

I'm Sitting With Solipsists Thinking How*

John Barlow

I'm sitting with solipsists thinking how
they really do cling to each other, and need.
I'm seeing how they cling to language
sorting it sorting with it and seeking to
have their sorting consonant with each other,
to make you consonant with their sorting.
I'm sitting thinking I'd like to write a
short story in which I could use real names.
Watching solipsists pin the tail on the
donkey with their myths watching them seek to
broadcast their myths and press immensely
in this cause. creates all the noise in the room.
But whenever one of them has been speaking
for more than a single piece of information
they blur into their voices and my head
starts to drift out into their head
and I'm listening to the person's fundamental
buzzing and seeing what they want unable to
hear what they're saying. But whenever one of them
has been speaking for more than a single piece of
information they blur into their voices
and my head starts to drift into their head
(and starts to drift into their head)
and I'm listening to the person's fundamental
buzzing and seeing what they want and
seeing what they want and unable to
hear what they're saying. The more
pressure they put on me personally
to hear what they're saying the less
I can even begin to identify
words in the darkness of the sound
impressing me. a nonstop aggression.
But there is a difference between

friendly and disturbing aggression
 in the amount of internal echo, how
 much the solipsist is trapping his
 own voice and what he is saying
 in his foremirrors. how much they're
 conscious of their solipsism, perhaps.
 None of them are conscious of their solipsism,
 because none of them are literally conscious of
 their solipsism, the least solipsistic
 being generally the most conscious of
 his solipsism, and vice versa,
 and I find myself with no end of time to consider it.
 (Solipsism's a bit of a disgrace but if you're
 conscious of it you look about periodically
 or even with some obsessive concern.
 Solipsism's a bit of a disgrace but if you're
 conscious of it you sometimes come to a full stop.
 Since we're swimming in a sea of poisonous money.
 Since our heads fall apart and drift in the room.

(You're nothing more than my equal.
 You're nothing more than her equal.
 You're nothing more than equal
 and nothing is happening.)

As this is a relatively comfortable community
 of solipsists ultimately I am always able
 to pull out of the head of the other solipsist
 to pull out of the head of the other solipsist
 and the residual effect I find is that while
 they continue to speak I am able to see the
 room around me in the film of their speech.
 in the film of their breath as one speaks
 of the galaxy as flying saliva in the breath of God.
 A powerful metaphor can silence what it states.
 The room becomes saturated in the film of their voice.
 A simple mimicking of social, convivial,
 cliches of familiarity can work wonders,
 an application of conventional novelistic or

filmic or cultural history helps
define a fine room gloss. In-
tense discussion of religion and terror
is invigorating as it is likely one of the
building blocks of the common culture
in a way that pop icons cannot be,
due to the habitually ironic and after the fact
notion of being hip common in everyone. which will be
easily painted in whomever are in the room, usually
a bar or a party. Manipulative, insistent, domineering
solipsists unless one is extremely bored or
feeling a surplus of energy.
But virtually all things all
energized life forms tap your energy
leaving you withering fruit on the vine
contemplating the collapse of civilization
with some fear, and groping for freedom.

The Happy Idea*

John Barlow

Human beings are through and through, crippled with remorse,
corrupt, evil, possessive, slandering, ill, warped,
cut into shreds, despairing, helpless, heartless, vicious,
unthinking, uncaring, unweaned and self-centered and blind...
Human beings are bleak sheep and sheep stink and dying, dying
of spiritual starvation, and they are and they are and they are
forever in a moral dilemma over it forever concealing it
sinking into it letting it crush their experience
and joy of life into misery and mine, mine, mine...
Letting it crush us in months of depression decades of disease
hours of failure moments of hell, I... love... you... anyway
Letting it kill and go on killing besieging it to kill defending
its right to kill while forever moralizing whimsically about it
indecisively pandering to it rationalizing it reconstituting it
in delusive and formal life-denuded breath-denuded
empty, stricken, language
... while the weak and the vulnerable are punished and the
sweet and the innocent are entered by death o snakes
o greyskins o scum, why dont you just shoot yourselves in the heart
in the head or in the stomach instead of shooting your wives
that know the truth about you, and claiming temporary insanity
instead of shooting your brains near numb and nearer worthless
and pretending it doesnt matter instead of shooting
yourselves in the sexual organs and then, o summer,
denying it hurts o you sick dullards you businessmen you beefing
asshole boors o gods

Let me tell you of a place i went to in a dream.

It was a good dream... but as with many dreams, as with dreams in life,
it started poorly. i was outside, nervous, frightened and alone
and black tadpoles, black tadpoles which became eels,
black and lascivious and entwining, were all about me

swimming in my eyes, as i stood within, with my heart gulping for air,
 an upright, glass, coffin. such that i, when the glass coffin vanished,
 but the eels did not, fell into a ditch. Somewhat ashamed,
 entirely defenseless, i remember falling and asking a woman
 whom intuitively i did not distrust, for help,
 and she helped me, helped me get out, with as little prolongment,
 as little embarrassment as possibly i could have hoped.
 it was wonderful it was wonderful
 o joy o goddess

And this then was the crazy winter i had met
 a whole new generation of friends of the family
 who had invited me with familiar voices to swim and fish
 in their complicated backyards with the waterworks
 and to run—gallop—between narrow fences over mud quickly.

The year was 1998 I presume as the flooding was not yet
 so accustomed, whole garden parties consisted of little more
 than the marvel at so much water.
 There was a freshness of amusement in the air
 such as i long for, even now.
 That night in the cool dark of their glassy den
 they had let me to myself to enjoy freely
 their supersonic tv and to

... gather
 recollections
 of an earthly
 community...

A celebrity drug addict was being interviewed
 on his own terms in the bleachers of the ballpark,
 the game on, it Friday night, relaxed television broadcast
 being diverted by curiosity to the patrons in the stands
 he was telling how and when and why it had started
 finally growing angry, child-like, demanding his drug
 and there was no moral underline
 only the friendly and benign
 tolerance one so easily forgets
 can occur in the annals ...of...man...

o kind race o kind kind possibility
 We Had Open State The Planet Of America A Coldless Winter
 Everyone Happy And Honest And Guilty
 A group of businessmen on the train
 invited me into their cabin
 to read pamphlets on tax and insurance fraud
 put out by the government
 which encouraged short-lived wealth as a means
 to psychological prosperity
 and to join with them in happy fraternity
 concocting correlated madhatch stories
 with which to blame the fire at the well
 on the one man who was there and smiling along
 with shameless depravity of confidence in his jurors'
 forgiveness, not for the money but for the glee of it!
 There was much free laughter and champagne
 it was wonderful.

But as i woke Christ said No! Interpret it differently
 but it was too late i was loving it too much
 i was actually loving humanity
 beautiful young playful humanity
 everything overwhelmed with water
 ... the landfill clogged lakes dancing like jellybeans
 on my table and everything else
 giddy during the earthquake