

Vanitas Magazine

VANITAS : a journal of poetry, writings by artists, criticism, and essays. **VANITAS** comes out annually, a forum for international voices with an emphasis on coming to grips with current world situations. Each issue contains writings by artists whose primary modes are non-literary and features the work of a visual artist. [www.vanitasmagazine.net]

Wednesday, September 16, 2009

TC: Jim Carroll: Pax Aeternum



It's been awhile since I have written. That's because I made a large -- perhaps too large -- leap downward on my methadone dosage about two months ago, and it is only now that I've

stabilized enough to write. Physically, I'm not too bad. I sneezed once every twenty seconds or so the first four days, and that was most unpleasant, but I'm holding on.

My brain feels detached... literally, that is, as if the liquid that suspends it evenly inside my head, like those marine compasses... I'm sure you've seen them... well, it's as if that fluid were drained off and the corduroy-textured bulk of gray was loose, banging itself freely against the inner walls of my head, leaving chunks of itself there at times, shriveling and drying without the protection of the vital, viscous fluid which provides a sort of nurturing balance.

I'm not sure what the exact results of this are... the light gives everything a sinister frame. I've never subscribed to that wank theory about people having "auras," but in sharp sunlight, everything looks cheetah-like... ready to pounce.

My dog is the loser. He gets shorter and shorter walks than usual. But since I can't get more than a cavity full of sleep (which reminds me: my teeth ache, individually and as one), I am able to go up to the meadow in first light of dawn and indulge him in the splendors of tennis ball fetch. Being up at that hour, I invariably run into my friend, the poet Tom Clark (wearing one of those Superfly, back-to-Africa pillbox jobs). He never stops. We seldom speak, but simply nod at each other with a look of camaraderie born of the knowledge that we have both succeeded in our quest to become complete anti-social hermits, dazzling and mysterious -- at least to our pets -- in our exquisite reclusion...

*

Enfin, ô bonheur, ô raison, j'écartai du ciel l'azur, qui est du noir, et je vécus, étincelle d'or de la lumière nature. De joie, je prenais une expression bouffonne et égarée au possible :

*Elle est retrouvée.
Quoi ? - L'Éternité.
C'est la mer mêlée
Au soleil.*

*Mon âme éternelle,
Observe ton voeu
Malgré la nuit seule
Et le jour en feu.*

*Donc tu te dégages
Des humains suffrages
Des communs élans
Et voles selon...*

*- Jamais d'espérance
Pas d'orientur.*

*Science et patience,
Le supplice est sûr.*

*Plus de lendemain,
Braises de satin,
Votre ardeur
Est le devoir.*

*Elle est retrouvée !
- Quoi ? - L'Éternité.
C'est la mer mêlée
Au soleil.*

*

I am never bored. I entertain myself. I put deadly spiders along my thigh, and they inject me with God. At times, I pretend I am a man in order to laugh.

Past midnight, when the doors have been barricaded for night, I ascend and steal water from the baptismal fount to drink. For nourishment, I eat what moves along the floor in the darkness. I have never seen my food.

What need have I for companionship? Without trying, I have made an alliance with angels: my will and capability are one. And, against my will at first, I was given comrades in hell. It is why I dance.

The saints know who I am. Because I dance, they have made clear that they may offer me no aid. Yet, they have vowed their respect for me nonetheless.

At night, to keep my body well, I climb these church walls within. For footholds I see the reliefs of Christ on his way to Calvary, as he weeps into a veil. Sometimes, as a great feast day approaches, workmen use scaffolds to polish the facades. They ascend all the way to the rotunda ceiling. It is my only sky. I choke on the dead reliquary air of a hundred years. I will be here on this scaffold, like an owl, for a hundred more. Looking down, it is again the day of my birth. And I kiss the painted blue. I touch the painted stars.



Jim Carroll: *Impaired* (excerpt), 1973, from *Forced Entries* (1987)

Arthur Rimbaud: *Délires II* (excerpt), from *Une Saison en Enfer* (1873)

Jim Carroll: *Me, Myself and I* (excerpt), c. 1973, from *The Book of Nods* (1986)

Clouds over Bolinas Lagoon: photo by Oaxoax, 2006

Pax Aeternum (Bolinas): photo by Grumpies, 2009

Posted by TC upon the hour of the funeral mass for Jim Carroll at the Church of Our Lady of Pompeii, West Greenwich Village, New York City, September 16, 2009

*Requiem aeternam dona eis, Domine; et lux perpetua luceat eis.
In paradisum deducant te Angeli.*

Posted by TC at [5:21 AM](#)

4 comments:

[Lallysaid...](#)

Beautiful. thanks for that Tom.

[September 16, 2009 8:03 PM](#)

[TCsaid...](#)

And thanks to you, Michael. (Catholic boys.)

[September 17, 2009 12:45 AM](#)

[Issa's Untidy Hutsaid...](#)

Yes, indeed, very beautiful. Thanks.

[September 17, 2009 6:14 AM](#)

[TCsaid...](#)

Thanks for coming over, Don.

[September 17, 2009 2:04 PM](#)

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Tom Clark blogs on Vanitas Site!!

For the foreseeable future, Tom Clark has agreed to blog on the Vanitas magazine site! This is amazing news, as Tom is not only prolific – but also highly entertaining, a genius, extremely knowledgeable, etc. Look for the "TC" tag in front of his post titles – and enjoy!

Recent Libellum Publications : Norma Cole and Basil King

Norma Cole : *Natural Light*

Norma Cole's book presents new poems by a modern master of the found and formulated – this book is divided into three sequences: "Pluto's Disgrace," "In Our Own Backyard," and "Collective Memory." Personal, global, universal: all three shift and interlock in repeating cadences. Their lock on reality provides consolation for these times.

Basil King : *In The Field Where Daffodils Grow*

Part of King's series "Learning to Draw" that brings to bear his talents both as writer and visual artist. This book contains the autobiography of a painting and contemplation of some heroes – Hartley, H.D., Williams, Demuth, Giotto, Nijinsky, Emily Carr, Virginia Woolf and her sister, Vanessa Bell. "Paintings stay alive because people look at them. And when they don't, they die."

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www.spdbooks.org

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