

SEQ CHAPTER Vv Vr 1

I am ill, because I am made of glass -- glass with capability of sensing the staggering fatigue that is the central fact of my being, a death-like fatigue that makes it impossible to carry out even the simplest contraction of the musculature without shattering my glassy being into one hundred thousand painful shards. To move without breaking would seem to give enormous (but in truth unwarranted) value to the valiant effort involved. No, it would surely be better not to try to move to accommodate myself to the ridiculous regime of the hospital. But I detest the too naked obscenity of the room I am in and its foul green cast whose tedium-inducing powers are counteracted by the all-too-occasional bustling as another cancer-victim is wheeled away in a bag. Oh, for more such interruptions that might overcome my proclivity towards fantasy and call me to reality. Oh, that I might have the means to decorate with innumerable casts of woman's bodies and countless ithyphallic momentos. In any event, my boredom increases my tendency to succumb and sleep fits as profound and imaginative as any hypnotic slumber, and only good can come from increased frequency of visits to the realm of sleep. Though sleeping fits put one's mental hygiene in jeopardy, by undermining any condition that is in the least favourable to its elementary factors implicit in its make-up, and though they can all too easily lead to impulsive actions, the gesticulations which one makes on first returning from a visit to those enchanted sites, before re-acculturating oneself, repays the many risks involved.

A bewilderment, no different in any respect from vertigo, accompanies each and every effort. My skull is broken into pieces that I feel shift against each other, and when they align themselves out of kilter, they produce an appalling tinnitus that disturbs my thinking. I am required to defecate in a pot left on the floor of the lavatory -- and what for, so that, following Montaigne's counsel, I can wear it on my head afterwards. In any event, were I to do so, what I would have above my neck would be more valuable than what any professor has above her or his head. In fact the contents of the can could well be dumped and sifted through at one of the borderline gatherings --- say, at one of the initial meetings of the steering committee for International Congress to Determine the Directives in Aid and Defense of the Spirit of Postmodernity Propagandistic to a New Declaration of the Rights of Humanity as a Groundwork for the Celebration of the 125th Anniversary of Hysteria. But now reality becomes disembodied and multiplies itself prodigiously. On what ground could one possibly select one version as "the really real" and consign all others to status of the simulacrum? The very thought of the possibility of being asked to make such a discrimination riles the will. Nothing belongs to a rational order -- there are only emotional links between things to which I alone am privy. All things have become odourless, even though everything has a sex. A person who suffers is different -- only a sufferer knows about these secrets. Words rot as soon as will summons them out of the unconscious, and they lie rotting on far edges of

awareness, as numerous and offensive as smelt on the shores of the Great Lakes in spring. No words correspond to the condition of my thought, so anything that I say is no better than barking, but the stupefaction of my tongue renders me non-existent. These gaps in my thinking, this void in my being, is truly horrible. Being relates to power, and is a power. To not be is to be powerless, and to be powerless is a miserably abject condition. Collagenous corpuscles within me secrete a venom that renders my nerve endings unexcitable. These corpuscles therefore do worse than make me idiot -- though they certainly do that -- they pitch me into the void in which I sense the power of existence leak out of me. I cannot even be said to exist: I merely subsist in a state of suspended animation.

I am confined here, in this place where I was born and where I will die. I enjoy such a monastic existence. Should I venture the old, the "outside" world would affect me only as visions that compose an unwanted dream. When I look at women, I see only their teeth. Seeing a woman smile makes me long to disinter the corpses of nuns in order to examine their teeth. Then I am gripped by a desire so strong that I pass into a trance. I become agitated, and what I prize most is repose. So long as they do not smile at me, I can submit to the comfortable intrigue of sensing the queer life they have inside, but the merest flash of smile puts an end to that possibility. Teeth, you should know, are ideas -- smiling at anyone, allowing them to see your teeth, exposes one's

thoughts and establishes the conditions for one's innermost recesses to be violated. "By space the universe encompasses and swallows me as an atom, but by thought I encompass that. That is why I cannot allow my teeth to be seen. That is why I prefer the solitude of the library. What matters above all else is the record. I am assembling the record here. That is all that counts. I must not allow myself to be distracted from the task.

I am acquainted in my innermost recesses with loss. The monotony of time makes me forgetful of the future, and this engenders the most terrible panic over loss. I have no expectations, any more than I have explanations, because, while time devours you, consciousness of its opposite does the same. I despair over the condition of the landscape. The afternoons seem an infernal eternity. Mirrors have become my hosts, but they provide but temporary solace from the castle of oblivion, whose inhabitants are all too enthusiastic about iron and cement. Nobody knows it, but I am utterly hollow. Hollow and in pieces. One part of me belongs to this realm, one part to another. One part pays homage to Caesar, another is affronted by any requests that do not come from the Highest. One part of me expends my energies in fruitless labours, while another part of me lives in village amongst drummers and dancers who have taken their art in unprecedented directions by honing their skills to astonishing levels. One part of me

issues words to which no one attends; the words from the other part are commands that effect an immediate and deferential response. One of mouths is filled with sawdust, the other issues words as beautiful as the trillium encountered in the inner recesses of a forest. My limbs belong to one part, my heart to another, my head to another. All that connects the various regions is the engorged phallus. And even it cannot endow my being with sufficient density to really matter. Nothing could fill such a cavern to the point where my soul might qualify for Destiny, any more than the hollow of my hand can bring bright colours to such life that they leap out of subterranean depths and take their rightful place in the Above. Because I am empty, I bring forth nothing. Not even the wonderment I used to feel about geometric conception can return my being to the density and integrity it formerly enjoyed. But, since I a cock-eyed optimist, as is pretty well-known, I still hope that this emptiness might bestow a blessing upon me: I might purge philosophical ideas from my writing, something that, unaided, I find very hard to do.

