

Eclipse

By Richard Reeve

Part One

The Barabbas Monologues

An Introjected Introduction

“What are you doing here?” he asks
skipping any pretense of decorum, not
even glancing up from the steaming mug

gripped tight with both hands.

And though it seems rather late to be ingesting caffeine,
he abruptly cuts your thought off like excess wrapping paper.

“That you’ve even turned to this page is suspect.

No, my voice will not rise beyond this whisper.

Do not expect more.

You’ll find nothing here to take and even less to follow.

I can’t claim competency or promise safe passage.

This is all uncharted, unlicensed, unregulated stuff.

But,

beware of turning back.

Many have strained to get out

of harm’s way only to place themselves

squarely in the crosshairs of the Joker’s scope.

So here you are. What?

Oh, call me Barabbas.

As has been said before, congratulations
and condolences are in order,”

and waving his hand at a pesky fly,
he knocks his mug

over
spoiling the notes he'd been scribbling

before this interruption:
“Entitled little motherfuckers!

Nothing else in all creation
is so fucking invasive to another's immediacy.

I need to find some kind of witchdoctor that can
get these god damn flies to fuck off.

Well. So much for the whisper,” he chuckles reclaiming composure.

“Western man enters that yet named realm west of west backwards.

Ass first.

Right Bottom?”

Glyph in the Desert

The stories that surround him

full of cockamamie exaggeration,

though the one claiming he fell from the sky,

tumbling down the bank of a sand pit

and walking off

not even a scratch,

impressive,

even if it the testimony of a hostile witness.

And so, late another night, this son of the father Barabbas

Picked up not quite where he left off:

“See, ignoring signs giving direction and warning, as if

certainty alone makes things so,

the throng stumbles, blinded by the constraints of conviction.

Yes, magical thinking

buoys many along, but solely at the current’s whim.

And so, I too was stuck that day

as raven laughed, bouncing along the rocks overhead,

enjoying the spectacle of my blatant trespass,
a desperate hour spent turned in circles,
fueled only on vapors of arrogance
and a desperate thirst to connect to mystery.
When composure returned, then it was simple.

Go back.

Start over. There were no other eyes to pull the wool over
out there
beyond the illusions of collective consciousness.

Ask yourself, can you walk within the frame you've been given?

Leave your ideals and anything else that reeks
of the grandiose at the threshold.

Begin again. Yet again.

Led into a barren expanse, who can hold to their corruption?
Will not the eye of the vaulted sky drive out all that's foul
even from those tightly secured, secret recesses?

Why

this naïve underestimation of the ruthless mystery?
Breathe each hot breath from the beginning of the path.
Retrace in this tracing your crossing.
Be right-sized and attentive.

Then, if the stars align and you bear the hidden mark,
what had been camouflaged
amidst the orange rock by polluted purposes
will stand out like a gilded lion.”



The Call

“Sure, the *Fall* was in the beginning, right?

What if we’ve yet to catch up with it?

What if that old musty sock needs to be turned inside out?

Maybe it’s not the first parents that got cast out

but the last children who get sucked in.

What? You do not follow?

Let me back up.

The *Fall* is not a one and done deal. It’s a participle.

We are falling, not fallen.

We are *falling man*.

All the striving to shore up a stable consciousness

these many thousand generations but a valiant attempt to conceal it.

You’re here, not another.

So I guess you need to be let in on the little secret:

The house of cards is about to fall.”

Straight Up Wide Open

“Led to a story beyond the parameters of my desire,
that’s where the opening came, in extremity:

I learned this from a homeless Haitian
As he hobbled through the travel crazed throngs
rushing off to their Thanksgiving tables.
Oblivious to his gait, informed as it was
by bone scraping knees, gout enflamed ankles,
and two deeply cracked heels, their denial
of his presence the lot of all shamecarriers,
yet he incarnated a sweet foul god with scrubby chin
bowed legs and sharpened teeth,
teeth great for biting the heads off of snakes.

With each step progressing no more than an inch,
accompanied no longer with moans,
but the irrefutable expression
of ecstasy,
he had traveled out beyond the limits of pain
only to enter into the kingdom of its opposite.

How startling it was to observe not only a rhythm,
but a dance in his slight barely discernible gestures.
How utterly confounding his attainment through pain
induced delirium to a rapture of delight.

He had discovered the secrets of old Bes
who could not help himself but attend to each birth pang
before he was run off by our insecure Father,
barred from any subsequent divine issuance,
and leaving Mother to crush the serpent with her own heel.

Pain will cross your path, be assured.

Are you ready to dance?"

Recipe of the One Man

"Icy rain pelts this smoldering field.

No, not just the growth of last season, but
some ten thousand years reduced
to black powder, awaiting a turn by the hoe.

Swailing *Mans-field*

to fertilize an undreamt tomorrow.

Token lives,
poured out and fixed in
hardened presets, circumstance
closed before opened.

No fortune.

No fortune.

You know the feeling
of cracking an empty cookie.
Disappointment, yet
with souls, grief.

Like the chick
slowly tapping out,
turned against as it where, the
encapsulating
cosmic shell
this break out
toppling idols,
death of precedents through Zero.

Klali-Abraxas,
Destroyer,
Life giver.

Arrive we else wise?

Not until this shell too shatters.

The melting at the poles
will release more than the scientists
anticipate,
for none of the models as yet
incorporates the impact
as it ripples through psyche.

Can you outrun time?

Or swallow vast stretches of the Badlands?

