



# ‘ΠΑΝΤΟΛΕΩΝ’

[‘PANTOLEON’]

poems by a man possessed

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## Origami / Πίγανη [Oregano]

*Dodoitsu.*

On all our desks paper beaks  
Cry the departure of joy  
There could be a thousand cranes  
Pecking about here.

~

First they avenged Ibucus  
They bore Sadako away  
Long necks poke into our hearts  
And eat our troubles.

## **Sir Frederick Awaiting The Morning / Beautiful Parasite**

*Villanelle.*

At the prelude of a new day's dawning,  
Thoughtless, a daring boyish tune he hums,  
Sir Frederick awaiting the morning.

His trap was laid by gum and sap in fawning,  
The court alive with raised and lowered thumbs,  
At the prelude of a false day's dawning.

And while his foe he gives no foolish warning,  
He tells his camp to quit their martial drums,  
Sir Frederick awaiting the morning.

The knight knows day brings only grim mourning,  
Vultures roost and look for more than crumbs  
At the prelude of a dark day's dawning.

He gives up hope for sleep; rises, yawning,  
A tipple warms his bones, his sense it numbs,  
Sir Frederick awaiting the morning.

I have told all under this black awning.  
Tale's end is nigh, and as gold sunlight comes,  
At the prelude of a new day's dawning,  
Sir Frederick is awaiting the morning.

~

This mountain-flower grows until its roots have reached the end,  
And though the course of time dictates that victory we find,  
Your birthright and your legend I have stolen, my poor friend.

From abstract amniotic lake I came, and did depend  
On strangers, needing good work done, who favoured me in kind,  
This mountain-flower grows until its roots have reached the end.

In my agony of impatience, all I tried to mend,  
Thrust out my hand and took the glove with which that knight would bind:  
Your birthright and your legend I have stolen, my poor friend.

Come the day of contest when all the world's prepared to spend  
As though at some cheap county-fair - they've coins, and hands entwined,  
This mountain-flower grows until its roots have reached the end.

And as the ball stays fast in place, your foe's armour you rend,  
I retreat to the amniotic waters in your mind;  
Your birthright and your legend I have stolen, my poor friend.

Your hand is held aloft - you've won! - for centuries you're kenned,  
But my name supersedes your own; mine's the name they'll find.  
This mountain-flower grows until its roots have reached the end;  
Your birthright and your legend I have stolen, my poor friend.

## Pterodactyl Monkey / Second-Hand Boy Returns

*Desort.*

Low beasts move slow across the plain.

Fog-topped mountains ossified saurian churches and the sun spits out  
An orange world a distant gas-station sign.

“Joe’s.”

You will relinquish everything that you call yourself

Let the bus full of heads

Crash into you

And the axons fire their cannons

Convincing.

A purple-gold jewel looms in desert distance

Lanky wings languid can stretch in the sun

Where the railroad meets the sea.

Will your golden-tongued saintly mouth move with your wings? Or will  
The monkey bones weigh  
You down?

~

Well, I’m back.

I’ve brought some things with me in my bag.

Some anecdotes

A few precious stones

Dust from a few hundred roads.

Found an old war medal in a lady’s tea chest and she let me have it for a story:  
Of course I never met the man who won it.

My eager beak caught this before my eyes:

Thick green glasses from the head of old Robespierre, the head priest at the altar of  
Logic.

And here’s the stick Archimedes used to draw in the dirt

When the Roman soldier murdered him for no particular reason when you think  
about it.

Oh?

Someone took a sick traveller in, and knitted me this red scarf...

She wrapped me up in it, probably expecting

It would act like a rope,

Or a string of fate, like the Japanese fairytale.

No way.

## **Umbragunkyardwork / Vortextravellum**

*Sestina.*

Abs,tracts of landownerless is moor  
Alightscapade showstopover glory  
Endegraded yourning bringing work  
Pharmhand shootitalls gamegive away  
Tuttinguist starlingkupdoggone hope  
By Custercluster bustard eaten

Getsetgoback, even geteaten  
Suckcrumb sickly leave to social moor:  
Alephamily works a foolshope,  
Peertopeers punchup at veinglory,  
To dreamoff and pass Faradayaway -  
Buttiget just umbragunkyardwork.