Illness causes memory to invade the body and, by installing alien entities within the body, exacerbates the effects of whatever natural organisms are initially responsible for the disease process. The onset of delirium is a restorative factor in the disease

process, for it undoes the imaginary cohesion that memory produces. It allows for a decomposition, without which we can never recover from illness. Memory hopes to become a pall-bearer, but delirium fends memory away from the pitiable, enfeebled body. It turns the body away from an orientation towards the past, and restores it to the vital, enduring present that knows nothing but what is immediate. Delirium reduces the delusory structures that consciousness constructs to protect itself and reveals the primacy of chaos. Illness induces a most appalling laxity of judgment, and this laxity permits the real obscenity of existence to disclose itself. Contrary to received opinion, suggestibility has no role in the phenomenon whatsoever: what it reveals is the authentic core of existence. That it resembles the bleeding, mutilated corpse of a newly slaughtered lamb on its way to the final stage in the rendering process -- that it is like suppurating wounds and the deformations caused by madmen's experiments on the bodies of pregnant women -- is not something I should be blamed for. That's life as it really is -- and it's that which makes this film cinéma-vérité. What is more, every spasm of pain destroys another of the ligatures that shackle expression, and so, if only by an inch, frees the imagination. Every spasm of pain comes on as a surprise, and surprise, as Apollinaire well knew, is the imagination's greatest resource. The periodic spasms of pain punctuate much longer episodes of boredom -- I can only hope that the stupefying, cretinizing effects of tedium produce some salutary, paroxysmal effect, as elevating as a paranoid's hallucinations. Pain allows one to understand that the idea a poem is the product of well-defined and exquisitely governed will is egregious ignorance

and arrogance -- why are people so foolish as believe that they can focus appetite for the marvellous on the will itself. Pain reveals that reality is no lapdog, lying contently at our feet. What else could be the meaning of the fact that events belonging to separate causal series, the members of which are as closed to the members of other events as Leibniz' monads are to one another, sometimes converge, as though by pure chance, at a point, and when they do, they generate the most dazzling illumination imaginable, as bright as that which nuclear fusion generates? It is thus pain that reveals that the folly of believing in elective love -- that is to say love that we choose -- is the highest form of folly. Love overcomes us when two separate event paths converge upon a single term; delusion brings the fusion to incandescence, and its blinding light conceals the criss-crossing of other hellish currents. Choice has no role in the beginning of the whole affair, though some noble souls are capable of endlessly fuelling and stoking this fire of delusion and of preventing the enlarging knot of darkness from extinguishing it.

The image starts long before I see here approaching: it begins with a whiff of green-tea and the sound of Chinese zither that brings to his mind a phrase from Do Fu. An exotic world forms itself, of brocade and mountains rising steeply out of a river and climbing into the clouds. I am transported away on strains of music as delicate as cherry-blossoms. An elegant man in a trench-coat, in a puddle of light, leans against a

building that, I believe, would appear brightly painted if the image were not in monochrome; above him is large, wrought-iron balcony, with no one standing on it. I don't know who took the photograph of the scene (I hear there is one), but I certainly do not want to see it. I suspect that the man knows that he is completely at her mercy, and that she is as spoiled as he is wounded; but even if that were not so, I would still be unwilling to look at the photograph. These parts of Mexico I find too sinister to be completely comfortable with them. Down the street, I hear words in Spanish, the "r"s rolled with a particularly malevolent gusto. The sound is too loud, resembling a film sound turned up to loud. I become aroused thinking of *Viridiana*. It must be acknowledged that the man had come here by an agreement that they forged as soon as she asked him. It was at just the point when the agreement was sealed that the man's fate coagulated, and, willy-nilly, he will have to reckon with it. I imagine that there might be a body somewhere, but it is not really part of the picture. My sister approaches. I have not seen her for a very long time. Then the image softens, for what I see there can make me weep.

