the building and at the back through the trees he sees a river imagine darkness and shadows and a woman is standing in the river she is frightened and he sees her fear of him

imagine he turns to leave and now he is walking along a dirt road cutting darkly through a forest imagine he stops suddenly and he says "*it's in the stars*" and he returns to the building and enters an apartment

imagine apartment

i am standing in the doorway two men are struggling on the sofa one is me the other is my brother they are struggling and behind them is the woman from the river she is trapped trapped by the struggling and i am the rescuer

there's something i'm not telling you

imagine this is a dream

DRAFT

leaves
scattered on the water's
deep blue green

cleansing light

dried yellow rose petals

a dish of broken crystal

august breeze
through white cotton

DRAFT

*“but where the silent mother stood, there
no one glanced and no one
would have dared”*

DRAFT

watching raindrops penetrate
the surface above and i
i can't breathe
this dream
alone

DRAFT

in these stagnant places
rushes and reeds
still
respond to the wind

and a movement obtains
allows

staccato vision of black water

here
my grandmother floats
her face submerged in the water

there is a submission of will
an obscurity

i wade into the water
And pull her limp body from the blackness

she becomes
man

he embraces me
whispering

“are you my confessor?”

rain
has altered
the scent of fallen leaves

sister

you come from autumn
wearing colours
of the clinging
flame

a soft chill

the lake
is turning
crisp

clear

*“Go down at once to the potters house
and there I will tell you
what I have to say”*

—Jeremiah 18.2

with clay and a chopstick
he formed a mobius surface
flowing into itself
again and again

it became
man and woman
death and birth

it became
pain

words
etched
in absences

"it occurs to me that I am America"

was that really you sitting cross-legged on top of the hill
while children whispered from the pine trees

speak
speak

and when you began the descent into the valley
did you know where the path would lead?

voices are tumbling into the night

keep walking
keep walking

the man reading package labels at the Giant Eagle
is elisha

keep walking
keep walking

sun is illusion
there is only sleep
and dreams
and dreams within dreams

keep walking
keep walking

...

i dreamt of a rainbow
turned to a mushrooming cloud
from earth to the sky
fierce and violent
omnipotent

it advanced
in its path
was the earth
black as ash
undulating
tearing seams molten red

the people ran to the tower for sanctuary

God is Love
God is Love
God is Love

DRAFT

*“i defend
not my voice
but my silence”*

less

cold is only a concept
until the hairs in our nostrils freeze
from iced toronto winds
as winter cleanses raw streets grey

grey he watches
the passers-by clench ears stinging
and his wiry limbs tremble
in the warm breath of iron grating

home

DRAFT

a crinoline rustle
as she shifts her body
in her makeshift bed

whites

the styrofoam sound
of footsteps in the snow

bits of yellow light
in the blue black recesses

used tubes
of airplane glue

daffodils

DRAFT

*“the ice crumbled and cracked,
black water appeared underfoot*

*‘this is the lake’, you thought
‘and in the lake there is a little island ...’
and suddenly from the darkness
shone the small blue flame”*

DRAFT

someone small has decided to live

DRAFT

DRAFT

*“but the enemy will not divide
our land at will for himself
the mother of God will spread her white mantle
over this enormous grief”*

in the winterblue dusk
deer are gathering
now there are three

the moon
slowly ascends
a white pine

in the winterblue dusk
deer are gathering
now there are twelve

morning sun
each breath hovers
in blue air

and the interesting thing is the statues which aren't really statues as much as cutouts people you know but flat like cartoons or like those cardboard dolls my sister would punch out of books

and these statues or cutouts or whatever are scattered about on the lawn sometimes a man sometimes a woman a family even

and they're wooden not stone like you would expect green around the edges you know and the weird thing is they kept the rectangles of wood you know the original slabs they used to make these statues or cutouts or whatever and so each time there is one

there are two

because of the hole in the rectangle you know where the statue of cutout or whatever used to be

and so you can look for the pairs bring them together match them even you know in your mind so that when they fit together there's nothing left but the rectangles

"How does that make you feel?"

I'm thinking of mirrors mirrors reflecting in mirrors and the hole part you know

DRAFT

water
rushing over stones
beneath the snow

DRAFT

smoke and steaming sap
rise through the branches
into the night

march sun
the lake is low
the ice glare

a man and his father
are gathering stones
to fill an empty crib

the sun
the ice
two men
and a silent harvest of stone

DRAFT

april ice
disintegrating
into needles

a man sits on a bench in the northeast corner of allan park
he sits there watching the birds or the trees or perhaps the
cracks in the concrete path

it is evening
shadows of men on bicycles move across the grass
gathering and dispersing and gathering again
money is exchanged

there is a woman her eyes are vague confused
she bounces off the men
collecting dispersing
she bounces off the men and someone calls out
"you're a good man"

and now the woman is gone

and the men are gone

and the man on the bench seems to be waiting for
someone or something

a cyclist returns
he approaches the man stares at him
asks him if he wants anything
"some ladies maybe?"
he stares at him and then he moves on

and the man on the bench is waiting

...