Rivermanufactury at work  
Flatcapfishclad sweptuckin eatin'  
Winnowers struggline to swimmerway  
From the frantique goldpannicking moor  
Holdinghy crammingling glory  
Washingtonnes to murky waterhope

Marquee de palisades built for hope  
Tricktheology to find inwork  
Foursome publeakins only glory.  
Deskicciated and routine-eaten  
They sin,kings of dismall moor,  
Biden stridentime to put away.

Cheepin tartainment won't get away  
Diss track shines and hardbores a hope  
Two-take anew york, broadway, broadmoor  
Pets hounds scrubbed fur all their stunted work  
Metropolitically eaten  
Assuming all Desaintly glory.

Soda rift to medean glory,  
Reedflute paperails and gothink away!  
Midwitlessly cleverly Eton

And informed, falsefillflagged with hope  
Steel resolve riddling to blindly work  
Trump your need to consoul any moor.

And you think this moor can bring you glory,  
You think hard work can bear you away.  
Well, perhaps that hope will stop you being eaten.

~

“In my old age, though I am young  
I realise fame is all I want;  
As once the Temple-burning fool -  
'Hierostratus', his sorry name -  
Hero's status his only gain,  
Yet worth his turn to scattered ash.”

“His fame,” my face a whitened ash -  
How could Quevedo, stunted, young,  
Outstrip me in his worldly gain?  
I care not what the public want.  
Luis de Góngora my name  
Do not compare me with that fool!

I like to ride, I like to fool,  
I've turned the Coorong into ash,  
My tiny size has made my name:  
“That bushman looks just far too young!”  
An ostrich ride is what I want;  
What you lose I, Peggotty, gain.

Ivan Tsarevich may have gained  
A Firebird in the hand, a fool  
By lordly side. Yet I would want  
A flock to fly. Digital ash -  
I hacked the Firewall still young  
Tsar Ivan shares my common name.

Dandolo buried my good name  
Again I rose for Evans' gain,  
A lion caring for its young  
Buried in the mind of a fool

Who on his forehead sprinkled ash  
And, burned up, lost the will to want.

And now, what all the children want  
Is fame online and 'subs' – a name  
To insulate from worlds of ash  
Where complex oligarchs can gain  
Dominion over every fool  
And keep themselves forever young.

Time is what you want and cannot gain.  
Thinking text can save your name - you're not a fool,  
But you're young – for all becomes ash.

## A Cyclops Song / Arion With His Mellotron

*Epithalamion.*

“Three cheers for Timotheus, boys!  
And here’s my first – that he made Phil  
Rightly one-eyed, to fit the bill -  
With prophet’s cyclops-song he toys,  
Anticipates some early jazz -  
(Competes with his atonal noise)  
So Philip gives him all he has!

My second cheer goes out now;  
Remembering Alex’s youth  
When Timotheus gave the proof  
Of manhood in the boy, who bowed,  
His sword jutting awkwardly out  
While feasting! Ah, well - this allowed  
The women there to know his clout.

*To make it even better the Suda encyclopedia claims Timotheus was playing with the ‘steep-rising’ style!*

And finally, I should thank Tim  
Tonight, for marrying me off,  
(And so should you who took this cloth)  
I should praise his beard – looking trim!  
And mass conjoining in new sin.  
He’s drunk - he seems filled to the brim,  
And so...to bed! We may begin!”

~

Among all great musicians  
Arion must be the one:  
Two god’s renditions  
Painting with his song  
A purple sun.

For a wedding, he is wrong  
And flees such with perfect grace:  
Knows not to belong

And with dolphin's speed  
Boards with no trace.

Budokan; famed venue's greed,  
Madison Square Garden waits:  
No family tree.  
Again listless fame  
Has killed the great.

And tonight, I say:  
May we die by pirates  
Before that happens to us!

## 33.9 MYA / October 16 1949

*Monostich Haiku.*

winter ice plateau poor-timed a lion will roar to no great renown

~

guns fall crickets die conscious i tremble unborn as Summer comes down

## **Do Not Pursue Lü Bu / Have Eye Got A Story For You**

*Lushi.*

Outside, in the palace courtyard  
Exiled from royal talk, threw  
Javelins over the grass;  
Spear above his head, the hue  
Of dragon-skin, the face a  
Demon's mask; the mind askew.  
I beg you, quit this monster!  
You must not pursue Lü Bu!

