

That Abattoir

Delivered at The Georgetown Literary Festival, 2019

There is a boom boom and a bang bang and I jump up and I always jump up. Well naturally you say but to be honest you can't always be jumping up, can't exist that is in a permanent state of so-called Airborne because after the jump there's the down, there's always the down you see but who likes to think about that not me not me not me. Nonetheless. Nonetheless it's indisputable you see, it's come finally to be indisputable that the down is a part of the jump itself, which is to say that the fall is not in the After but in the Within, in other words it is foundational. In the air I am you see, that is the point, that might be the point, I do tend to lose it, but to return to the problem, which is to say to the conundrum, for it's not a problem if you don't call it one, nothing's ever anything without a name, and never say Hard and never say Can't and Only boring people get bored my mother used to say, is that the air contains the abyss, contains that is that craven cavity which is so much *not* the air that it is identical to the air and how's that for a contradiction. And Oh you sigh, Oh lordy, off she goes off she blows, once more into Abstraction but what else is a girl to do you see, please answer me that. Because have you given me an alternative. Have you ever given me an alternative.

So yes a contradiction, though to be honest it's *all* been a game of Unspeakable Gestures so I'll abide no complaint, right up your alley besides for recall the old maxim, how did it go, *Whereof one cannot speak thereof one must be silent* yes perhaps that was it, and let me remind you how it used to swill around your mouth lest you forget, a potent brew admittedly all those white men's words and thus so to speak armed how once you were smug. For how easy it was to believe in their power –

Well to be fair, and I'm nothing if not fair, the adage may still hold, *Whereof* and so on not such a bad strategy, a good idea in this life to keep all bases covered can't argue with that, and what better cover is there than []. A reasonable conclusion I think you'll agree, for there are just so many uh manholes and there are only so many uh lids.

Meaning that a girl needs a blanket, a very heavy, silent blanket –

but what use a blanket when you're on the sea bed. And mixed metaphors you see but one does what one can. One does what one can except when one doesn't and you stare at the old house except when you don't. And he used to call out It's the Grabbies! and oh how we'd laugh. Not only him you see – you did. You did.

And I hope she'll be a fool, a pretty little fool.

Well time lost and more time lost for you took it to heart, took it to heart like you take everything to heart because you always do take things in don't you. And have I been harvested and have I been squandered. And by whom do I mean. I mean pronouns are important, don't say they're not important.

Yes we're back there again. At that place from which out we started and yes one always does go back there. To that starting-out place I mean. Always the way so you'd think by now I'd have assumed the posture, the posture of resignation that is, and it's true that I do suffer the most appalling jobs in the region of oh let's say the lower

back. So yes quite sufficiently intimate you'd think with the rhythm of these deplorably circuitous ululations but the truth is they never cease to perturb, all these back back backnesses highly disturbing you see and that's never mind known or not, to know is irrelevant, whether I know them like the back of his hand or –

Knowing is never the thing you see, except when it is.

He was just so very hungry.

Contradictions! Tend very much to enjoy them you see and what's that about, a generativity in the for-and-against but whatever it is you can't claim they help, no I don't claim they do because to wit You coy bitch will you *never* say it like it is even though there are Evidences? For yes there *are* Evidences and is that what you mean, what is it that you mean, no need to get nasty, a little courtesy wouldn't go amiss, whatever you mean alright I'll concede, I'll grant you the fact, it's Evidences all agogo, we're in Evidences awash, we're sat in a great ocean of Evidences but is that really enough? I mean 'Evidences' my god lah, wot talk in euphemism is it, wot are you British Empire wot well something akin perhaps, for indeed this is a land of shadows you're peddling. You cannot deny that this is a land of shadows.

And I haven't mentioned the exhaustion yet, have I mentioned the exhaustion, I haven't even mentioned the exhaustion you see. For I am tired, so tired, so very –

I'm really quite fed up of him now and in fact it's high time he go jump ship, yes it's come to this, high time I CHIBABOOM on his head but well come on now how to die one when got no one there to die. I mean he always was a slippery fish not that I ever you know really tried to net him wot, I mean I had a line but no hook and what's a hookless line well I'll tell you: it's just a limp old thing; it's just a sad little dangle; it's just a girl a woman a country.

Well come on then if you're going to talk. Say it like it is and I know you do not like to repeat but seriously what is this 'it' you speak of. Please clarify and eternally grateful, yours et cetera. Oh disingenuous am I well two can play that old game of Mock, She who protest too much you say and oooh am I scared no I am not. The truth, since this is what you appear boorishly to be requesting, is that I don't –

You tell me to See and you tell me to Say but what change therein from the old ventriloquisms and from his hand up my glove. Which is not to imply that I think you are him but they *all* say they're not and so how am I to trust –

By which I mean that *If in doubt clear it out*, yes, something like that is what I mean, that's the ticket, that is perhaps the ticket, very conceivably that's the ticket you see.

This morning as every morning you see lying in bed, and this morning as every morning in that bed ransacked, and it was Hear now the mosque and it was Hear now the neighbours and it was oh you know the rat-tat and the wail-wail and the scuffle-thump and the beep-beep and the moan-drone and yes I know that to gripe is unattractive but oh how it blares and the wind on my skin and I turned the fan off. And I turned off the fan and I turned off the fan and I always turn the fan off. Because how anymore to tolerate the strokings airy or not, how

to tahan when partitions so thoroughly a-prick-a-prick-pricked, all sieve and colander I am and Love they said,
A luminous dance of give and take, which is why since you ask –

which is why since you ask –

why you accepted the inseminations. Which is partly why. Which is historically why.

