



ANEMONE SIDECAR

CHAPTER 15
of
THE
ANEMONE SIDECAR

Introduction

*Notes and Observations
from DKG, our Cathlamet Correspondent*

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This week: "The Lost Cow of Astoria Finns"

As I started to tell you last time, Astoria Finns had been leading what most would consider a contented if unremarkable life until her cow went missing....

I remember her from back before then, before she moved to the farm, when she had spare time and spent some of it doing genealogical research. One day, she told me, she traveled to the Folk Festival in Naselle, to trace her roots. It was a very hot day, and she ducked inside and began strolling down the long hallways of lockers in the High School where crowds had gathered for the day. She eventually found herself staring at the cramped twigs of home-made genealogy charts on display in the Library—charts with the bigger writing on the too-high-to-read part, the littlest writing on the bottom where the living ones are—but couldn't make much of it, the vowels blurring between double consonants like a ballpoint fence. Everyone, she often said, remembers a falling star; a cluster can go unnoticed when it is cloudy. She bent low where she thought there might be an Andrew and bumped someone with her shoulder bag, the bag that had swung dangerously all morning, heavy with everything she'd brought with her—maps, camera, her grandmother's aged diary, the address book stuffed with comic strips, two jars of lingonberry jam. She turned to look, her mumbled "sorry" dwindling in the space left by whoever it was who was already gone.

Now and then I find myself wondering what did happen to her cow. Actually I remember only a few things about her. I know, of course, she lived in western Oregon and that the loss of her cow was quite distressing to her. I know that she wandered off in search of it, got lost in the dense woods surrounding the small

farm she'd inherited from her parents, and was found, safely, after others in the community finally realized she was missing. She had failed to come to Church on a Sunday, three days after she left in search of her cow. This, in itself, was not remarkable, since Astoria was not a religious woman, but it was worrisome that she did not come to the fund-raiser afterwards, since she had promised to contribute her much-admired jam. Even though she had no "regular faith" and the fund-raiser was not even for God at all but to repair the west wall of the Church, damaged in a winter storm, she always had a deep feeling of community and was loved by those around her as a result. It was the Mayor's dog that located her and attracted others with his barking. This totally changed Astoria's mind about dogs, since until that moment she had not liked them, even though she always treated them with kindness, as she did all living things; yet another reason she was so beloved. She was grateful that others had rescued her, and after she recovered, which did not take long, treated the entire community to homemade scones and tea at an outdoor party at her farm. This did not, however, change her attitude toward church since, as she explained to the Minister, there was no reason to think that the kindness of her many friends had anything to do with anyone's religious beliefs. The Minister, feeling about Astoria just as everyone else did, was not bothered by this at all, instead smiling and helping himself to another scone. When the funds needed to repair the church had been raised, and the wall rebuilt, Astoria was the featured singer. For years after, people talked about the soft beauty of her rendition of "Amazing Grace." It had been a great surprise because, until then, only her animals knew she could sing. Sometimes, she would tell me, revelation just springs up when you are not looking for it. The townspeople drew a parallel between Astoria's new appreciation of dogs and the community's new appreciation of Astoria's singing talent. The Minister did not think this a coincidence and talked about it at length in a sermon that Astoria did not attend, though others did and, no doubt, told her about it later.

I never did find out what happened to her cow though I soon enough learned that Astoria had no abiding interest in genealogy, no matter what she'd professed in her youth. She decided to spend the rest of her spare time volunteering for the local veterinarian; God and his human tree having nothing superior to the DNA of a cow or even its tail.

It wasn't much of a house, that farmhouse she'd inherited. Continually added onto over the years, the nice peak of the original portion gave way to a roof of lesser pitch. The third section, newest and less well thought-out, if time and care taken can describe thought, leaned wearily on the rest with a roof like the lid of a storm cellar. This end was prone, as was the church, to damage from a west wind. The shed, linked to the back by a pathway, was filled with the smell of apples and the dust of dust. She kept a hand scythe back there that the mice couldn't chew on and cardboard barrels of dried corn that they could. The corn was intended for the chickens, though those had gotten out in a storm shortly after she moved into the house and could no longer be said to be hers, eating and sleeping as they did beyond the pen. Happily, they returned once in awhile. She could see them, nodding their greetings, pointing their wrinkled feet in the direction of the coop (though this was hardly a straight line), clucking mysteriously about the outside world as seen from close to the ground—stories even the cow was too tall to experience. Plump and generous, the hens scratched out intricate maps for the pullets. And when they went off again, exploring, smaller birds dropped down to annotate with their tiny toes. The gracious potentials of the world cannot be exaggerated.

All the rooms of the house were painted the same faint blue the carpenter saw in the water and in the sky, the color that memorized his eyes on the long, long voyage to America in 1913, and, when light was right, reflected them.

It was her singing at the church that made her begin to feel just a little remarkable. For years she had been casually exploring historical gateways to the universe and other vexing interpretive

problems, hoping by this to re-establish the intimacy with family and human history she imagined she must have felt at some time—a feeling both increased and weakened with each rustle of the aspens her parents had planted at the farm with such hope. She had shocked herself by singing that day, did not know she had that resolve, and could not account for what made such a shy person agree to perform openly. But that, she said, from that point on, was how she believed she should live her life; adding with a wink that there is nothing more patiently forthcoming than the unexpected. But over the years, in the isolation of the small farm, certain confusions arose and she'd begun to remember the performance taking place in 1946 or even 1928, confusing herself with her aunt who was adept at the pianoforte or her mother who played swing guitar with her first husband at the grange dance. One just does not know how all this happens. In her meager possessions when she died, one sepia photo provided an intriguing clue, its creases and stains indicating frequent handling: two men hold their saucers to their faces to cool the hot coffee, the abandoned cups afloat on dripped inner-tubes of flavor—milk, coffee, sugar—on the table. One can almost sense her in that room right now, in her purple wool bathrobe, sliding her hand fondly over the dateless stains, feeling the complex texture of wood and pleasure, the intimacy of ghosts; then running to the front door and throwing it wide open so even the sun could see her....

...to be continued in Chapter 16 of The Anemone Sidecar



The Anemone Sidecar, Chapter Fifteen, 2011,
built on the work of select multitudes.

Cover image by Daniel Boyer.

Orchid Tierney: *Perspective*

all

the girls say

it is raining

mortar flowers

in darfur

helicopter dragonflies

rescue insects

from webs

and he winks wide

eyes

just for

you

Kevin O’Cuinn: *Mooring*

We moored at the mouth of the fjord, the weekend the clocks
changed.

It was a wet one, squalls. Wind rain wind rain.

We pulled on our oilskins and braced ourselves.

“A bit blowey,” she said, shouted. “A bit,” I shouted back.