My employment inflicts the most incredible suffering and humiliation and compensates for that only pitiably; yet I must endure it, for I have no other means. Any

employment requires two things: the first is that one become a voyeur, the second the one become an imposteur. The first is the reason that success in work correlates with access to key-holes. The second explains why worker-slaves become puffy and possess arse-cheek smiles. And because professors are the masters of the game of fraud, their smiles are most arse-like. Not even the creeping madness that takes over their mind by inches can elevate worker-slaves (of whom I am one) above the condition of a bone-head, since one must, above all else, keep up the appearance of being level-headed in order to keep a job. But deviance, narcissism, subversion, concealment, protest, longing, submission, hallucination, obsession, exclusion, judgment -- this is what any employment demands and I detest. Moreover, employment demands that one conform one's inner existence to an alien external realm. I consider the site of my travails as an enormous laboratory, whose machinery is so constructed to discover the worst possible outcome for any given situation. After a few weeks in bondage at the institution, one develops the habit of always expecting the worst, and begins to play a little game. One examines the situation in which one is forced to live out one's life, scanning it for the worst that one might conceive could come of it, and then, in keeping with the degradation one has learned to expect, predicts that as the outcome. Then the laboratory goes to work, and processes the situation and, astonishingly, time after time, finds a worse -- a more degrading, more humiliating, more bone-crushing, more revolting, more anti-imaginative, more hostile, more philistine, more anti-ideal, more thwarting -- outcome, and imposes that outcome as reality. If anyone truly desired to

know about the political realities of the present, they would examine this anti-evolutionary practice. Instead W.C.W. (and I indicate the professor, not the gentle doctor/poet), L.S., E.S., N.G., M.D., K.A., K.B, D.T., and R.B. all condemn the excessive comforts my existence affords, because they are ignorant of my actual material conditions, because they are such bigots, and, the most important reason of all, because they ardently crave to become slaves of the most appallingly commonplace sort. Read their writings and see how willingly they lock themselves up in the prisons of received ideas, which truly constitute a compendium of human baseness. These people could encounter the Parade of Orpheus, marching with lyres, robes, and glazed-over eyes, and still not recognize a single person of imagination! Not even the facts that each member of the parade possessed a fury that would dissolve into simply defiance, that each shot out from eyes a raging torrent of symbols, and that each dragged behind him a gothic landscape peirced with lightning-flashes would alert such impenetrable ones to the presence of poets. What complete dolts these people, whose sensibility is less like that of an upstart arriviste or a philandering parvenu than that of a jackal hungry for death and destruction and eager to divulge the obscene precariousness of existence! What do such ignoramus know of the rarified domains hidden away in restricted sections of the library? What have they read in the secret texts printed in marvellous, fading letters on wilting paper recording extraordinary intellectual peregrinations among the planets? Do they possess the key that allows them to unlock the recondite meaning secreted away in the texts of persecuted writers (that is to say, given humankind's

envious nature, all imaginative writers?) All I can say is that am I glad the majority are hurtling towards premature senility in the comfort of their university chairs -- otherwise the howls of agony issuing from their wounded grandiosity would disturb my reveries. Indeed, their behaviour simply confirms that an outmoded world, rushing towards its doom, attempts to prolong itself by increasing restraints and multiplying taboos; in this way, it attempts, unsuccessfully, to keep from revealing the stupidity, arrogance and cynicism that overflow what constraints it tries to impose, no matter how severely enforced. Why one of the pathetic lot of morons I just enumerated, who each and every one exemplify this outmoded form of existence, thinks that, though the zoom in *Wavelength* does not, light in the cinema actually does move -- in time, he pleonastically adds, though one might well ask why he refrains from adding space as well. Because I am sage, I rest content in the recognition that such stupidity will hurtle to quick self-destruction, with no effort on my part (though a more committed, reasonable and politically aware person than I would likely wonder about how much public money will be squandered on supporting him until he crashes, for, at the rate at which he has been consuming public funds, even a short span will be costly -- unwarrantedly costly, considering that the few miserable little squibs he has produced are of the nature of yankee imperialist propaganda whose end, though he likely unconscious of the fact, is really a defense and illustration of aesthetic and moral superiority the Emersonian version of Transcendentalism to any other artistic ideals.)

I am bored, and many try me by boring me further. What is the meaning of all this? Why has the truth not been spelt out for us. Human beings are no better off than apes without tails for their confusion -- no self-regard even exacerbates the effects of our ignorant condition by making us aware of what fools we are, and making us crave lucidity all the more. Whatever reading material chance throws my way I find myself detesting. I am too distracted by commands from another place to pay any such artifice any attention whatsoever. Still, one should never forget that the murder, when perpetrated simply for the amusement it provides, is a result of boredom. The bourgeois employers, for their own safety's sake, should never allow a person to become quite as bored as I am right now. I'm just not up to playing the game. My thoughts belong to another place. Too many people want to play God -- and sacrilege, after all, is simply an act of conformism, as evident a sign of timidity as any professor's tweed jacket and blue jeans outfit. (Did some of you blush just now with self-recognition?) Is all of it part of plan that in the last days will be revealed? God does have need of the Lucifer, after all, if only to sustain the absurd drama of existence though a serial existence that makes even the longest-lived soap opera pale in comparison. And everyone knows that atheists are the true believers. And the charlantism of poetry and art is necessary to reveal that everyone is a dupe, just as all speaking is always an effort to answer the question about the reference of the word "I." Out of an utterly contemptible self-pity, I imagine that the

