

TRAVEL

(1992-1993)



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Calboccia

You can keep your music—the crack of the whip,
the multiple songs of the unidentified species,
Luciano electronically leaked into a Spoleto street,
my wailing the theme from La Strada at my sister
at the Calboccia dining table,
the combination of coffees and waters
whimpering on the Calboccia stove,
the puffs from a hunter's distant gun.
Even the clouds have a symphonic meaning
as long as the door is open to see them
and the illumination from the sun is up and about.

“Don't change a hair for me.”
You can keep the scene you need to sleep by,
the crystallized serenity you need
to gather the mists you need for sleeping.
But you know you hate sleeping.
You want to keep the music going.
The calibrations, the articulations, the particulars
are more of the ways to stay awake,
to keep the dying back, to keep music.
Even if the songs are short, the variety seems infinite.

Santa Barbara

Visiting you both my frame shifts
into suddenly straight. That you are
women in a gauze on the three of us
— we can see through it and it binds us.
As rooted in common as genes,
we ruminate on the risk that our canine
fidelity might be fragile. So, to secure
the risk and ruin the possibility
that the staunchness of
(knowing our randomness is as real as)
these bound accidents we are
being so enGoded as to be naturally just there...
(I have always regarded the accidental as mine,
but now I admit I share it totally.)
I propose a fanfare:
Here comes constancy! Here comes their mother!
Here among zillions we squeeze through as three such!
And here is the chair of him that retired after many years
as left tackle for the Project with a fine touch!
Now we want to know what is it we are attending.

Sacramento

A taxi can make very long trips if you're willing to pay.
Ask for Will Ferguson even if they ignore you.
Money removes panic as shaving removes strength.
Standing outside, out from under the rain, is classic
—do I have something better to do? Instead of a train?
The death of animals comes from relying on X outside the skin.
Inside the skin, absolute mystery and stories of miracles
suffice like fire burns ice if the Tao is Christ.
Creating decisions to escape comes after waiting; waiting
is I forget for stories of close calls and guardian angels
from Will Ferguson who is jobbing between jobs. Ask for him.

It will be when I least expect it. A pleat
in forgotten fabric and the beyond takes over,
watching over us with His eyes half close for us to forget
Him watching. His capital is hidden. His twisted
humor of sense watching. I don't notice and
cross myself for forgetting Will Ferguson, the guardian.

I am holding onto the seat in front of me.
My arms quiver later from the surprising effort.
I don't see the bridge; my mind is elsewhere.
I've been up and down here too often to love it. But
now I am ready for the pleat in my surface.

Silverton

The old father stops everybody, "Wait a minute!"
It's the comma in "all that is, seen and unseen."
He wants us to pause, to use it. God, if we stopped
at every comma, we're badgered by a crisis of pauses.
Well, when you're old, you like them, I guess, a chance
to breathe, to fix the racing glissandi that curl
off the page, falling into cacophony and wild dreams.
And the comma conjoins a quilt, a calendar of small
triangles in altar colors bracing the brain for a new thought.

Cost is still a factor. How much to give?
A trade medley of knowing, slowing, owning,
timing, gracing, withdrawing, showing, anchoring, losing
—patterns framed by white speechless walls where
commas float without discipline or judgment.
Cost for the pause is in the offering.
Cost for the quilt is held against the silent wall.
The father and the quilter don't want the money,
even when they do. The price of the comma or the pattern
is incidental; they want that damn recognition,
which they recognize, to be reconciled somewhere, with someone,
as shards and words make pottery and musing.

New York City

O Max, my Max, God-piercing Max, und Sigmund question
thy bifunctionaries. "He just wrote anything." As well he could,
you, I mean, we mean, could, no should, no shoulder
to cry on, we buy, my sign, this long-found guy.
He went; the talisman is gathered by six maidens
who know nothing better in order to calm the neighbors
who also weep on dirty snow while other collectors
are in mid-swing, participating in swollen prayers.
And we are supposed to figure it out. Why I admire.
The box is defunct; it needs to be bigger! There is (no) harm.
(Super)stitions need (not) apply. Gangster tricks, battered birds,
adjective nouns, a soupçon of just how many are taken to make
the lost squadron, are begging, are confronting how hungry
they truly are, near Red Grooms, near Grand Central,
near Rockefeller. It is, we have announced. Blue note we share.
To fly. The other pokes—move over—pull up your pants.
Now I am traditional, not shy, no leaning, in stride
as we are all wont to do ere the scarecrow die.
A measure of confidence in a crate of diffidence
—I see where this leads, I know the futile story.
In a hundred years, dusting, rusting, lusting overtakes trusting.
We park and no more startle. Enough of ens. Enough of us.
Enough, my friends, be sought, belong of course to the offspring.
Where my reaction ceases merges at the edges of where
my reaction pleases of course remorse my aching for recourse
to my reaction to bricks, summer, marigolds, chaste walls, smiles.

Another Santa Barbara

What anybody has said about the truth belongs to us...

Justin Martyr

I anticipate an ascent. But the dangers of speeding
through hatches and on ladder are evident.
The impetus to make it happen can make it crash.
I still anticipate. I'm so sorry. I did it again?
It's a smash—hammering the complete anatomy.
Soul and all. Quake damage. Fire sale. Closeout.
Plastic acts of ascension from crematories for ideas.
I have installed a golden filter.
The triumph of love and to know, for sure.
I believe in what I say not in what I believe.
The growth of live oaks confirms this,
as well as the transportation of stucco, the whims
of saints condemned to continuing education.
We span the globe. Our time has come.
We have a revolutionary stance for easy balance.
We dance to the steps of generosity and a tranquil sea.
Tender out from under the old skin, our new dance is
harmonious with the needs of forgiveness and providence
(which harmonizes in turn with the new skin).
The poet is helpless; the poet is a common denominator.
And here lies eradicated the lust for fame.
Hey, that's it; that was a final line.