We stuck it out till the light faded; a kind of sunset without sun.
Below, we turned on the space heater and stripped off.

*

“I’ll need you here early on Monday,” he’d said down the phone.

“I’ll need to get you up to speed; you’ll need to hit the ground
running.”

I thought hard about his verbs.

*

We’d had a good run and couldn’t complain. Our supplies were
out but we’d managed – the ocean had provided. We scraped
cockles from the rocks that Sunday. We fried them in oil and
seasoned them with white pepper. She pulled a couple of
Heinekens out of nowhere, said *Da-daah*.

*

Monday arrives, its silence wakes us
Not a breeze, not a wave, not a gull

I dress, good to go
Spring forward; Fall back

She pecks me on the cheek, a symbol from this other world
“I’ll be here,” she says

I find the stop and take the bus
The bus follows the telephone wires

The city sucks me back to Present Tense
It grows in the window until I am small

Gay Baines: Chautauqua

A triangle on gray water
waving its arms becomes
two people in a kayak,
paddling hard to leave the harbor.
Toward the south they go, moving like
seated dancers, their shoulders
bare to the sky. There is
calm out on the lake. There are
weeds deep in the lake. Under the
hot sun, silver lips chatter in the lake.
For as long as the journey takes,
the kayakers will be of, and in,
the lake, finding something perhaps
called peace, or distance, or freedom,
that will last until the prow of the kayak
grinds the dark pebbles of the shore.

Derek Pollard: two poems

Our Rome

We have made the turn
Toward Rome

Pillars sweetened with blood

The sweetness of mulberries

Birds drifting toward shore

The crowdedness of the shore

LISTEN

There are slaves
Below decks crowding
The galleys

LISTEN

The first sweet hosanna
Across the desert
And the cobbled streets

Want makes want
Calls to want
From building to building
Far above and near

ROME BURNS

Even now
We laugh

The *Via Apia* paved over
With gold, with yellow brick

We applaud the spectacle
The monsters and little people
Safely locked away

The curtain drawn
Then drawn back
As those outside rush
The gates

We pull up what we can
For salvage and safeguard
And go out into the city
And the far wilderness
Where there is nothing known
Nor language for such moment

We turn
Toward Rome

Longing to be suckled
And comforted
Listening for echoes
And warm salutation

The grasses high
All around us
Our coins dusted
Blue—green

Note: This poem and the following each previously appeared in issues of
“Word For/Word”

The Lovers of the Eiffel Tower

Eiffel's thin lines

Light:

Her hand rests

His arms are:

Dappled marigolds

Ash and

How he looked just then

: Steichen &

Clara

Lake George, 1903

You

Shaking your voice

The crucible trembling

Explain: How cold

The day

Brushing against this chair

An orchard of rain

Marguerite Sullivan: *Birthday Girl*

She stands before the mirror and puts makeup on. She thinks about her days in the chorus, about her mother's small, wizening voice, even though she must be drowsing in a hot sun and cannot speak. She sees the chorus leader years ago, swinging her hands, widening her mouth in pantomime of the chorus' mouth, sees as if it were yesterday.

Years wrap her head in a skein of soundlessness. On this day she wants to think more slowly, then even more.

She counts the items by the sink. Eighty-one, but how is that possible. In her hand a disk of plum powder. She repeats the number like a chime: eighty one.

Reduce this to something simpler: an open door, a faucet running, frigidaires that harmonize, gray heads doused in daytime. Red curtains awash with bachelor buttons. A tendency to swoon over nothing.

The man had called her "Linda" as he put her in the cab. His name and his blue mustache alike in their folly.

In the mirror she continues to celebrate the privacy of her rooms, the name that is not Linda. How ingrained she is among the patterns and objects, like a coloratura of sand and sky, like a statue of glassy outlines or a fruited cloth thrown open. She is the most familiar item. She says eighty-two and gives herself black eyebrows and opalescent skin, the perfect tranquility of storybook girls.

His voice says *Linda linda linda linda linda linda* from a beige going-on of voices, a sleepy know-nothing who wants to bend her wires.

The time, mute in its grotesqueries, flimsy, mislaid. As if the woods opened up from the fabric of clacking lead and reclaimed the world.

Linda loiters in her head like a part to rehearse. Like an alto starting in low. She could be anyone, seen or unseen, propped violet before a bowl of cream. She would gesture like the trees to come closer, come closer.

Polished nails, murmuring lips—who are these women with their straw tidings?

Which is louder, the face and its mad life or the rush of things undone?

Erika Ostergaard: *Barefoot and Vestal*

Carry on little Harpist, lover with wet eyes
and hope stored at the hips.
I keep having this dream where you rest
in the higher branches and shake down the blossoms,
large and moist with growth.

Though your sanity's gone the way of Mother,
we cuddle our secrets in gold crumbs until
a May-tide victory comes spouting
and your green toes
glow.

Francis Raven: *A Rite of Questions*

It's hard to know which religion bows before
unnaturally blue and yellow flowers. Their deistic haircuts,
conundrum headdresses, offer few clues
and yet his white button up shirt
could have appeared
in a folk dance

I might have once seen. This is America of course, as
globalization nevertheless entails that we remain
in one country
at a time. The back of the procession
moves to the front
and the front stays put.

This appears to be a battle formation
in a boulevard's bitter island,
monument which is hidden
by a carefully turning oak. That's a description
of the time of year. However, the descriptions
their jackets make on their shirts
sound like mourning, but it's too public to be a funeral.
Nevertheless, their outfits remain the same;
however, their hand-cobbled shoes
kick waterbottles, technologically.
So they only wear this garb during ceremonies
and that's not really an answer
as to why their expressions appear more patriotic
than religious.

Tina Hyland: *In the Wash*

A perfect red pearl gathered on her fingertip and dropped heavily on the leaves of paper below her.

Well, fuck.

Any last words, he asked.

Yeah, she said. You're not always right.

He smiled, knowing he was right enough of the time. She did what she must by falling asleep.

In the wash, there are no reliable systems, only muddled currents. Reasons flow in endless debate, bubbling over one another, babbling back and forth until they litter their diatribes on the shore. Sometimes they break as waves, inchoate bursts of sound on the rocks. She collects them in a bucket. When the arguments are heavy with emotion and thrashing mindlessly, she hauls them to the boat. A good distance from shore, she will release them back to the waves of the wash. There is a logic that says all the rational and counter-rational currents will buffet them until they break apart, into pieces so small and inconsistent that she'll never have to scoop them off the shore again. If this is true, it is funny how alike so many of them are.

You awake yet, he asked.

Yes, I am now, she said.

I need help sorting all these allusions. They're getting out of hand. She glanced at the grim cabinets, overcome with loose papers and scattered files.

Yes, they really are.