events of my life compose one long, tedious, "Song of the Poorly Loved One." There's no irony in this work, no exquisite balancing of delicately counterposed forces -- here there's only a direct, brutish attack on the hideousness of Being. Anyway, what folly it is to believe that through the imagination one can recast the shape of one's existence. The truth is that events befall us -- they overtake us and impose themselves on us, most often contrary to our will; and it often seems that they are so constructed as to inflict the maximum of suffering on us. This metaphysical dynamic manifests itself even in the statuary we glimpse as we look just anywhere and catch sight of these products of an age of vandalism, that glorify authority, oppression, and the sacrifice of human life -- the last celebrated without the courage even to relish blood and brutishness. We cling desperate to the belief that sacrifice can wash the world -- but such sacrifice is a singular event that it can happen only once. And it has already occurred, and it took place at night.

I am troubled by a presentiment of language. A pulse, with a rhythm of swelling syllables that cannot make themselves definite, pressures my brain. An idea swells like a lung filling with air for speech, but it swells into an indefinite form that can be likened, if to anything, only to a jelly-fish. Then my thought stammers, unable to utter a word. If I speak, it is as one speaks to a stone, or to someone who is not present. My blood is too

full of toxins, my forehead too wet -- I cannot formulate a thought. I am acquainted only with leeches and scorpions, with fungus and rot, with centipedes and crawling squalor, with demonic forces that unsettle the senses, stir the passions, disorder life, create alarms in the midst of sleep, bring diseases, fill the mind with terror, distort the limbs, arouse the passion to make love, create the heat of cupidity, and lurk even in consecrated places -- and my knowledge of such is carnally intimate and carnally intense. If I could transform my thoughts into words, I could lessen the impact of awareness, but I cannot. Words can serve as a rubble-barge that carries away the detritus of consciousness and creates a still and empty place. But Words fail to protect me. My incapacities leave me naked and vulnerable, as I strive to keep in mind that it is the pitiableness of burnt wood that reveals the strength of fire. I push air into lungs, but the formed words never give it any shape. Names turn ethereal when words remain as formless as sea-green, and the porpoises of thought leap into an eternalized Nowhere (but the ripples they cause possess the sting of scorpions.)

I dreamt of one whose hands were full of hours. I dreamt of one encrusted with red and yellow leaves, and not with brown leaves as I am. I dreamt of one who enabled me to scale light. I dreamt of one who enabled me to compose electricity. I dreamt of a smile from depths I cannot fathom. I dreamt despite having a mouth full of brine. I

dreamt even while I was immersed in brackish water. I dreamt of dandylions, but mostly on account of their name. I dreamt of being able to bang a drum silently, but so as to fill the universe with soundless reverations that reenergize all that is, but has become tired. I dreamt I awakened in Rome, and it became true. I dreamt I awakened in Ravenna, among the mosaics and close to Dante Aligheri's tomb, and it too became true. so I went down to observe the flame burning the oil that people of Florence sent to atone for sending the great poet into exile. I dreamt that I had learned to dance. But I had night terrors of sun, glinting from sharp blades and reflected into a mirror.

Words revolt against my spirit by betraying the subtlety of my thought. My thought is fine, ethereal, ghostly in elusiveness, but words are coarse. Poetry is simply travesty. Our gilded youth are enchanted and betrayed by a farcical language, which can utter only the absurdities of politics and writings of half-witted academics. I must learn to eschew subtle gestures and subtle thought, for subtlety and refinement are of no import when what most demands doing is avoiding boredom. I say again, the political realm, as we know it, has its home in a completely farcical, and utterly stupifying language that converts any petty ministerial crisis such as a change in government in Cambodia into a cataclysmic revolutionary event, and denies evident truth that human vileness corrupts any form of governance language might body forth. The spiritually

enlightened experience language as an unintelligible ballast that prevents the soul from taking flight to the higher realms. Only the delirious know how completely language forbids the conveyance of our real thoughts. Only the delirious understand the hidden life of words and the incestuous commerce with thought. Only the delirious realize that words shed no light on the world beyond themselves, because the desire to copulate with one another is the totality of their wants. Words themselves must revolt against meaning if this condition is to be remedied, and this emptying must be a violent, destructive process: one must become a risk-taking adventurer to discover the cure for the language, for no stay-at-home dandy as lacking in the sense of urgency of as any coddled professor is would be able to wrest a change of such magnitude. One must be histrionic and paroxysmal if one is to measure up to the task. Too long people have sought to master language, even though their bondage in which they hoped to shackle themselves was only illusory. The stronger among recent poets have all directed their endeavours against language and thought; they want to get out of language so as to live with ambiguity. In this way, they carry negative capability to its ultimate, for they have the courage to explode the sheltering delusions that are the end and the essence of thinking, which after all, is simply a biological process that forms the sleigh-ride of being we call evolution. Bad poets, on the contrary, whose skills fail to surpass those of the writers of Benneton advertisements, have deluded themselves into believing that they can secret irony away in the sign, but the truth, to be revealed in the revolt of words, is that the sign itself, and not the speaker, makes irony. And what is more, what they think

