

blue

Derek Jarman

1993

You say to the boy open your eyes
When he opens his eyes and sees the light
You make him cry out. Saying

O Blue come forth

O Blue arise

O Blue ascend

O Blue come in

I am sitting with some friends in this café drinking coffee
served by young refugees from Bosnia. The war rages across
the newspapers and through the ruined streets of Sarajevo.

Tania said "Your clothes are on back to front and inside out".
Since there were only two of us there I took them off and put
them right then and there. I am always here before the doors
open.

What need of so much news from abroad while all that con-
cerns either life or death is all transacting and at work within
me.

I step off the kerb and a cyclist nearly knocks me down. Flying
in from the dark he nearly parted my hair.

I step into a blue funk.

The doctor in St. Bartholomew's Hospital thought he could
detect lesions in my retina - the pupils dilated with belladonna -
the torch shone into them with a terrible blinding light.

Look left
Look down
Look up
Look right

Blue flashes in my eyes.

Blue Bottle buzzing
Lazy days
The sky blue butterfly
Sways on the cornflower
Lost in the warmth
Of the blue heat haze
Singing the blues
Quiet and slowly

Blue of my heart
Blue of my dreams
Slow blue love
Of delphinium days

[...]

I have lost the sight on the periphery of my right eye.

I hold out my hands before me and slowly part them. At a certain moment they disappear out of the corner of my eyes. This is how I used to see. Now if I repeat the motion this is all I see.

I shall not win the battle against the virus - in spite of the slogans like "Living with AIDS". The virus was appropriated by the well - so we have to live with AIDS while they spread the quilt for the moths of Ithaca across the wine dark sea.

Awareness is heightened by this, but something else is lost. A sense of reality drowned in theatre.

Thinking blind, becoming blind.
In the hospital it is as quiet as a tomb. The nurse fights to find

a vein in my right arm. We give up after five attempts. Would you faint if someone stuck a needle into your arm? I've got used to it - but I still shut my eyes.

The Gautama Buddha instructs me to walk away from illness. But he wasn't attached to a drip.

Fate is the strongest
Fate Fated Fatal
I resign myself to Fate
Blind Fate

The drip stings
A lump swells up in my arm
Out comes the drip
An electric shock sparks up my arm

How can I walk away with a drip attached to me?
How am I going to walk away from this?

I fill this room with the echo of many voices
Who passed time here
Voices unlocked from the blue of the long dried paint
The sun comes and floods this empty room
I call it my room

My room has welcomed many summers
Embraced laughter and tears
Can it fill itself with your laughter
Each word a sunbeam

Glancing in the light
This is the song of My Room
Blue stretches, yawns and is awake.

[...]

I am a mannish
Muff diving
Size queen
With bad attitude

An arse licking
Psychofag
Molesting the flies of privacy
Balling lesbian boys
A perverted heterodemon
Crossing purpose with death

I am a cock sucking
Straight acting
Lesbian man
With ball crushing bad manners
Laddish nymphomaniac politics
Spunky sexist desires
of incestuous inversion and
Incorrect terminology
I am a Not Gay

H.B. is in the kitchen
Greasing his hair
He guards the space
Against me
He calls it his office
At nine we leave for the hospital

H.B. comes back from the eye dept
Where all my notes are muddled
He says
It's like Romania in there
Two light bulbs
Grimly illuminate
The flaking walls
There is a box of dolls
In the corner
Indescribably grim
The doctor says
Well of course
The kids don't see them

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There are no resources
To brighten the place up

[...]

Pearl fishers
In azure seas
Deep waters
Washing the isle of the dead
In coral harbours
Amphora
Spill
Gold
Across the still seabed
We lie there
Fanned by the billowing
Sails of forgotten ships
Tossed by the mournful winds
Of the deep
Lost Boys
Sleep forever
In a dear embrace
Salt lips touching
In submarine gardens
Cool marble fingers
Touch an antique smile
Shell sounds
Whisper
Deep love drifting on the tide forever
The smell of him
Dead good looking
In beauty's summer
His blue jeans
Around his ankles
Bliss in my ghostly eye
Kiss me
On the lips

7

On the eyes
Our name will be forgotten
In time
No one will remember our work
Our life will pass like the traces of a cloud
And be scattered like
Mist that is chased by the
Rays of the sun
For our time is the passing of a shadow
And our lives will run like
Sparks through the stubble.
I place a delphinium, Blue, upon your grave

the golden age, time passed

Ralph Ellison

1959

It has been a long time now, and not many remember how it was in the old days, not really. Not even those who were there to see and hear as it happened, who were pressed in the crowds beneath the dim rosy lights of the bar in the smoke-veiled room, and who shared, night after night, the mysterious spell created by the talk, the laughter, grease paint, powder, perfume, sweat, alcohol and food—all blended and simmering, like a stew on the restaurant range, and brought to a sustained moment of elusive meaning by the timbres and accents of musical instruments locked in passionate recitative. It has been too long now, some seventeen years.

Above the bandstand there later appeared a mural depicting a group of jazzmen holding a jam session in a narrow Harlem bedroom. While an exhausted girl with shapely legs sleeps on her stomach in a big brass bed, they bend to their music in a quiet concatenation of unheard sound: a trumpeter, a guitarist, a clarinetist, a drummer, their only audience a small, cock-eared dog. The clarinetist is white. The guitarist strums with an enigmatic smile. The trumpet is muted. The barefooted drummer, beating a folded newspaper with whisk-brooms in lieu of a drum, stirs the eye's ear like a blast of brasses in a midnight street. A bottle of port rests on a dresser, but like the girl it is ignored. The