They worked in silence, inspecting each leaf and tucking it into its

corresponding drawer. Some leaves were complicated and needed to be cross-filed. She was always, somehow, the one who jogged upstairs to make the copies.

By noon, the cabinets were mostly ordered. Only a few drawers bulged with untended leaves and overweight files. She did not look forward to shifting the whole system over into the ready and empty cabinets further down the row.

Would you look at this, he said, waving a leaf of paper in the air.

What is it?

It's us, he said.

Which us?

The us right now.

He scanned the fresh leaf.

Seems like a Cinderella type, he said.

Should we file it or roll with it?

I'm hungry, he said, so I'm going to say roll with it.

You would.

I did. And I'm feeling more like a stepsister by the second.

In the wash, some currents are stronger than others. They push their full weight against the stones—a ceaseless battering ram—until the stones soften and give. This procedure does not take as long as it maybe should.

Where did the last Cinderella file go? Did you hide it?

I'm not a child, she said.

I know the Cinderellas piss you off.

They do, but that doesn't mean I'd hide them.

Wherever they've gone, we need to know where that is.

They opened and closed the cabinet drawers, searching. It was lost time. The leaves rained down on them from above, threatening to overwhelm the operation. You start filing these, he said, and I'll keep looking. Ok.

She gathered the leaves up in her arms and moved quickly through the cabinets. It was difficult work to do alone, but he was busy slamming drawers and shouting. She followed a small path of leaves that meandered around the back of the cabinets. She halted.

Oh shit, she said.
What is it?
It's us.
What does it say?
Reads like a Hansel and Gretel.

He dropped the file he was sifting.

Run.

In the wash, there are vents that heat things to a boil. Only specially adapted creatures can live near them, and those creatures are best avoided by those who can't. She was especially careful picking up the things they spat on the shore.

I want to sleep next to you, he said.
What are we now?
Can't we just be in love?
No, she said. That much is impossible.

Matthew Johnstone: two poems

The stars think I have a job but I do not.

The states have a furious
great desire the mapmaker
places the sky inside to find
it without the drugs,

Leaning the gate its
shadow is a careless, reckless,
a whole does not change. Loveliest
moment not a mixture of arms.
Do not break
your dark hands snapping in.

When I go back to sea I will
have shapes chewing at me to move
forward. Or chewing to move backward.

The heavy speech of locks kept in a sleep.

Tilt of serious masks at bear, children,
bears, false power symbols, bears. Keys field the
managed hush I would claw less.

Body washed like a thief

Being a light somehow involved.

Where the cotton warp and woof cross

the shoddy is caught.

This is the place to place my tender.

Anne Sexton

Without making sound every living thing makes sounds
/ imitating death/ it is raining on the ocean,
I am rubbing my teeth down the barrier like fine marble,

crushing foam/ the noise forms,
drought reaching the fires all your jaw stag/
watching that clenches and have brought my gun

Bullets fired near ocean or no bullets fired at all,
the horror she with/ do not empty their grey eyes
Shapes of breathing/ the ground remain the subtitle

Dream to be coral is there and to throw ourselves against it
no one is running / this engine,
It is a cold month in all its thirst and umbra

Slips of carbon float/ which is another ocean /
/ all the ruin of nature/ is this me who moans every dry
breath?

The ocean is enticing which is enough

The air become too thick, the stings pure like ginger,
roaring some cord is choking the surface around us,

The bullets are pink in fish we pat / we are spitting out the
plugs / camellias we pull through salt,
/ fingers in our mouths

Ujjal d Nihil: *If Someone Rings the Bell*

Don't attempt anything with room for retrospect you will have no friends to talk about this with you won't be here it should not be recorded in any form count the candles in the box dig out all the food from the freezer cover your furniture with thick sheets choke the waterline if you have any object durable enough to break the windows stack them up in your bathroom don't look at the walls don't have a musical countenance if someone else happens to be with you tell him/her to take off their clothes in a way you haven't seen before tell him/her you don't understand the need(it's important, very crucial, to tell him/her that you know you're predictable)but it's very good in these situations. If there isn't someone with you then begin a story about a Bombay police constable. Title it *Tawde's baton*. It should begin with the following paragraph:

Tawde's baton is hard. He points it to the moon from his window and brushes his elbow against the rust on its hinges. He thinks of the whispers he hears at the station about his unforgiving baton. He looks at his sleeping wife and notices she has slipped to the centre of the bed. He picks up a small chip of rust from the corner of the sill and throws it at his wife. She wakes up and moves to the corner. He points the baton to the moon. He is brilliant and feels ample and takes off his uniform without a sound. He realizes no one has ever been given such a beautiful baton, with no irregularities, smooth to the hilt, autonomous when in use. He turns around to the bed again and feels unbearable compassion for his wife's unclear shape in the dark. He thanks his baton for this minor privilege and moves toward the bed.

Try to justify his violence and fraudulence by highlighting his economic situation in meticulous, complex ways. Like they do with babies (to ensure their future, health, mind, movements etc). Make a concise diagram charting his growth pattern in the middle of the text. Make it natural, make it national, make it arbitrary. If possible try to make him sound paranormally obsessed by his baton. Rape scenes, if any, should be written with slight meditations on the gender scenario. Make that the undercurrent, like an oppressed text within the text, a kind of abrupt slice. Go wild, implicate as many hierarchies as possible, this country likes posthumous things.

Take a count of all the cigarettes and sanitizers, go in to the kitchen and think why you came here, you might be tempted to put your ear to the door, it's harmless but it might inspire you. Look up the other text for the possible variations for this emotion, refer to any simple cousin in your mind, sketching a long apple helps 6 out of ten times. Touch the windowpanes to feel or look for any kind of dense settlement, this and all of this can be ignored but its effects are invariable. The most important thing is to not submit oneself into idle worship, don't like your ideas because you have survived it for the time. Push them up in jerk in retrograde fist lock killer flashlight up your average nightmare I have no rhythm to solve this try circling the warmest place in the house panic panic why should I know what you should do if someone rings the bell? Turn on the shower. I completely forgot about this. If you have pets just leave them alone, don't think about them, fucking ignore them or bite them and note the reaction. Avoid cotton and take off all the clocks from the wall and reset the dials to eleven o' clock. The inflection of eleeeven might work because now you have to move towards confrontation

with whoever's rung the bell. If you have a mail-door try slipping in a clock outside and a glass of nice hair. If you hear the voice say eleeven outside the door, then it's useless. If he doesn't then you have to try other things. You have to remember all your actions are essentially useless and are being performed to only stretch the consequence of the bell ringing. So you can bake something in the oven too and kill one of your pets and try that through the mail-door too. You are free to try a host of terminal combinations. You can make a bonfire in the hallway and masturbate. A lot of interesting actions can be performed facing the mirror.

