

7/29/48

... And what is it to be young in years and suddenly wakened to the anguish, the urgency of life?

It is to be reached one day by the reverberations of those who do not follow, to stumble out of the jungle and fall into an abyss:

It is then to be blind to the faults of the rebellious, to yearn painfully, wholly, after all opposites of childhood's existence. It is impetuosity, wild enthusiasm, immediately submerged in a flood of self-deprecation. It is the cruel awareness of one's own presumption ...

It is humiliation with every slip-of-the-tongue, sleepless nights spent rehearsing tomorrow's conversation, and torturing oneself for yesterday's ... a bowed head held between one's hands ... it is "my god, my god" ... (in lower case, of course, because there is no god).

It is withdrawal of feeling toward one's family and all childhood idols ... It is lying ... and resentment, and then hate ...

It is the emergence of cynicism, a probing of every thought and word and action. ("Ah, to be perfectly, utterly sincere!") It is a bitter and relentless questioning of motives ...

It is to discover that the catalyst, the [Entry trails off at this point.]

There's nothing more artificial than descriptions of young girls and the fanciful comparisons that go along with them. Lips like cherries, breasts like little roses; oh, if only it were enough to buy some fruit and flowers at the store! And if lips really did have the taste of cherries, who on earth would have the courage to be in love? Who on earth would be tempted by a caramel—that is, a sweet kiss?—But, hush, enough, it's a secret, taboo, let's not say too much about lips.—Alice's elbow, seen through the prism of the emotions, was at times a smooth white virginal point, passing into the warmer tones of the arm; at others, when her arm dangled passively, it was a sweet round dimple, a quiet little nook, a side alter of her body. Aside from this Alice resembled any other daughter of a retired major brought up by a loving mother in a suburban cottage.

Like others, she occasionally stroked her elbow, lost in thought, and like others she learned early on to poke about in the sand with her slender foot.

Alice had become engaged four years ago, when she was still in her seventeenth spring—"Miss Alice," mumbled the young man, "will you permit this slim hand—to be mine?" "What do you mean?" she asked. "I'm asking for your hand, Miss Alice," stuttered the young paramour. "Surely sir, you don't expect me to cut off my hand," said the naïve girl, nevertheless flushing scarlet. "Then you do not wish to be my betrothed?" "Oh yes," she replied, "but on the condition that you give me your word you'll never importune me for any of my extremities; that's ridiculous!" "Wonderful!" he exclaimed. "You have no idea how enchanting you are. Intoxicating!" And he spent the entire evening roaming the streets and repeating: "She understood it literally; she thought that I...desired to take her hand the way a person takes a piece of cake. It makes one want to drop to one's knees!"

They made a handsome couple. Mrs. S. watched them gladly from the window as she embroidered a napkin. "You've changed," the young man

was saying sadly; "you don't prattle like before, you don't wave your little hand about..."

"No, no, I still love you just the same," Alice replied distractedly, "I love you; it's just..."

"Just what?"

"You won't make fun of me?"

"You know that I—I never laugh. I only smile, and only with a cheerful smile."

"Explain to me: What does love mean, and what do I mean?"

"Ah, I've been awaiting that question for a long time," he exclaimed. "Come and sit on this bench."

"When the first parents in paradise yielded to Satan's whisper and tasted the tree of awareness, as you know, everything changed for the worse. 'O Lord!'—the people begged—'grant us at least a little of that lost purity and innocence.' The Lord God looked helplessly at the motley band and had no idea where or how He could find a place for Purity and Innocence in that squalid herd. It was then He created a virgin, a vessel of innocence, locked her up tightly and set her among the people, who conceived a nostalgic longing for her."

"But why is it, tell me, why is it that men throw rocks at virgins?"

"What's that, Alice?"

"It's happened to me a number of times," said Alice, turning deep crimson, "that one or another man I've met on an empty street, when no one was watching—threw a rock at me."

The next day she spoke to her fiancé, who was gazing in rapture at her elbow: "Paul...I sometimes have the wildest notions!"

"So much the better, my darling; that's exactly what I expect of you," he responded. "After all, what would you be without whims and notions. I adore that pure unwisdom!"

"But my notions are strange, Paul...so strange I'm embarrassed to say what they are."

"You cannot have any other kind, unaware as you are," he replied.

"The wilder and stranger the notion, the greater will be my zeal in carrying it out, my flower. Yielding to it, I'll pay homage to your virginity and mine."

"But...you see...it's in fact, its somehow different... In any case, I'm sort of scattered by it. Tell me, have...have you also...like other people... have you ever stolen?"

"Who do you take me for, Alice? What's the meaning of these words? Could you even for a moment be drawn to a man soiled by such an offence? I've always tried to be pure and worthy of you, naturally in my own, male domain."

"I don't know, I don't know, Paul—but tell me, only please, please be honest—tell me, have you ever, you know—deceived someone, or bit them, or walked around...half naked; or have you ever slept on a wall; or have you ever beaten someone, or licked them; or have you ever eaten something revolting?"