So you turn off the fan but you can't turn off the ears, no you can't close *them*, and so the boom boom
and the bang bang, in they get you see, in and then in and the ears, well, what can I say, in this manner they are
not unlike other unclosable orifices.

The fact is that at night still I plug my ears with the foam and still hoist the mask down over the top of my head
and the world is black-ish then and it's quiet-ish sommor and that's how I lie it best.

I mean that's how I like it best.

Befoamed and bemasked but. But they still get in and will they forever get in and yes they're tenacious
buggers by which I mean that Things you see, they do insist on their penetrations.

Say it you say, *Say it*.

In my box there is always someone being slaughtered. I mean I keep the place neat, there's nothing so especially
Carnage about it but you know, look at the girl, to look at the girl you can tell right off she's never been one for
the Explicit. To be frank the Explicit is in my opinion a rather perilous place to reside and so if I may a moment
advise you of this, but then you do love your precisions so why waste my breath.

No choice then but here, all crouched cowed and bowed, and all flesh infolded and all heart exploded
and dare I suggest in this once again the old carriage so no you can't complain, ever there was comfort in the
Familiar you see, and ever in the Familiar comfort there will be.

On Saturdays it was the Special so in the morning half a grapefruit for each, knife nudging a-jig-a-jig-jig round
the edge of the pith and you'll never forget it, blade in his hand long and curved Just So at its tip, and then the
segments you see, so easy to pilfer, a little rubbery though so mind the juice does not spurt, mind the juice does
not drip.

And why do they all want something of you you see, what is it that you want, and do you understand, it is so
hard to *distinguish*. And though I suppose there is a difference between good and evil just how to tell, just how
to know when the gazes you see, the gazes, they do tend towards the *questing*.

(And *he's* why you're such a loner, and *he's* why you're such a freak).

[There were those Smurfs you recall and they were right at your eye level on the mantelpiece and the girl Smurf
you liked her best with her little round blue stomach and her white skirt too and it was the skirt made her special
set in petrified flap high around her thighs like some juvenile Marilyn stood atop the hot roar of his breath.

Whatever the thing in the tunnel you can count on it that it breathes hotly you see but that's another story.

Perhaps that's another story. And you would pick up the Smurf though very carefully mind because when you

pick up a girl you must be very tender – so much he had taught me. And one he said two he said three he said four and do you know how many years I have endured dreams of dogs fingers fathers].

Your eyes needle in and I do tolerate them, don't say I don't tolerate them. I even try to play your game according to your rules so you can't say that I'm not doing my best because I am. I am doing my best to Convey you see, and oh I know I do lapse fairly frequently into the old mumbles but it's one day at a time isn't it, isn't that what you *also* said?

To return to the point. It's a tiring abode to inhabit you see, for whilst it's not exactly a case of blood all a-spatter, carcasses do abound, I mean they're in the cupboards and all and rather neatly stacked, but even what is stashed away has a habit of insinuating itself into the space don't you know. I mean you know it's there don't you. It preys on the mind. Certain things you see they do prey. Many things.

So yes a tiring existence all told and no doubt you'll be hissing Box lah where got, but please at least *try* to understand: I am living in the undertow.

Let it be. Because Don say like that and You think too much, but you see his voice was always the louder, his whine But I love you and we all know that trapdoor, are all familiar with that snare, we've all licked that blade in that goddamned apple, so I doubt any more needs to be said about that.

And I am on the ceiling and I am out the door and it's all very well locking your house but you can't go about locking *them* inside. Not them and not him for that's quite the wrong way around you see and yes that quite defeats the purpose.

By the way I have nothing to say. I really have nothing to say. Honestly just what is it you are asking me.

And do you remember when the car got broken into and he cried out, I felt violated!, and for a moment you thought *he? He* felt violated?

– but it was just for a moment.

This is My daughter he'd say and he'd stand in the middle of the room rattling his coins in his pocket. And he'd drink his Chinese tea and light his Chinese incense and mourn the loss of his Chinese wife, and She was so free, he said, Your mother, he said, She was so different; I found it, he said, So attractive. For lost she was yes, but no matter because after all –

because after all –

he had me he had me he had me.

And so it's boom boom and bang bang and No I don't want to see you and No I don't want to go out, and No I don't like to do anything and Who needs friends and people you see, they make so much noise, they just make so much noise and please tell me how can, because inside it all just how is a girl to –

You took to the streets you see; of course you took to the streets. Returning late to the house all Trojan Horses inside your concavities, about which what more can you say, it was as banal as a strike. But it was a strike backfired, all Save me Daddy! said your body, and oh, *how* he loved that.

Because If there's nothing there then how can they take you –
The most horrendous miscalculation, let's just leave it at that.

Months upon months and years upon years, and who can tell about such things these days for yes there are Erasures. And who can bear the weight of the loss not me not me not me. Except that you bear it for what choice do you have. Amongst the Evidences there are Erasures you see and so this is what you're left with, by which I mean: Erasures are what he bequeathed you.

And boom boom and bang bang and I'm on the ceiling and on the ceiling is where you'll find me. I jump up and I look down and this is freedom but it's the freedom of the lost –

All of which is to say that harm, however silent, is *substantial* –
And I am fine you see but to a war unannounced there can be no ceasefire –
And I am fine you see but it is nonetheless the case that.
That desecration is not the wrong word.