If the story is going nowhere, then call a relative. Call one of those aunts who always thought you were a little weird for family traditions. You don't have to concern yourself with what is actually "weird" where this "weirdness" has got you. Call her, the one who always served you more dal at marriages with her breasts singing to our face. Tell her you want to run for Prime minister and the country is in 'bad hands' and 'too many hands'. After saying 'too many hands' go quiet for a few seconds and then tell her 'I knew nothing would work' and quickly hang up. Then call her back and pretend that you had never called and ask her about your favorite tree. 'Is the pond still there? What about the potter who made documentaries of grass life?' Ask her what she did with all the pictures she took. Then hang up again.

He has saved a catholic from drowning in the church pool and, since the incident, visits his house everyday . His wife cooks well. Tawde doesn't eat at her house, but comes to watch her cook. He stands at the corner of the kitchen and instructs his wife to not turn until she hears a command. No one can spit like Tawde after doing something infinitely important.

Try passing whatever you have finished writing about Tawde's Baton from underneath the door. Chances are it will be read and it might give you some more time to iron clothes for a funeral in the future. Remember, there will be no funeral or future to visit but it's a good thought because your clothes can be used to give someone a decent funeral. You will also be duly commemorated for this service towards the country's poor. 'FIREWOOD, not even that...' 'Where do we find ourselves in this heat?' Avoid these lofty sentences.

Try reciting this jingle about national juice.

*flowing through the cracks
of fertile land
Where innumerable molten nipples
Sweat milk babies hips
Have settled
our buried spirit
national juice
let's remember them
only
this is our juice.*

Some other sentences may add up in your mind, many won't, don't overreact, we all know everything there is to about this place. Nothing will surprise the country behind the door. Open it.

Christopher Barnes: *Inquest*

“Smith told me – on Sunday night, after
we had gone to bed – and it happened on
Monday, too – that he couldn’t love me
In a physical sense.” – Libby Holman

The pallbearers rick through a play of light,
The infectious veil of softwood
And she chemised in black
Is timorous with tender feelings
For the obsequies by the pit.

Opiates and tequila blinker these episodes,
Milestones and new-leaf widowhood,
She lulls insentient on pillows.

Rumour folds off presses,
Soft focus italics across the Evening Journal,
The New York Times wriggles into consciousness,
Cincinnati Post a blur.

Nobody’s darlin’ and lily-livered,
He was crystal certain
He was going berserk.

For her shaping at the inquest
A redeeming alabaster-smocked negligee,
Black-lead locks squeezed in braid;
Her piano lesson floating on gossamer
Is the grittiest fire in her head.

“You and your husband never had any differences?”
“We were terribly happy.”

And all the while
The first squirm of an embryo
Unsettling in the stomach.

Feng Sun Chen: *First Ocean*

How some days are saturated with salt. Salt is the only way I can describe this urgency--a saltiness of the body. A thirst that thirsts for itself.

This is what I discovered after moving to a new city, the Twin Cities, city of kinetic cherry on spoon and absurd skies. For the first time, I own a full length mirror and a sheepskin rug. Many of my new friends have just come into themselves too. They speak of becoming real. We are at that age. But I think I have “fallen in love” with myself in that I have become unreal. In more clinical and sterile settings this could be construed as depression. She is unable to rouse herself, for example, to do the laundry, to clean up the kitchen, to do anything but sit in stupor in the morning. She is apathetic, languid, and has the mannerisms of a confused tapir, finding ants in out-of-the-way hollows. Interaction with other human beings is unbearable.

Maybe I don't want to be filled. There is the suspicion that fulfillment is akin to drowning. One is filled all the orifices are filled with cold or hot flood/blood.

Indeed, I have experienced bradycardia, the opposite of bradycardia, peripheral vasoconstriction, and panic during submersion. I mean, submission, or missionary.

Stacey Tran: *adding to the treasury of moments*

what juts like a crack of darkness

what remains has passed to light
crouching to impress
what is gold inside the heart

raw and unprotected
bruised with the print of faces
so subtle they have no name

leaving the intimacy behind
as the ticking of a clock
with no hands but a face
so naked hiding behind the
boat neck and prow of winter

*

moments running together and
downward as the tide of people
rolls blank-faced, furling home

down a flight of stairs at the train
station how lost expression gets

when drowning among its
self in other clothes
as unrecognizable as you and i
become with or without rage

falling off the edge of the land
our arms and hope suspended

remembering the shape of one's
own nose against the sky
as it gently closes down around us

shutting off memory and escaping
into darkness

*

remind me again how your eyes
broke as they did once

into a thousand pale flowers
over the grass, white socks
beneath the bed, two empty
plates set side by side
wide cast and white as lakes
echoing back and forth sounds
of black callow swans

*

at night thoughts like these form and
become facts under the cold moon fossil light

if this is drowning i'd rather be in it
than afloat and without it

memory, i mean

*

how can one expect to know all the pieces
that make up the fist if it is impossible first

to name or place how each bone in it
is within each other and
survives that way and patiently

*

like a child waiting for the arrival of time to pass

i'm reconstituting the state i am in

finding what it's like to have a destination
adding to the treasury of moments

breaking down with ease
a dialect of the human body language

to be at or towards, the will to, running for
president in the governing (the wren
hanging onto such) branches of the heart

Nafkote Tamirat: *Encyclopedia Brown and the Case
of the Real World*

Leroy Brown had been called “Encyclopedia” since his tenth birthday. No one remembered who had first coined the nickname, although there was speculation that it was Davy Tickett, who had had to share a cubby with Encyclopedia in the second grade. Encyclopedia was the only one who knew the derivation of the word “cubby” (from the word “cub” (1835), related to the word “cove” and “cub stall”, whose most basic definitions were “a stall for cubs”). Encyclopedia never bragged about his knowledge, but Davy Tickett wouldn’t stop mocking the word until Encyclopedia couldn’t keep his mouth shut since the history of “cubby” gave it a significance that he refused to see sullied. Seven-year-old Davy Tickett listened to Encyclopedia’s rant on the subject for a good three minutes, eyes wide, mouth drooling, and then screamed “Encyclopedia” at him (a word that he had learned only two days before) from then until the day that he was run over by Bugs Meany’s truck when he was 17 and had just been released from the straitjacket. The rest of the town followed suit.

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Encyclopedia Brown was born and raised in the town of Idaville, Florida, a town that no one who was not born and/or raised there can ever locate on a map. Encyclopedia’s father was the chief of police and Encyclopedia’s mother was a raging nymphomaniac who slept with half of the town and made eyes at the other half. Encyclopedia’s father never knew and died content that his life had been that of a happily upstanding Idaville-ite. Encyclopedia had always known about his mother but loved her fiercely

anyway. Encyclopedia's mother never stopped calling him "Leroy" until the age of 20 when he finally left home, at which point she called him "absent", and even that infrequently.