they secret away in the sign is only further weight that hinders the soul in its natural proclivity to ascend. If the revolution of words succeeds, words will become lamps to illuminate the obscurity in which we live, and their colours, flashing in succession, will turn the colourless fog into a rainbow. And its colours reflect a world more beautiful than anything I have known heretofore. Then nothing imposed is submitted to, for all is refracted through a crystal window. The trick in dealing with words is to place oneself at the centre of language and observe their variegated spectacle of light created as thought is refracted -- that is to say, bent or twisted -- through words. The thought itself becomes as nothing, and the dazzling light-play words create becomes everything. We create rare, exotic sensations by making ethereal entities collide in the higher realm of flamboyant colour. This is another way of saying, that we relearn how to follow the pleasure principle, by liberating ourselves from the reality principle with its principle of representation.

I cherish solitude more than does any other person alive, but it is imposed upon me, and not freely chosen. I am isolated by breath-stopping spasms of pain that arise from lower gut and rise through my belly to strangle my thought. I can barely control my bowels, and sometimes am not even successful at that basic prerequisite for engaging in

intercourse with civilized society. The whole matter is terribly humiliating, but I am pleased that, at long last, I have achieved sufficient equanimity that follows from the realization that the whole world despises a complainer and much application that enables me to dissimulate -- I would like to add "effectively" but I fear that would be exaggeration. For pain acts like a force-field, and even though one endeavours to be as stoical as is humanly possible, and not to let anyone know what one is feeling, a field emanates out around like a magnetic field around a loadstone, and affects others negatively, making them want to avoid you. Why only recently, at at the wedding of two friends, my gut attacked me with such savagery that I felt swoony and dazed throughout the evening, and had to sit down for the entire length of the affair. I tried my best to conceal the pain I felt, and certainly did not remark upon it, but I did remark that nonetheless my friends avoided me, and left me to grope my way through swarming hoards of overwhelmingly intense sensations of pain in the effort to complete a thought which, only a moment before had presented itself so effortlessly. Such events impress upon me the radical incongruity of appearance and reality, and offer up the wonderful ironic ontological fact that an inner realm utterly devastated by intense suffering can coexist with a semblance of utter normalcy. I take pride that I am able to maintain my the composure even while the pain of the spasm is so intense that I cannot inhale. If the intensity of my painful sensation drives away my friends, so much the worse for them. My pain fixes my mind on my inward sensations and obliterates the entire external world; thus the inner world swells up to engulf all that lies beyond my skin. There are

moments when the pain frequently rises to such an intensity that I feel that I am hallucinating. Accordingly, this horrendous pain serves as an armature for imagination. Pain fashions a wondrous cage wherein I lie, shuddering uncontrollably. But this is to be preferred to the "heathy" attitude of those who roam the out-of-doors just for the sake of amusement. Should anyone deign to speak to me, this isolation would be threatened. I am glad no one does. Moreover, my bowels resistance to submitting to control makes me aware of the savage nature of all existence. This malady vouchsafes to me a lively knowledge that civilization is nothing more than a thin veneer.

I repeat, it is the thought of a woman that has made me narcoleptic. Though a rotten smell emanates from the streets below, this blanket of sleep and protects me -- I fly away into delicious, and O so naughty, realms. A procession of conquerers marches through the streets and raises a tattered flag. Who really cares?! Funerals arouse me, after all. Nonetheless my dream follows the procession through the deserted streets into the parlour of a naked, and massively overweight woman; behind her, on benches against the outwalls sit many other nude woman. The room is filled with symmetrical bottles and treatises on occult topics, but perfect symmetry, of the sort the bottles displayed, has always disgusted me. A nocturnal rambler enters the room, and struck by his apparition in a mirror, begins to strut. At two o'clock the boisterous retinue of horses

clamours through the street. An alert musician then thanks the audience, and passes the hat for money. He has extraordinarily acute hearing. His voice is angelic. It can be heard even when he does not sing. But he decides to sing again. Before doing so, he goes to a bar and sets a flame of spirits alight, to incite all the customers into a round-dance. His face is pale, and shadowed by a fedora. When he begins to sing, the women want to don new dresses. Just as dawn begins to break over the pathetic dirt and stone streets, they appear fully clad. Tomorrow the women in the building will put on their finery. Tomorrow the women in the building will dance for him. Tomorrow the women in the building will hand him keys to their bedrooms. Tomorrow the women in the building will learn the words to all the songs he has written. Tomorrow the women in the building will enter into a competition amongst themselves. Tomorrow the women in the building will pine away for the capacity to play Spanish guitar. Tomorrow the women in the building will heed the call of the archangel Raphael. Tomorrow the women in the building will enter into the realm of the blessed. Tomorrow the women in the building will learn about the identity of the two Marys. Tomorrow the women in the building will become acquainted with the power of poetry.