a shadowy figure moves among the trees
hiding and emerging and hiding again
the shadow moves
and moves towards the bench

the man seems unaware

now the figure is approaching from behind
drawing close
uncomfortably close

blood close

silence grows
and the man waits
and the shadow waits

and the shadow waits

and in the weighting
the shadow begins
to recede

soon the man will get up and leave the park
he will enter the door to the church across the street
and he will disappear

a man sits on a bench in the northeast corner of allan park
he sits there watching the birds or the trees or perhaps the
cracks in the concrete path
he sits there and no one knows

deep may
beneath the budding maples
snow

along the limestone path
a pale yellow flower
recedes with the sun

beneath moon-traced clouds
fingertips touching
petals of a trillium

DRAFT

DRAFT

drifting on the lake
stars above below

a trout surfaces

breath

mouth

throat

lungs

heart

lungs

throat

mouth

voice

DRAFT

silently
against these lips
sweet blood wine
lingers

DRAFT

DRAFT

contemplation in two voices for piano and flute

*"The spirit of the valley never dies.
It is called the mystic female.
The door of the mystic female
is the root of heaven and earth.*

*"Continuously, continuously,
it seems to remain.
Draw upon it
and it serves you with ease."*

— Tao Te Ching

*"All science is the search for unity hidden in likenesses ...
The scientist looks for order in the appearance of nature by
exploring such likenesses. For order does not display itself
of itself; if it can be said to be there at all it is not there for
the mere looking. There is no way of pointing a finger or a
camera at it; order must be discovered and, in a deep sense,
it must be created. What we see, as we see it, is mere
disorder ... We re-make nature by the act of discovery, in
the poem or in the theorem"*

— Bronowski

*“Looked at but cannot be seen –
that is called the invisible.
Listened to but cannot be heard –
that is called the inaudible.
Grasped at but cannot be touched –
that is called the intangible.
These three elude all our inquiries
and hence blend and become one.*

*“Not by its rising is there light,
nor by its setting is there darkness.
Unceasing, continuous,
it cannot be defined,
and reverts again to the realm of nothingness.”
– Tao Te Ching*

- "2.21 A picture agrees with reality or fails to agree; it is correct or incorrect, true or false.
- "2.22 What a picture represents it represents independently of its truth or falsity, by means of its pictorial form.
- "2.221 What a picture represents is its sense.
- "2.222 The agreement or disagreement of its sense with reality constitutes its truth or falsity.
- "2.223 In order to tell whether a picture is true or false we must compare it with reality.
- "2.224 It is impossible to tell from the picture alone whether it is true or false.
- "2.225 There are no pictures that are true a priori.
- "3. A logical picture of facts is a thought."
– Wittgenstein

*“The changes is a book
from which one may not hold aloof.
Its tao is forever changing —
alteration, movement without rest,
flowing through the six empty places;
rising and sinking without fixed law,
firm and yielding transform each other.
They cannot be confined within a rule;
it is only change that is at work here.*

*...
First take up the words,
ponder their meaning,
then the fixed rules reveal themselves.
But if you are not the right man,
the meaning will not manifest itself to you.”
— I Ching*

“6.54 My propositions serve as elucidations in the following way: anyone who understands me eventually recognizes them as nonsensical, when he has used them — as steps — to climb up beyond them. (He must, so to speak, throw away the ladder after he has climbed up it.) He must transcend these propositions, and then he will see the world aright.

“7. What we cannot speak about we must pass over in silence.”

— Wittgenstein

DRAFT

DRAFT

DRAFT

DRAFT



as light scatters through morning mist
all is subtly born
in shape and form alone

a loon calls
through the grey
dream of the blood moon

dream related
to the architecture of water

the sound of this paddle
dipping beneath the surface

blurred
echoes
echoing

in the beginning
I am

*i am
in the beginning*

*echoing
echoes
blurred*

*dipping beneath the surface
sound of this paddle*

*to the architecture of water
dream related*

*of the blood moon
through the grey
a loon call*

*in shape and form alone
all is borne
as light scatters*

DRAFT

Notes

The rejection letter on page 10 is authentic, 1997.

Excerpts on pages 25, 29, 38, 43, 44, 46 from *The complete Poems of Anna Akhmatova: expanded edition*, translated by Judith Hemschemeyer, Boston: Zephyr Press, 1997 [pp 398, 392, 520, 213, 546, 200].

Excerpts on pages 62 and 63 from *Tao Te Ching: verse VI and verse XIV*, in *The Wisdom of Laotse*, translated by L Yutang, New York: Random House Inc, 1976.

Excerpt on page 62 from Jacob Bronowski, *Science and Human Values*, New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1956 [pp 23, 24, 32].

Excerpts on pages 64 and 65 from Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, translated by DF Pears and BF McGuinness, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd, 1977 [pp 10, 74].

Excerpt on page 65 from *I Ching, The Great Treatise II: VIII*, translated by R Wilhelm, rendered into English by C Baynes, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990.

Acknowledgements: many, david neelands, jim olthuis,
albert fuller, linda waybrant, tony marques, allan
briesmaster, jill battson, pierre l'abbé, allen sutterfield,
phoenix poets workshop, art bar poetry series,
innumerable authors, peter sheridan, david jasnow, walter
goldburg, jim maher, dad mom and family, saad.

Companion composition: parts of this poem are also
integrated within *Études in Light and Harmony: an
interdisciplinary workbook for creative dialogue and discovery*.

timothy mckenzie rogers
trinity college, toronto
september 19, 2022