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From grade 5 to grade 12, Encyclopedia Brown struggled at school, often unable to complete his assignments and incapable of interacting with his fellow students, which was particularly distressing because the Idaville school system prided itself on its extensive (some said "excessive") utilization of the group project. The only class in which did this not apply was woodworking, after Eamon Murphy's right side was slashed off by an errant machete that Thomas Mutton had been holding as part of a group project on creating the perfect ottoman.

No one understood why Encyclopedia's marks were so poor; he clearly knew the material better than the teachers themselves. Puzzlement reigned until the discovery that Encyclopedia had crippling anxiety, so that while he could engage in one-on-one conversations, he was struck virtually dumb when having to contribute actual words into the ether around a group of more than three people. Encyclopedia's mother, noting this in her son, began to home-school him at age 14, which meant that Encyclopedia read books all day while his mother fucked the unemployed men of the town until dinner time, when she would serve the Chief's favorite meals like coq au vin and meatloaf au vin and broccoli au vin. The chief loved au vin. His wife preferred plain coq.

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Encyclopedia's only real friend was Sally Kimball, a leggy blonde who enjoyed playing detective with Encyclopedia, who set up his

own detective agency when he was fifteen years old. The detective agency's headquarters were located in Encyclopedia's garage, and he charged twenty-five cents for his modest services, plus expenses. Sally Kimball thought this too little, arguing that for the time spent devising plans, practicing the enactment of said plans, and then actually enacting the planned enactment of previously devised plans, they should charge some kind of hourly rate. Encyclopedia felt that they might lose business if their prices became too steep. Sally accused Encyclopedia of being unambitious. Encyclopedia accused Sally of being Jewish. Sally said that she *was* Jewish. Encyclopedia said that he knew. Sally wondered aloud if her being called Jewish in that instant was supposed to be an insult. Encyclopedia hastily countered that it wasn't, it was just a fact that he had felt the need to declare at that moment, a need that he could neither justify nor deny. Sally was silent. Encyclopedia sweated profusely. It was only after The Case of the Disappearing Bicycle Racks and Sunglasses (No Connection Between the Two Objects in Terms of Culprit and Motive) that relations between the two went back to being relatively normal. Many credit Encyclopedia's sudden conversion to Judaism after leaving Idaville to this moment of almost-insensitivity, although why it took half a decade for the change is one that scholars continue to debate.

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Sally Kimball and Encyclopedia Brown were not in love.

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Sally Kimball and Encyclopedia Brown talked about whether they were in love. Encyclopedia explained to Sally that he could definitely fall in love with her, that in terms of proximity and mutual interests, it would be the most convenient and

comfortable relationship for the both of them. Sally explained to Encyclopedia that that wasn't what she wanted from love. Encyclopedia asked her to unpack that statement. Sally went further and explained that she wanted someone to love her who wouldn't hesitate to feel unnaturally attached to her, who would want to hold her all night and dance all morning, and not mind the inherent hyperbole. Encyclopedia envied this kind of feeling. He had never felt it before, but seeing it in Sally, he felt the closest to passion for her that he would feel in quite a while.

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Sally Kimball and Encyclopedia Brown were never in love, although they wanted it.

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The day before Encyclopedia left Idaville, old Mrs. Christopher came to the Brown house to say goodbye. Mrs. Christopher was known in Idaville for her incorrigible crossword puzzle mania; she would collect them from all of the readily available periodicals and then solve as many of them as she could over the course of her ceaseless walks up and down Idaville's biggest and leafiest boulevard. Encyclopedia had to pass her twice a day, once to go to Sally's and once to come back home, and every time he passed, Mrs. Christopher would ask him for the answer to the remaining clues. Inevitably, the two clues that Encyclopedia answered were the last two that she needed to complete the puzzle in question. It was a mystery as to how this could possibly be the case each and every time, and Encyclopedia had worked out an equation in an attempt to solve it, the equation being: $2a + 89.09 \times \text{FREE WILL} = \text{the solution}$. Despite poring over this mathematical conundrum time and time again, Encyclopedia was unable to definitively conclude why his and Mrs. Christopher's regularly impromptu

meetings on the street were both believable and possible.

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Sally Kimball argued that what Encyclopedia didn't understand was that not everything had or needed a solution. Encyclopedia exclaimed that he had never heard such trite clichés pass through Sally's lips before and Sally retorted that he had seen and would continue to see very little pass through said lips. Both pondered where exactly the sharp-witted retort within this verbal jab lay and, not finding it, stared at the ground, Sally wondering what she was doing in Idaville, and Encyclopedia wondering why Idaville could even exist.

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Mrs. Christopher died three years after Encyclopedia left. She died in her living room in the early afternoon on a day that was agreed by many to be the most beautiful that Idaville had seen in a while. The last clue on that day's crossword puzzle was 45 Down, "Wide open with good feelings, from the Greek", five spaces.

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Encyclopedia roamed around the fictional United States for a good many years after moving. He tried to set up larger detective agencies in Roverville, Pennsylvania, Norton Wood, Montana, and Peek-a-ville, Louisiana, all of which eventually failed, not because of a lack of skill on his part, but because the residents distrusted this man-boy who had all the answers and whose prices were too low for there not to be murder involved somewhere. After solving a few cases, with a torn T-shirt (in Roverville) and a toenail clipping (in Peek-a-ville) as his only clues, the residents sent the heads of their local governing bodies to Encyclopedia, to

ask him politely and with lowered voices if he wouldn't mind moving out at his earliest convenience. Encyclopedia had been raised well and understood immediately that he wasn't wanted.

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Even as Encyclopedia's age increased, his face remained as boyish as ever. People continually mistook him for a hyper-articulate twelve-year-old, or an autistic fifteen-year-old. Encyclopedia (who was twenty-five now) would try to correct them, but because Idaville had done away with (or had never had, Encyclopedia couldn't remember) official documentation like birth certificates and social security cards, he had no way of proving that he was the age that he claimed to be. Encyclopedia recognized loneliness for the first time and began to understand that during his time in Idaville, he had always felt lonely, except for when he was with Sally. He had of course known what "lonely" meant, and could decline it in six different languages (three of them officially declared dead) but had been unable to bridge the gap between knowing through feeling and knowing through memorization and regurgitation. Encyclopedia didn't know if he should feel more cheated that this current epiphany was happening so late, but ultimately, chose to feel nothing.