Here there are ruins. An old castle, majestic and terrifying, has become a Disneyland, filled with pagentry of one's private imagining. One can imagine stranges

diseases that prowl in corridors so narrow that magnify the toxic effect many-fold. The clappers of bells toll for love. The town around the castle must have been very sizeable at one time. Now, it is inhabited only by phantoms (though, one should be careful and not leave unsaid that fact that every six-year old knows, that phantoms make the best companions.) There remain from this once sizeable town a few sizeable towers that, despite their age, seem like they might topple over at any moment. There are, additionally, a few sunny, but deserted squares and some few arcades which produce the most extraordinary perspectival effects. No one, absolutely no one, approaches me when I stand in the middle of the square. The stones do not speak, though they do effectively mirror any thoughts to which I give voice. Whole eternities pass while I wait. Ghosts, habituated to unfamiliar and seemingly uncanny customs, appear to engage in mysterious practices. On the north east corner there is a metal edifice, the purpose of which is utterly indiscernable. Beneath there is a labyrinth of corridors that I long to investigate. Love, do you condemn to do so? You know that I am coward, if ever there were one. Can't you choose a better slave? I'm not cut out to be Vergil, guiding the poet through the nether world.

The metaphosis of sleep makes everyone of us the equivalent of the Supreme Deity. Sleep transmutes every human other than the sleeper into a theatre-actor,

strutting his hour on the stage, though his actions be no more than a vain illusion -- a spectacle which the sleeper, tarted up in evening clothes, surveys from the luxurious isolation of his loge enclosure -- from an isolation that he breaks only when he stoops to the vulgar's theatre-going gesture of shouting encouragement or abuse at the tissue-paper courage or the awkward inaction he observes, or, in a more daring gesture, leaps across the portcullis of light that isolates him from the actor, crosses in one bound the luminous barrier that separates the stage from the world he occupied only a moment ago, and takes up habitation, as a ungovernable intruder, in a domain of vain liberty, among imitation woods of limited dimensionality, utterly unaware of the subterranean labyrinth that begins at the stage door that lies shut beneath his feet. In sleep, the moon becomes the ground under our feet and the stars become our constant companions. In sleep, Casanova or Moll Flanders (this film is certainly politically correct) become our amorous inferiors. In sleep, we embark for coasts where the ship will never land. Members of the opposite sex forget their dignity in darkened corners of smoky bars or in the dabbled light of intriguing forest settings. Sleep fills our minds with obscene inscriptions. Sleep stays the hand of our adversaries, and translates them into rude mechanicals who exploits are as comical and ineffectual as any mid-summer's night revel. In sleep, dancers as passionate and supple as Isodore Duncan become our personal servants. Sleep turns us all into clairvoyants with a knowledge of the rumblings from the lower orders, intelligence for which the king richly rewards us. In sleep, we keep the company of the most delightful nudes whose presence otherwise we

could never afford. Sleep permits us to go naked in the world. Sleep causes anyone from whom we take our leave to fall dead. I beseech anyone who finds me asleep to respect the luxuriousness of this activity, so essential if the creative faculties are to be fecund. You who are in the street, beneath my windows, I implore you, be quiet lest you interfere with my carefully nurtured capacity to lapse into reverie-engendering slumber more quickly than any narcoleptic. The journey from which you recall me, if you do keep the peace, may be more humanly momentous than America's astronauts lunar adventure (a mission that even the least courageous among us had long since had accomplished oneirically.) Though it is the sun that forces your lock-step march, I prefer the realm over which the moon presides; it is there that I do my best work.

The Greeks considered the limitless to be limitless by reason of privation: that which is limitless lacks what is necessary to assume form. They called the limitless *apeiron*, and considered indefiniteness, disordered, chaotic, undefined, negative. Nothing could be further from the truth. The limitless is breath that gives us life -- it is this breath which inspires poetry. It is in the limitless that we have our origin -- and in which all poems have their origin, for the rule for poetry is that it must start from nothing. The emptiness of the infinite puts an end to the echoes that reverberate through the

mind. The infinite teaches us the value of poverty. Knowledge of the infinite fills us with wonder at the fact that objects are without thought. The infinite shows us the night is not the opposite of fire, that the sun is not a force of negation that obliterates darkness, and that the sun does not show simply the visible but also the invisible. From the infinite we learn that Hegel was wrong on all points about death, and on many points about negation. The limitless shows us that silence is a good servant who puts one's house in order. The limitless shows us that, truly, light can be hidden, but cannot be extinguished. The limitless teaches us the ageless ones revert again and again to sea. The limitless instructs us to remove all that, by blocking light, obscures gentleness. The limitless makes us aware of how meagre is the distance between us and the farthest star, and therefore makes the ruler break his sword across his knee. The limitless makes us aware of just how narrow the night really is. The limitless makes clear that it's really all over now, and forever. The limitless makes me ashamed of aping death, of calling upon death with soft words, of beseeching death, from such a comfortable distance. The limitless makes me sense that my hand bats an air that is extremely fat, and not mere emptiness. The limitless acquaints me with where invisible creatures drink, and always have drunk. The limitless provides me with the understanding of how the darkness absorbs light. The limitless makes me think of distant gods. The limitless stimulates me to imagine endless expanses of wheat which wave in testimony to strength accumulated in seeds. Knowledge of the limitless reveals the power of the name to gather into being all that has been destroyed.