~

Xiahou Dun rode forth:  
His horse knew its craft,  
Its master's face pierced  
By Cao Xing's haft.  
He ripped from stuck head  
Father's eye, and laughed:  
A thrifty son gained  
Fame from Cao Cao's draft.

## Red / Red

*Ballad.*

At the tomb of the crimson king  
One penitent, weary,  
Praying at feet that strode the world  
Eyes expectant, bleary.

The lion-throne sarcophagus  
Of porphyry, blood-red,  
He wants to open, giving light,  
And waking from the bed:

The Falconer, who hears his pets  
As they blot out the sun  
Whose pitying claws will clench white bones  
To please the Mighty One.

His armies march, his speech will fade,  
The wise man's hope is lost  
The Church is burned and Pope has earned  
Eternity in frost.

All symbols rot and keys are placed  
To allow Satanic heist;  
The world expects the grand return  
Of marble Antichrist.

~

Fluorescent light has stained the grass, turned the green to sickly red,  
The analogues open the doors as hierophants prepare the bed,  
A voice from far away rings false - too far away to have been born  
Within the world it inhabits, and speaks to mend the fissures torn  
By screaming things; by monsters, hounds, and figures in the forest's pack,  
Gut-strings and drums reverberate and lights flash fast from red to black  
And voices in the forest cry: "Witch! Witch!"

When men like candelabras swing from banisters, while dripping red  
On marble floors, and Oriental tiles are coloured by the dead,  
Then shall this Lamb come carefully to sanctum governed by convent -

An inverted cathedral dome, an apex in unblessed descent.  
And all will shift from red-tinged light to bloodless blue-lead ghostly hues  
A sapping of vitality to mark the loss of friendship due -  
And cry the voices in the dark: "Witch! Witch!"

Upon our donning royal robes, heavy fabric a profound red,  
When every imposition shocks, and all our fleeting friends have fled,  
The heavy fabric of our nightmare will be known and ripped aside -  
Entangled, we must rise in sweat and heave a troubled waker's sigh.  
In dreams we cannot act ourselves, except by leave of some dark will,  
Sluggish reaction is our only course, with freedom gone, and still -  
I hear those voices, incessant: "Witch! Witch!"

Presiding over all the nightmare world, the colours blue to red,  
A mother wakes and, laughing, looming, crone-like starts to weave a thread  
For fate's sake. And we are reduced, lost within an exhalation,  
Transformed to vapour's part and drowned within her incubation.  
Our chorus: *Vilis Mater, suscipe nostrum donum spiritus;*  
*in servitio tuo vivimus - suspiria tua sumus.*  
And voices in the forest cry: "Witch! Witch!"

"Witch!"

## **Robbery, Assault, and Battery / Mixed Metaphor**

*Shakespearean sonnet.*

With a treasure under his crooked arm  
A thief proceeds to climb a sordid wall,  
Two steps, ladders, a triggered trip-alarm  
The pigs are coming up a-caterwaul.  
He takes a yearning leap across the roof  
Pursued by only God knows how many -  
One moment in the air provides the proof  
He's in for the proverbial penny.  
And pounding feet follow along below,  
And his sense of freedom, and sense of love,  
For the night sky and low-lying stars' repose  
Reaches its peak, matching his flight above.  
And while this humid longing night will pass,  
Our thief has caught its soul in black-gloved grasp.

~

To my reader, who takes these foolish words  
Consumes and works within your winking mind;  
To you, the thief who took a thing inferred  
And concretised what meanings you could find:  
I cannot say what I would like to say,  
I cannot mean what I would like to mean.  
Your currency has value to repay,  
The exchange rate I find too high a fee.  
Twisted by inflections I can't control,  
Published in your brain by your assent;  
Decreed pariah by unsanctioned poll,  
The public sees the death of good intent.  
And yet, because you bothered reading this,  
I think a swing is worth the certain miss.