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Encyclopedia discovered spicy food when he moved to reality-inspired towns like Baton Rouge, Louisiana, Montpelier, Vermont and Boston, Massachusetts. Idaville's food had had lovely presentation and the *Idaville County Gourmet Gazette* had crowed that the National Taste-Testers Union had declared Idaville to possess "the most toy-like and least food-like food in the world" (the National Taste-Testers Union was made up of a bunch of hotheads and Marxists, and no one was afraid to say it) but as a

result, it had tasted like nothing and so Encyclopedia, while cognizant of the concepts behind “scrumptious” and “bone-licking good”, had never truly understood when anyone would ever have a chance to use them. This all changed when he found himself in Washington D.C., in front of an Ethiopian restaurant, trying to parse out the smells that were wafting out of it and that at once frightened and enticed him. Later that night, as he vomited up his entire stomach, he decided that the pain was fully worth it, if only to allow his tongue to actually live for once.

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Encyclopedia’s attempts to break into reality-based crime-fighting failed entirely. Not only was the twenty-five cents per day scheme impossible to maintain in the economic realities of reality, but it turned out that in real life, there was no way that one could follow a tiny slip in logic or a minute aberration in the facts all the way to the wrongdoers. Reality’s crimes were complex in their motivations and consequences, and more often than not, nothing was solved. Encyclopedia marveled at how, unlike Bugs Meany and Wilford Wiggins, who up until that point had been the most evil people he had ever met, real America’s populations concealed actual monsters hiding behind the ruse of humanity. Two years after living in reality, Encyclopedia finally began to age. He saw the wrinkles forming on his forehead one morning, felt the absolute hopelessness that was becoming a trademark of his days, and knew that he had to return to fictional America, which he did within the next week. He would soon miss feeling anything of import.

Irene O'Garden: *Lay Out a Day*

lay out a day like a city divided and gridded and guided by railings
and palings
appointments exquisite demanding denuding the day of her organs
and sieving the day
into pixels and digits and gross national units of memories diced
for the shelves within
selves and the cells of the selves which are round in the moment
have edges cut off at the
sides so they fit in the grid wherethey bleed and they die in the
square holes the lives of the living like lambs to the styrofoam
wrapped, weighed, piled to buy, are we fools
are we slaves are we sick

Jamie Utphall: *Commemoration of Kyle Davison's
Complete 25-hour Performance of Erik Satie's
Vexations on July 17, 2010; Madison, WI*

You begin midday, striking the cool slabs of the vibraphone with three purple tipped mallets, sending those first one hundred repetitions from the third story slinking down to the greasy summer street where each chord, more curious than dejected in its monotony, melts into the alley between the tin-roofed Laundromat and a rusty row of bike racks; but I'm already sick of listening to this theme not yet vexed but, at sixty beats a minute, as calm and as steady as a running faucet, a sound which the boys toting past cheap cases of beer fail to hear, but nevertheless a sound which slowly cascading lures new guests as they climb the back staircase and enter to find you poised on a stool in the far corner of the living room, balanced in front of your sleek mammoth of an instrument with sweat slightly dampening the starched shoulders of your dress shirt; you fixedly press and release the pedal in your sock-feet, forever maintaining your composure, your connectedness, your dedication, for even your humanity is unwavering, because not once does mechanical twitching overtake you; not once do you look up with an expression of urgency, desperation, lethargy, or dread; not once do you stop, or even pause unexpectedly (apart from your three scheduled and evenly spaced six-minute bathroom breaks) from this silly piece of music to be played 840 times in succession; this silly piece of music lasting over twenty-four hours notated intentionally to confuse, enslaving your eyes to a jumbled mess of double-flats and tripled sharps (which you had taken pains to secure with a tidy excess of masking tape), composed over 120 years ago as a joke, a gimmick, an exorcism, and then forgotten

until 1963 when the marathon piece was resurrected and performed by a relay team of pianists, and now by you, who wondered simply one day, what would happen if...“it’s not a race,” you scold when I asked if I could pop a bottle of Champagne to commemorate your crossing of the finish line...“it’s just something that will happen,” a statement with which I couldn’t argue but only respect with ice-cold pretension for its anachronistic absurdity, its parodic emulation, its numerological significance, or its whatever, but in the end did nothing to halt my maternal instinct to dote, to nag you incessantly about drinking enough water, to just eat *something*, for the remaining seventeen hours of the concert as I drifted in and out of consciousness, but then, suddenly, out of nowhere, I caught you around 312, très, très lent, setting down your right-hand mallet, snaking your arm behind your back where next to you another music stand turned flat supported your essentials (a half-glass of water, a warm can of orange soda, a pound of sliced strawberries, and later, a bottle of Aleve), and you reached for it--he goes for the cracker!-- I wanted to shout with the enthusiasm of a 1940s sportscaster, but instead I was nervous about breaking the proscenium, so I let you eat that sole Town House cracker in peace yet eyed you eagerly as you slipped it into your mouth with the same precision and care that guided your changeless wrists before gracefully, you retrieved your mallet without missing a beat, and guilt washes over me (I attributed my new found enthusiasm to nothing but an exhibitionist appeal, of watching you eat a mere cracker); because it won’t be until later, hours later, in the early morning after I have again drifted in and out of consciousness like a sick child that I am awoken by blinds knocking, the fierce July heat breaking, a look from you unfazed, and I realize there are only 200-some repetitions left, but that I want you, selfishly, to continue playing, that I could never get tired of hearing you sink one more calmly vexed chord into another.

Lorri Rupard: *Turns With the Tide*

my daughter longs to know hardship
in this too much excess
tell me the story about when you were poor
she wants to fall asleep under the shade of human struggle
it makes her feel cozy
how fresh can she be
I so often forget
the stuffed fuzzy talisman
tucked under one arm
yet I sense cultivation
her post-camp collapse crying and not knowing why
the nail polish in the frieze I will never get out
a bottomless sea of discarded clean clothes
all indications

I lie down beside her
and say everyone was poor
we drove Impalas that broke down on the shoulder
our hands were busy—not texting
but holding rudimentary gadgets:
pet rocks
clackers
an 8 ball
no wireless no i-tunes
a verifiable Gethsemane
she says '*man that sucks*'
she's so glad she's not me

she's not me

whose feet are now bigger than mine
she whorls in toward me
this curious cool shell
heavy head on the harbor
where my arm and shoulder meet
—the world's boniest pillow
I neaten her ponytail
and lull us along waves
of late century strife
though no one's listening now
not even my own brain but
pins and needles are trying to tell that
what it already knows
that my shirt pocket's clammy with drool
how it won't be too long
her shallow breathing will gradually deepen

Owen Kaelin: *Sound and Sky*

Recorder in hand, I went out to trap whatever sounds sky and land might think to challenge me with. One night I tried it on a thunderstorm. The sky was carrying on like a motherfucker, shouting, pushing, flashing its long teeth while many pounds of water slapped the street, the houses, all those strategically placed trees. I was impressed.