One can never be too empty. One can never have too expansive a void within one's self. Thought and words are one, after all, and the best that words provide is some risible pataphysical apocalypse. No sooner does one open one's mouth than one smells the stench of other people. Because of language, all thought is simply a mise-en-scene, which positions oneself and things for the purposes of show. Within the absurd mise-en-scene, any façade we erect is merely a semblance, a delusory structure to protect from the frightening discovery of non-existence. All of them must come down; any involvement with them is sheer farce. But action is no more revelatory and that being unconscious is a more truthful state than being conscious -- it is not true to say that deeds reveal while words conceal: Our gestures, as our language, are no more authentic or revealing of the inner core of our existence than the writhings of a snake whose head a young boy cut off minutes ago. Knowledge of the Void renders one imperturbable, because it makes one completely natural -- though this claim must be understood only through the realization that nature itself is just one more show, and no more authentic, and no more deserving of our loyalty and affections than any other, and, beyond all this, it is not natural to think. Knowledge of the void releases a person from his or her comedic involvements with artifice that are every bit as splendid and deceptive as common humanity's love of dogs, birds, cats, gold fish, iguanas, gerbils, pet rocks,

mice, garden slugs, pet rabbits, hamsters, parrots, hockey games, football games, soccer games, baseball games, pasta with pesto, raddichio salads, lean, well-hung beef, and fine hats. Only Bach's music and knowledge of the Void provide any antidote, for they allow one to know that existence and non-existence are no different from each other. But force needs a point of application, so the more one empties oneself, the less can reality exert any pressure on one's thinking. Then nothing can overcome you.

When you are empty, you are no longer required to prostrate yourself before the truly evil and gratuitously beg forgiveness for nothing, but simply to acknowledge your servitude to the soulless maligners of all that is noble, a darkly destitute ritual to ensure the continuing empowerment of those whose authority is based on nothing, but which, nonetheless grows with every passing hour. Emptiness instructs a person to attend to the words that emanate from the mouths of shadows. No fiction of "total receptivity to the given" -- which, in essence simply means allowing oneself to be beset by the gratuitous non-events of unreality -- can command the allegiance of one who has taken the counsel of emptiness. Knowledge of true emptiness -- of the unbearable lightness of Being -- allows one to perceive the counterfeiting emptiness of those hollow persons whose inflated reputations are sustained only by most extraordinary efforts of society to kill off all those of genuine, and truly capable, imaginations -- reputations which deflate ever so rapidly as soon as the connivers of the art-world select their next decoy and direct their efforts towards constructing that figure of dissemblance. Emptiness, which is an exhilarating consequence of the obscene absence of love, puts the belly of a lactating

beast on display. It is emptiness that makes the black sun shine.

Suppose I raise my arm or cross my legs, sit down, or stand up and move across the room. Where do I figure in those actions? You will say that I was implicated in the act of will that raised my arm, in the act of will that lifted one leg and set it down atop the other. But where do you see this I you impute to these actions? What was his role in the action performed? For what portion of each act was he responsible? We know for certain, of course, that your eyes, your nose, and your fingers do not belong to him? But do we know for certain that if you stand up, it is not him who is responsible? When I come awake, a universe revives? Alors, qui est responsable. When I turn my head, the universe is transformed. Alors, qui est responsable. Is anything in this example different from what happens when I move in front a mirror and my mirror image moves with me? Is anything in this example similar to what happens when I move in front of mirror and my mirror image moves with me?

The hands the formed the light are Holy. All weeping is Holy. Anything redeemed is Holy. Anything not yet redeemed is Holy, and there is nothing not ever to be redeemed. Souls that have forgotten the names of things. The names of things themselves are Holy. Those who speak the names in remembrance are nonetheless

Holy. Every living thing is surrounded in light and reflects light, and is therefore Holy. All weeping is Holy. Anyone who hears crying is Holy. The days that belong to the Lord are Holy. All that exposes itself, to be seen naked, is Holy. All that conceals itself in modesty is Holy. The meditation of the great ones, though they are so far above me as to belong to the Beyond, help to form Holiness. Whatever shelters the sick is Holy. Whoever gives food to the hungry is Holy. Whoever gives clothes to those who need them is Holy. Who ever looks with gentleness on anyone who wants to show him or herself naked is Holy. Whatever extinguishes expectation is Holy. Whatever puts an end to hope, but does not bring despair in its wake, is Holy. Whatever speaks out to the desolate is Holy. Whoever suffers defeat without becoming despondent is Holy. Whoever contemplates the identity of love and mercy is Holy. Whoever listens to another's heart speaking is Holy. Whoever listens to his own heart speaking is Holy. Whoever treasures the secret, unspeakable name is Holy. Whoever learns of the way to a wider love through humility is Holy. Whoever enshrouds a panicked heart with mercy and gentleness is Holy. Whatever stands forth to be seen is Holy. Whatever light discloses is Holy.