## Damnation / Deliverance

*Ode.*

In front, a wall, as black and dead as home,  
Behind – I cannot turn to face my yawning tomb.  
The wall is space and time, a cave to fill  
All vision and feeling with a sulphuric chill.  
There is no cell to keep me in, or pause  
My impotent flailing and starting hopeless cause,  
But the wall is the might of all the world  
And I see all its darkest moments are unfurled.

Crushed by the merest tip of the finger  
On the great hand of laughing Saturn – I linger  
In memories alone: grace, love, and sounds -  
Even they are absorbed by this ravenous hound.  
A turned back, facing me, diminished all:  
In chase, the wonders of creation I appalled.  
I care for naught when thinking of that face,  
Which I still hope will look to me and give me grace.

Slowly, then, I begin to lose my life  
And to require nothing, for I know it is all  
That will ever happen to me.

~

I listened to the singing of a silent choir at night,  
And I let the drum-beat rules crash into me,  
And while I was distracted by the streets and their delights,  
I forgot I could just let the drum beat free.  
Learned the dances, speeches, and that I could never boast,  
And the foolishness of suffering for art;  
Then I registered the presence of a sprightly little ghost,  
And I felt as if she'd been there since the start.

She'd followed me through gutter-trash and holy calumny,  
And waited for me by every single door.  
She'd spurred me on to test myself with every agony,  
Gave comfort when I was beaten to the floor.  
Without a clue exactly what was happening to us,

We allowed ourselves the succour of delay,  
And the farmer with his scythe would have to wait and make his fuss,  
And with mercy maybe give us one more day.

And such is her nature,  
That even when he comes,  
I will still carry a part of her  
In a melody I hum,  
In a melody I hum...

## Yet I Could Shave Off This Moustache / ΠΑΝΤΟΛΕΩΝ

*Pantoum and Free Verse.*

I could escape by shaving my moustache,  
Recursive control lifted by release.  
And while I could shave, I know it would lurk  
Waiting and seething underneath my skin.

Recursive control lifted by release -  
Without history's plasmatic prison  
Waiting and seething underneath my skin,  
Compelling me to assume it again.

Without history's plasmatic prison  
All would turn to a child's formless chaos,  
Compelling me to assume it again.  
But if I made solitude my master,

All would turn to a child's formless chaos.  
And while I could shave, I know it would lurk...  
But if I made solitude my master,  
I could escape by shaving my moustache.

~

A lion raged and nursed a weary heart  
With marble head high, on marble it strode,  
Roared with my mouth, assuming my life's part.  
Now turning to face this rider it goads:

TAKE OFF MY GOLDEN VENETIAN MASK  
THE SKIN BENEATH IS DAMP  
WHITE UNTOUCHED AND WRINKLED.

With marble head high, on marble it strode,  
The beast; and the rider further entwined.  
Now turning to face this rider it goads:  
I must lose everything I could call mine.

ALL YOUR MISDIRECTED LOVES SPEAK OF VICE;  
THE ALL-CONSUMING LION

YEARNS ONLY FOR THAT WHICH IS HIGHEST  
AND WHICH GOES BEYOND YOUR SOUTHERN MIND.

The beast and the rider further entwined  
Redemption through a sculptor's taming fist.  
I must lose everything I could call mine -  
A heavy burden to replace a kiss.

YOU APPROACH KNOWLEDGE,  
HEAD BOWED, SUPPLIANT TO WISDOM  
AND ALL THE WEIGHTY GLORY OF THE DEAD.

Redemption through a sculptor's taming fist;  
I lived within it, still a child unmade.  
A heavy burden, to replace a kiss,  
Waited implacable; made me afraid.

I FEAR THE STATUE THAT HIDES BENEATH  
THE BLANK FACE OF THIS STONE!

I lived within it, still, a child unmade,  
Roared, with my mouth assuming my life's part;  
Waited, implacable: made me, afraid.  
A lion raged and nursed a weary heart -

IN EACH CONSUMMATION OF EXPECTATION  
IN THE APING OF THE GREAT PHILOSOPHER  
THE ONE TO RAISE THIS LION WITHIN ME  
WAS I MYSELF.

And in the end it seems that I was free to live;  
There was only kindness in its terrible gaze.