Once the weather had moved on, I took my recording indoors and reviewed the sounds feverishly. So many stomps and growls, so much variety! It was a challenge, but eventually I was able to isolate one single thunderous clap which intrigued me more than the others. It felt important that I simplify the storm in this way.

My chosen thunderclap was not a simple one. As it spoke, it twisted and twined around itself. Every time my ears tried to make sense, they managed to discern yet another quality. All of those qualities, originally obscured by the storm's noisy rage, were at once a kind of unpacking and also an act of building something.

In the end, I decided that this thunderclap would be my pet.

By now I was more ambitious. I imagined myself host to more of these thunderclaps, others very much like this one. In my mind I composed a veritable family, roaming—from one end to another—across a dell all their own. I dreamed I could simply walk from my humble urban home to that high place of claps, and there wet my eyes with their orchestral voices, and imagine all the while that my urban home was in some honest way extendable from there to here. How pleased my pet thunderclap would be, exulting at the center of this tribe of sisters! My excitement grew.

But the prospect was demanding, to be sure, since it dared engage the very breadth and length of New England. And what a

strange effort this would be! Much as I tried, I couldn't quite envision myself imposing on so many people the sound of this precious thunderclap, followed by my questioning: "Does this clap sound familiar to you? Do you think you might've heard it before, something like this?" There was an uncomfortable audacity to this idea: that a young man should tramp himself from town to town and demand answers of absurd exactitude from people who probably had never thought before to discriminate thunderclaps so personally. And once such thoughts had been moved into being by me, they'd then inevitably move their new bodies quickly into other realms, birthing thoughts that were themselves possessed of the dreadful power to bite and corrupt and break me down. No tongues would be necessary for the speaking of such words; eyes and gestures would serve the words' purpose quite adeptly. The clever movements of newly possessed human bodies would turn the air between us into little weapons, pins and darts, from them to me.

No. It was out of the question, all of it.

My thunderclap was disappointed; it cried in my arms. For myself, I strove for the best of views, thinking: We've found each other, this thunderclap and I, and that's enough. I was sure that my thunderclap and I had always belonged together—one for the other and not a third personality to divide us. We'd grow old together.

David Laskowski: *The Human Munition*

Particular to the project underwritten by philosopher Hammond Errant in his book *The Human Munition* is a febrile knowledge of Durum Kettle's *Marriage*, an unbelievably intrusive contusion into the bedroom of Kettle and her husband, Ben, a shallow, insignificant epicurean partial to heavy drinking. For Errant, a communist Pinkerton who once mistakenly erred in a run to California in his bare feet, bases his primary belligerence on the campaign waged against Kettle after the dissolution of *Marriage* by Ben, a miserably malcontented context provided for by the English language. Specifically, Errant takes from Kettle a ferocious disappointment bordering on melancholy in order to establish the errantry of "bureaucratic society," or a society eclipsed by the administration of the ignominious and brazen, accounting, of course, for deductions typical to costs up to and including any incurred on the half shell. In other words, finding such lapses under his bed, Errant, in a show of profundity approximating barbarism reinvents Kettle's "distressingly dreary discourses on the dire nature of figures of speech," turning them, so to speak, into literal expressions of figurative minacity.

Errant's intent in misappropriating Kettle grew out of Errant's rabid interest in Kettle, an interest that had been instrumental in Errant's decision to major in philosophy after receiving his bachelors in actuarial science from Coleman College in Chicago. It was, specifically, Errant remembers, not *Marriage*, but Kettle's *Stag: A Guide to Establishing Your Own Dictatorship* that so captured Errant's heart. "Like Kettle, I, too," Errant writes, "was theoretically lonely, spending most of my speculative pragmatism at home, reading my Hasidic typography. It was not

until Kettle that I realized I had no idea that what I was reading had nothing to do with philosophy.”

Ironically, Errant did not fall in love with Kettle’s book in its entirety “since,” Errant claims, “it is much too long,” but with a specific sentence. “In chapter one,” Errant writes, “Kettle states, emphatically, ‘I choose to be alone, despite what Harold says. I broke up with him.’” It was this sentence, Errant claims, that inspired him to put down his tables and pick up the first person he met, an affair that lasted, Errant remembers, “until I paid the bill.” Although unrequited, this affair got Errant thinking about the difference between “persistence, effort, and action,” the last of which Errant did not experience that night, which is, most likely, why Errant obsessed over it so much.

Even though it would be years before Errant would conquer *Marriage*, his time with *Stag*, Errant asserts, helped him become more comfortable with himself, which, he states, helped him be more comfortable when not by himself, a condition caused, some doctors believe, by company, a particularly virulent virus specific to public places. More specifically, by concentrating so “doggedly,” according to Officer Patrol Mann of the Chicago Police Department, “on *Stag*,” Errant managed to become Kettle’s leading admirer, or authority, depending on how well one knows Kettle.

Errant eventually published this initial work on *Stag* to positively indifferent reviews, including a starred asterisk in the footnote of a *Times* retraction. Mercurial Cacophonous, the *Times*’ most relentless reviewer, cited Errant’s “strong use of capitals” and his “insidious use of the semicolon,” a comment that led many grammarians to look up from their tablature. Cacophonous remarked that of all the books “he read while falling asleep, Errant’s was the most languishing, finding in Kettle what so many others have found before, and with better maps.” Errant, suffice it to say, was disappointed.

However, this disappointment did not last long since, after a string of sententious flings, Errant discovered *Marriage*. Introduced by a mutual novella, Errant and *Marriage* began a long relationship that lasted for many years. Citing its “effusive use of the physical in metaphysical” and its “loquacious garrulousness,” Errant found in *Marriage* a lucrative partner, investing more than half of his earned intellectual capital in it, which is, saying a lot, considering that Errant’s capital was one point under prime.

According to close friend and financial advisor, Silas High, and his wife, By Lowe, Errant’s interest in *Marriage* grew, primarily, out of Kettle’s assertion that “even if it is not perfect, it is the best system for maintaining, or, more specifically, cultivating virtue, the necessary figment to any imaginative union.” In other words, Errant found, in *Marriage*, an ambiguity perfectly suited to his own fantastical leanings, leanings, many political scientists now claim, are left in their direction and right in their opposition, an opposition fueled by its antipathy for conflict. More specifically, Errant found in *Marriage* a cohesively rationalistic defense of his own piggish priggishness, the residue, High believes, of Errant’s erratically early existence as a precociously shy child bent on world domination.

In contrast, and perhaps the reason for their recent separation, By Lowe disagrees with her husband’s assessment of Errant’s global aims. She believes that Errant’s interest in *Marriage* grew out of Errant’s early work with his parents. Specifically, Lowe writes, it grew out of Errant’s familiarity with their book, *Divorce*, a gruesome banality particular to indifference.