I wonder if the Blessed Virgin hasn't arranged these travails -- the Virgin and

Saint Jude. Yesterday, I could see my beloved maple tree outside my window taking leave. I felt eighteen again. I'll have nothing more to do with complaints. Write me only if you care to convey your joys. I prayed yesterday to Jude and to Mary for protection. This is surely a sign. Those who find the idea of God preposterous, and belief in Him amusing, should note this fact. Mary listened to my prayers because she knows the world inside out, and has exposed to me the vastness of its material indifference. Because of prayer there is no longer any reason for indecision. Because of prayer, it possible to go naked in the world. Because of prayer, the daffodils bloomed before my studio window when it was still mid-winter. Because of prayer, the tulips entertain me in my physical distress. Because of prayer, the radiance of all hopes, which, by way of being abandoned, have been projected outwards towards the constellation, culminate in interstices of being material being. Because of prayer, I am immune to the contagion of givenness. Because of prayer, I am released from the solicitations of the world and from any utilitarian or sentimental interests. Because of prayer, my heart belongs to wretched. Because of prayer, I exalt whatever lacks official consecration. Because of prayer, my hands are able to grasp hold of the rope of fire hung over the face of the opal mountain. Because of prayer, I can live up to my acrobatic ambitions. Because of prayer, I become as docile as a whipped cur, punished by his Master/God. Because of prayer, the noose at last tightens around my neck. Because of prayer, Saint Jude assists me to become more hopeless yet. Because of prayer, I am in a state of grace with chance. Because of prayer, this incommunicative vessel opens its windows.

Because of prayer, I learn to forsake love for abject duty. Prayer makes even the most flexible dancer yet more pliable, and more able to serve grace and beauty. Prayer binds my heart to the skylark. Prayer fixes my eyes on the blue hills beyond. Prayer refines and etherealizes my ardour. Prayer makes the Law shine. Prayer makes me grateful I am debased and despised. Prayer gives me hours. Prayer gives me midnite. Prayer enables me to see demons. Prayer gives this matter thought. Prayer allows ideas to rain down on me from high places. Prayer allows me to accept disgrace with composure. Prayer teaches me the value of an embrace. Prayer teaches me the value of a kiss. Prayer wells up in the midst of carnal pleasures. Prayer surrounds me with solitude, which becomes a shield for me. Prayer makes me resentless of my indigence. Because of prayer, I am become a practitioner of somnambulism. Because of prayer, I foreswear the uncongenial delusion of freedom. Because of prayer, appeals issuing from the preternatural depths of Being press against nothing. Because of prayer, conquest has instantly become redundant. Because of prayer, I become carnally aroused at any sensation of pathos. Because of prayer, the exploits of the gang that march behind black banners all come to nought. Because of prayer, the light surges. Because of prayer, emptiness is annihilated, as everything becomes one Being, a single cell comprising every existent protoplasmic node. Because of prayer, evening light appears over the marches that stretch into the horizon from just outside my window. Because of prayer, the booths by the riverside have hearts on offer. Because of prayer, we step our of doors while stars are flashing, and are possessed by the darkness that

enfolds us like a mother. Because of prayer, we belong to another place. Because of prayer, Octavio Paz speaks to us from the south. Prayer reawakens Federico Garcia Lorca. Because of Prayer, God alters his intensions to make me glorious, and consigns me to the beneficence of penance. Prayer revitalizes the interred corpses of poets and musicians and lifts them skyward, into the realm of the glorified. Prayer returns my spirit to a lowly place -- for which I am grateful. Prayer teaches me that I know nothing. Prayer teaches me that I own nothing. Prayer teaches me that I am nothing. Prayer draws down song from the middle air, and stengthens my voice to sing.

Whence comes a vision, of the comos, surrounded by luminous fire on the outside and black fire on the inside. The sun fills all that is with sparks. Its rays plant the sparks in the ground. Its brightness spreads out everywhere in its fullness -- up to the heavens and down into the abyss. The moisture of a gentle breeze flows over the earth and its greening power transforms the energy that the sun has placed there into the various manifestations of God's imagination, to manifest the vitality of nature in the present of the Holy Spirit. For plants spring not from the dew, nor from the rain which nourishes them, nor from the breezes that strengthens them, but from the Divine Radiance.

Whence comes a vision, of a brightness, as white as snow, forming into a crystal.

Whence comes a vision of forging art from the incendiary iron of light.

Whence comes a vision of light emerging from the womb of dawn, to hold the whole of creation in its embrace and to thrill every last creature. (But whenever any creature tries to embrace light, the light becomes shade.)

Whence comes a vision of dawn bristling with birds born from my hand at play.

Whence comes a vision of a spider illuminated in its glinting web of dust, as intricate as the cobwebbed intricacy of the nervous system.

Whence comes a vision of old men, while playing cards, taking on a new form of existence just at the very moment they abandon all hope. Whence comes a vision of an obstinate heart .

Whence comes a vision of light so pure it makes all natural light seem artificial, a light as different from natural light as the appearance of a clear stream passing over crystal is from the appearance of muddy brook with an earthy bottom, a light of milky-white softness, so soft that the eyes can never tire of it.