Can you split open a solid cube of silver
and extract the single drop of blue elixir?

No, greedy instead to mint coins
you know not to look for it.

So who are you? And for that matter, all your kind,
To play with such fire as the sun as if it were a mere rattle
left behind in an empty crib?

Two million years but the blink of an eye
for nature to await a worthy spouse
to arise from the wheel of species.

Patience is thin
like all the melting ice,
and this primate experiment assured no primacy
in the annals of Nature.

So draw near and let me put it as concise as I can.
For the sake of the birth of conscious

the body has been betrayed.

Deeply ingrained the aversion to the flesh,
the rotting of the corpse,
and the view that death destroys the body.

Our contempt relies on deodorant and perfume to mask any stench
offensive to the minds exaggerated superiority,

a loop-sided

fallacy not honoring the body's strength.

It is time to counter all deep seated hatred unleashed
against the body since consciousness dawned.

The mind must learn to adore what it hates.

The body must shed the vanities piled up

like a sea wall,

to hold back the assaulting disgust.

The task I dare only whisper

is only now,

only in the margins,

coming to be.

And why this union so long postponed?

Incredible responsibility accompanies the mystery

an alchemist once coined as the *second coniunctio*.

Only reflect on Christ cursing the fig tree

and see why this gate remains hidden and locked.

Ah, but here it comes, the show we've been waiting for..."

Part Two

The Eclipse Suite



Yes, bent over

with fingertips probing

amongst the seaweed and stone

this little Joey caught unaware,

as were the sunbathers further up the beach

when the surge,

a damn rogue wave

lifted and pushed him into

a series of underwater summersaults,

eyes open and mouth nose ears thoroughly flushed,

the briny sea water oddly familiar.

Tumbling over and over,

scratchy sandy bottom

scraping a shoulder,

now a calf,

elbow, nose, heel.

Until back the other way,

the ocean pulling him to herself.

He reached for the ladyslippers suspended about his head
and surprised he hadn't noticed the little fairy bodies
emerging from each, smiling nymphs waving him on.

2.

Now orphaned to the water,

he clutched the passing

tail of a turquoise serpent

down

down

down

beyond the depths penetrated by the sun.

The blackout cold.

Colder.

Too cold.

Much, much too cold.

3.

He awoke a boy of nine next to a warming fire.

When his startled glance found her,

already the lady held a silencing finger

to her lips

and after pointing down at the too hairy man,
his sleeping head laying in her lap,

softly she began.

“We will bring you in this way

through the Green Cave

until you learn to tolerate the flying monkeys

that inhabit the forest.

You have much to learn and there is precious little time.

Outside this cave is the staging area.

You will wait by the large solitary oak in the pasture
until I give you the signal.

Off to the northwest about a mile is a
a large round field,

into which our friend here

(again pointing affectionately to the resting troglodyte)

has tilled your spiraling path to the center.

It all meets the Queen’s specifications.

She calls the place Keening Field.

At the arrival of the shadow,

steadily, you will wind your way inwards.

4.

That all was happening as she said

did not ease his now middle aged mind

walking the descending spiral

as the silvery light and cold wind that accompany totality

sent a surge of panic into his veins.

His throat strained to form

the dirge he learned in a dream to sing as an offering

to the unspeakable mysteries consummated

in the heavens above.

Inward involutions ever tightening till vertigo spun him

like the spinner

of a child's game

(his life nothing but?

and the clamps which held tight

everything he'd given the definition *important*

loosened.

Finally.

5.

The swimmer,

turned briefly toward the commotion on the beach

would not have seen him,

but the toddlers shoulders lodged between her knees.

Yanking him up

and back into the air,

she denied the sea,

just as the obstetrician had during his meager delivery,

for now.

When Luna covers Sol,

know to turn away.

Your heliotropic tendencies lack all discretion.

Part Three

Tendered

Shall I Compare Thee?

That your skin was white

does not imply Caucasian,

all our shades

from deepest dark purple to albino

dusky in your presence.

Yet turned away as you remain that we might emerge

we continue to cackle through the millennia

like a fledgling crow

and call it culture.

Surrender this insistence, this stunted tendency to analogize at all,

and then, just maybe,

you might begin the uncharted journey

to Her beyond compare.

This Belongs to You

Blood, cell walls, tendons, bone, spittle and shit.

Strain, hiccup, sneeze, split nail and cramped hamstring.

Ringling in the left ear and a pervasive delusion of control.

Chicken scratched notes and these keystrokes repeatedly
activating the spell checker.

Easier to leave an offering by the altar

and be done with it,

nothing shy of total

the demands of embodiment.

I know, or as a poet before me fondly put it,

I *gn-ow* no other way.

Full Spectrum

The alchemists and the painters
conspired wisely to work with a limited palette.
The restrictions yielded some sense of an "ought."

As we no longer live within an oral cultural transmission,
Our inheritance spills like the jar of Aquarius,
out of their four leaf mold.

Full spectrum pours through
each quadrant
settling in none.

The alchemists where not far off when
glimpsing the peacock's tail
they anticipated switching into the next quadrant
of their quad colored system.

Oh, if they but turned into the gap instead of jumping it.

Coda

Long since dropping now

any expectations

of seeing again,

She,

who once

charged my every cell

with the illumined cursive script

of Her foreign name,

I wander among the ruins of my people,

gaining each day a bit more compassion

for this frail bubble we call being.

If by chance you are so fortunate,

please, do

tell her you saw me.