Divorce, or *Fifteen Years Too Long*, is a savage depiction of the fifteen years Errant’s mother spent married to Errant’s father, a tall drink of a damp tea cozy who worked for the Coleman College Press as a twelve-point font of information. The book, coincidentally enough, consists of fifteen chapters, each chapter detailing a year of the marriage. Chapters include “How Not to Make It Work,” “Why Did I Ever Listen to My Parents,” and “God

Damn You,” a short, although riveting, analysis of intense cross-eyeing anger. The book, in addition to the diarrheic details both parents provide, also offers a useful new language in which to talk about “modern marriage.” New terms include, among others, the step-between, the shouting-out, the back-porch, the child-can-hear, and the what’s-wrong-with-staying-home, a furious assault on being content with what already exists.

However, most significant for Errant, Lowe argues, is the book’s penultimate chapter, “You’re Thinking about Him Again, Aren’t You?” The chapter, penned by Errant’s mother, is an examination of her husband’s deep-seated and, according to his mother, debilitating insecurity, the same insecurity responsible for her husband’s jealousy, a jealousy, that left unchecked, led to several “sleepless nights.” It is most significant for Errant if only, Lowe claims, because it is what turned Errant against his father for several years after the book came out.

Yet, despite Lowe’s alluring glances, what the book does not cover are the myriad ways in which the pain of a divorce could manifest. For example, furiously concerned with their own welfare, Errant’s mother and father fail to recognize how their troubles led directly to the rebelliousness that guaranteed Errant years of verbal abuse at the hands, and tongues, of his peers. Acting, as Sr. Munson Burner has said, like a “donkey’s fart,” Errant fell victim for several years to his own devices, including, Sr. Burner remembers, the lonely-tolls, a “bell-shaped thumbscrew that assured black eyes and a bruised ego.” Thankfully, Errant only suffered greatly, for had it not been for the obliviousness of teachers, priests, coaches, and nuns like Burner, who despite their years of training and experience had really no skills in dealing with children, Errant might have met with the kind of trauma he still thinks about today.

Errant’s horrible childhood aside, High and Lowe’s comments about their friend, and client, pinpoint the oxford of Errant’s fastidious collar. In other words, even though Errant recognizes

that a certain brutality is inherent in any society, he cannot move past his undeniably rigorous belief in a certain austerity of character, a particularly virulent strain, so to speak, of morality bordering on the fascist, or authoritarian. After all, Errant argues, “nothing gets done unless the iron is hot, or unless someone says so.” However, who this someone is Errant does not make clear.

Chances are this someone is Errant himself since Errant, in addition to being painstakingly moral, is also dogmatically cocksure, from the Latin rooster, meaning oblivious. Even as a young child, Errant’s mother remembers, “Hammond would peck his food off the floor. The doctor said it was just a phase, although I was afraid that he might bother the hens.” Thankfully, according to the hens, he never did. However, this did not mean that Errant was not certain in his abilities, he writes, “to direct the tides in regards to drowning those who keep their heads in the sand,” a gruesome reminder, some critics think, of the menace inherent in Errant’s preoccupations as a cold-caller for several hotheaded investment brokers. Ironically, despite the cheekiness of his monkey, Errant never directly states that he believes himself the prevaricator of such dictatorial decrees. In fact, Errant often goes as far as to state that his ideas are “sheer mummery capable of nothing more than chimpanzees.” In fact, in a little-known, but well-publicized verdict on the trials of particular errors, Errant writes that he knows nothing, sees nothing, and has nothing to say about anything.

That Errant is so quick to dismiss his own shortcomings is not surprising since the bipolar disorder of most of his erratically moody work is capricious, to say the least. Take, for example, his wife, please, a grossly inappropriate chestnut ill suited to his ideas, and yet one Errant insists on using. That anyone should hold such chestnuts against Errant is unusual, especially since Errant, being allergic to nuts, would have a severe reaction and swell up like a tumor in June.

Allergies aside, Errant's pyretic insouciance for such yarns is indicative of his almost childlike fascination for kernels, being, as they are, stones of an entirely different sort. Specifically, it is almost impossible to tell when Errant is being truthful. In other words, is Errant advocating a totalitarian government, as critic Literal Redding claims, or is he simply advocating a specific philosophic method, as scholar Leonine Waltz argues, a direct result of Kettle's original sinecure?

To decide which, according to Nose Better, professor of Knowledge at Coleman College, is a matter for the ages, or sages, depending on the letter s. In other words, writes Better than you, "Errant's Byzantine inscrutably is analogous to the sweet rain on a field of bee-dewed jewelry," a comment that lead many to claim Better is anti-Semitic, a claim that Better not only denies, but also finds to be the result of the massive Jewish conspiracy that runs the world's largest banks.

It would be better for Errant if Waltz were right, especially considering the current atmosphere in academic rhombi. Specifically, because of the high pressure currently exerting itself over unpopular opinion, Errant would fare better if he offered a lower interest rate, one reflective of the fealty to borrow. Otherwise, Errant's seemingly erroneous claims may be taken as seemingly erroneous, a condition that could lead to a relatively nasty rash resulting in a trash heap akin to history. In addition, if Waltz were right, Errant could finally separate himself from Kettle, who despite the handle and spout, differs greatly from Errant. For example, where Kettle is content, so to speak, with *Marriage*, finding in it "the kind of security most celebrities pay for," Errant is not, using it only as a steppingstone to more radical, although less intimate, unions. Errant, in stark contrast to Kettle, advocates the elimination of privacy, if only because, Errant argues, "privacy is not Kettle's privacy. It is not," in other words, "a tool for identification as much as it is a tool for pacification, for the shrinking of the public sphere. The more

private,” Errant argues, “we become, the less public our laundry.” Although Errant’s most recent ex-wife, Bathsheba, believes Errant’s concern for the public realm is less a matter of political militancy than it is Errant’s fear of colors, Errant’s concern for the withering of the public sphere is fomenting.

Where they agree is in the necessity for a vibrant public realm where speech, in regards to persuasion and obfuscation, exists in and of itself as the conscientious use of language to undermine and, if need be, poison the independently prosperous, an oxymoron moronic in its deliberation. This speech, according to both Kettle and Errant, needs “an absence predicated on the present tension inherent in speaking in front of others,” or stage blight, a cruciform formality for making a difference.

Perhaps what matters most is how Errant errs. In other words, perhaps what Errant shows, following from Waltz, is how not to proceed, or how proceeding in a manner third akin on the mother’s side can lead to understanding the impossibility of ruling, an impossibility synonym Twelve Inches has been arguing for all along. In other words, although it may be impossible, in the end, to get any taller, that does not mean Errant should stop trying, especially since medicine reaches new heights everyday.





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