"Child! What are you saying? Where have you gotten all this from? Alice, think for a moment...I, lick someone or deceive them? What about my honor? You must be mad!"

"Oh, Paul," said Alice, "what a marvellous day—there's not a single cloud, and you have to shield your eyes with your hand."

Absorbed in their conversation, they walked right around the house and found themselves by the kitchen—where a pile of refuse lay a bone with scraps of pink meat abandoned by Bibi. "Look, Paul—a bone," said Alice.

"Let's go from here," said Paul. —"Let's go from here; in this place there are bad smells and the shouts of the kitchen maids. No, Alice, I'm surprised that such ideas could come out of that sweet little head of yours."

"I'd really like it, Paul, if you'd gnaw on it—that is, if together we gnawed the bone on the trash heap. Don't look, I'm blushing"—she nestled up to him—"don't look at me now."

"The bone? What was that, Alice—what? What did you say?"

"Paul," said Alice, clinging to him—"that...rock, you know, stirred a particular unease in me. I don't want to know about anything, don't say anything to me—but I'm troubled by the garden and the roses and the wall, and the white of my dress, and, oh, I don't know, perhaps I'd



like my back to be bruised...The rock whispered to me, whispered to my back, that there's something behind that wall—and that I'll eat that something, gnaw it in this bone, that is, we'll gnaw it jointly, Paul, you with me, me with you, I must, I must"—she insisted vehemently.

And suddenly a quarrel broke out between them, shot and dizzy as the burning July sun, which was dropping toward the west. "Really, Alice, this is disgusting, noxious—ugh—it makes me quite simply sick. I mean, it's right here that the cook throws out the slops!"—"The slops? I feel sick too, I also feel faint—I've a hankering for slops as well! Believe me, for sure, it can be gnawed, Paul, it can be eaten!—everybody does it, I feel it—when no one else is watching."

They argued for a long time. "It's disgusting!"—"It's blind, strange, mysterious, shameful and lovely!"—"Alice!" exclaimed Paul in the end, rubbing his eyes—"for the love of God...—though I'm beginning to have doubts. What is this? Dream or waking? I don't want to keep asking, heaven forbid, I'm not curious, but...Are you perhaps joking, making fun of me, Alice? What's happened here? The rock, you say? Is it possible—that rocks should be thrown and that out of this...that this should result in some kind of unhealthy greed for bones? Surely that would be too wild, too—impure somehow; no, I respect your notions, but this—it's no longer virginal instinct, but—made up off the top of your head."

"My head?" replied Alice—"But Paul, is my head not virginal? After all, you yourself said that one should close one's eyes unthinkingly and quietly, naïvely and purely and—oh, Paul, quick, look how the sun is gleaming, and that little insect is crawling so sleepily along the leaf, and I'm so scattered! I tell you, everyone does the same thing, we're the only ones who don't know about it! Oh, it seems to you that no one ever... at anyone...but I'm telling you that in the evenings the rocks whizz by like heavy rain, so much that one can't even blink; and in the shade of the trees, bones and other refuse are gnawed out of hunger, half-nakedly! That is love—love."

SHE WILL CONSIDER THE CONCEPT OF MENOPAUSE AND ITS PATHOLOGICAL CODE AS ONE OF THE COVERT PRODUCTS OF MODERNITY.

GERMS, CHANCE, PASSION, TIME, FAT, OBSCURITY, OUTDATED GARMENTS, HORMONES, WORRY, FRAYED CLOTH, SILENCE AND POLITICS ASSIST IN HER IDEAL DEREGULATION OF THE HYPOSTATIC MYSTICISMS OF GENDER.

SUCH DREARINESS, SUCH OBLIGATION, SUCH MOOT DIGNITY, SUCH BAD MYTHOLOGY IN THE HYPOSTASIS!

SO, BEING AN IDEALIST, SHE HAS CAUSED HER MENOPAUSE, SURGICALLY, PSYCHICALLY, CHEMICALLY, OR BY PATIENTLY WAITING. IT IS HER OWN. THE STATE HAS NO MENOPAUSE, ONLY PRODUCTIVITY AND LOSS.

SHE HAS ENTERED AN UNDOCUMENTED CORPORALITY. EXCELLENT. NOW THE SCINTILLATING RESEARCH CAN BEGIN.

IF SHE IS AN IMAGE, SHE IS THE IMAGE OF EVERYTHING THE STATE EVADES. IF SHE IS MELANCHOLIC, IT IS THE MELANCHOLY OF A HIGHLY DISCIPLINED CONSTITUTIONAL INTERIORITY.

HER HUMOUR IS INK.

THE EROTOLOGY OF HER IMAGE BEGINS WITH THE TRANSFIGURATION OF VALUE – OR RATHER, VALUE'S DERELICTION. SHE DOESN'T NEED ANYTHING YOU HAVE TO OFFER. IN THIS SENSE, SHE IS ALREADY BAUDELAIREAN. HER CLERICAL-STYLE TUNIC WAS COMMISSIONED AS ARE HER TEXTS. *SARTOR RESARTUS* IS HER PILLOWBOOK.