

Eclogue Three: Liberty
(from *XEclogue*)

What follows is the interminable journal of culture. This neutral and emotive little word seems, in the operatic dark green woods, so harmless and legal but it's liberty totalized, an incommensurable crime against the girls. To question privilege I'm going to shame this word. I will begin by gathering around my body all the facts, for they affect my person. Consider my feeling of resentment. I could have used it to fortify my courage. But everything was happening very fast and I thought it would be a waste to use it then. Violence and deceit, contempt and envy changed their colour, enclosed our labour. The phantom body now buttresses the vilest swindles with sub-Garbo hauteur. Violence and contempt, deceit and envy, sabotage my method and I learn to love it. I am aware that I bring horror—I embody the problem of the free-rider, inconveniencing the leaf-built, the simple-hearted, the phobic, with the unctuous display of my grief.

Enormous grief as if outside "our culture" a sense of peace floated or languished with no historical precedent. As if we could *invent* liberty, as if peace and liberty had no place in that slow starvation. As if, subject only to "the laws of nature," a gendered life were worth three years or nothing. As if, allowed to believe and to own and to publish newly hurled from the impartial sun, a person's coy reticence meant fraternity. As if nervous yet flung yet decorative—someone a noun discarded—this sweetie went down on a khaki blanket glittering.

Superlative mistress who hurts! My grief is no accident. I am hovering between plunder and awe. I am howling through the thick accretions of liberty, not harmonious, not patterned, but inconceivably voluptuous as thick rope. The enchanted world of harmonies has disappeared! The martyred world has disappeared! And I am not sorry for I tingle with the exquisite cadence of boredom—that flower's prodigious purple! If you slowly gilded flowers (or didn't), fact: this slow bloom holds the buttery promise of a meaning.

I want to remember how, couched in a tone like a windy cotton sleeve, the parenthetical real girls shuck the empire of convenience. The aristocracy of irony has never been their riskiest hope. They lull in the incommensurability of embarrassment, the semi-honesty of their slick membranes. Felicity is their glamour, the key. I have chosen for my fate their verdant garment and also the particular verdures of *Libertie*. For the image does not need me: rather I feel it is my calling to annotate the sheathed cadence of life beside power. Yet I don't mean to seem fantastic in the old sense. When I say "life beside power" I mean destruct the formal destinies, destruct the phantom body, destruct defunct ritual, unlock that paradise I mentioned earlier and give them back a renovated flower. (For whose utopia, peopled with sorrow, will annul such mollifying tokens?) Before turning I need to repeat that pornographic verb "to mollify."

What is this thought that refuses to reverse itself, that in the cool shade of fantasy creates an institution? that, shot-silk at the turn of a fold, not constructed but pursued, satisfies my kilted wit? Beardless boys stripped to the waist might illustrate my ability to think, but, like any experts in hope, they'd just deflate my perfect barbarity. If you took this prudish ornament, exuding moody sex as his own ornament, with his woozy shimmer, his bobbing glamour, fonder of the long-sleeved and lobed, he'd poach. Which means I must invent my own. So, by stepping from that house, I celebrate the death of method; the flirting woods call it, the glittering rocks call it—utopia is dead. High Loveliness was born *here* to cut back prim sublimity. She's a member of the lily tribe whose materials follow themselves. She's a bitch of the inauthentic; her ego's in drag. I flaunt her on my pink finger flipping backwards for liberty into the saline crux of a lily. She's lying in the pagan flowers, sweet-faced in her pompous velvet, swathed in the crude luxury of my rhetoric, strewn with the petals of aptly faded hope.

Battle Cry

(from *Debbie: An Epic*)

I SAW A DOG KILL TWO BIRDS IN A PARK
o little world approximate, all soft
things roar: each cruddy beast, each bloated hour
each hunger monstrous with tongues, the baroque
yawn of the avant garde, its purloined game
of solitaire and wielded branch pastoral
Curse its gilded milkteeth! Dedicate the
grave to Nothing! Such splendid maggots swag
the lid—in suburban streets, suburban
speed, the pungent blackness moves as lettrist.
Now arcane weeping ceases. And I shall
abandon the smudge-throated lawn. And I
shall defend what rhythm's touched. And I shall
live according to each resung cut. As
it speaks! *ad infinitum* into the
grass! *of how the quickened sea was
reddening roseate saffron-forced
rapid flecked with varied plume undulate
become all fine spun haunted growling
shaded to the tepid river. Multa!*
Multa! I shall not translate to present
tense—some won't know better. What is that gleam?
It is radiating from a phoneme
a royal habit plucked from crux of
matted blade and brownish sky. But don't
sing to the border: Wars, captives; captives,
bores—the joke's torqued on the side of fortune
and dust. I've fucked things up, but I'm awake.
I'll prompt no valour, turn no prow—my
story's slight, my task's opaque:
I want to live according to that reasoned ache.

Sunday

(from *The Weather*)

About here. All along here. All along here. All the soft coercions. Maybe black and shiny, wrinkled. A sky marbled with failures. A patterned revision. And got here about one o'clock. And got here wet to the skin. And here are houses too, here and there. And luck, too, whenever. And here experienced the benefits. And here again wisps. And here gained real knowledge. And here got into the wild. And here, too. Arrived here about two o'clock. Here alone the length. There is a bed of chalk under this. The fresh water falls here. Clumps of lofty trees. Dictions of deficit. Maybe we bristle. Came at the fact here. Everything has been done here. Every system's torn or roughened. Every surface discontinuous. Everywhere we are tipping our throats back, streaming and sifting. Got at work here, streaming and sifting. Got here to breakfast. Got here to sleep. Here a streak of light, there a streak of dark. Here and there a house. Here are all of the causes. Maybe a flesh that reverses. Here are farms and manors and mines and woods and forests and houses and streets. Here are hill and dell. Here are hill, dell, water, meadows, woods. Line upon line the twist and luck. Here are new enclosures. The chalk and the sand. Here are two. Here tongues. Here be nameless. Here has been the squandering. Here has been the work. Here we close the day. Here upon the edge. Here is a basin. A canal. A church. Here is a church. Here is a deep loam upon chalk. Here is a hill. Here is a house. Here is a system. Time pours from its mouth. We design it a flickering. Here is its desolation. Here it crosses. Here it falls at last. Here it has its full gratification. Here on the yet visible remains. The first. Maybe this gaze. Here, waiting. Here it crossed.

Here, close along. Quit some causes. Here, then. Here were a set. Here were two or three. So deliciously alterior. Here will be an interchange of cause and effect. Here, as everywhere else. In this tranquil spot. Here, Pete. Delicate perspex articulations. Twisting and passing. High along here. Ate here. Came here. Got here after deviations. Got here at nine o'clock. Coming here to remain here. Maybe we were frightened. And then go back. We speak from memory here all the way along. Whenever. On a pivot. Without conclusivity. Stopped here and there. Endeavoured. Here mentioned. In short, not here. Maybe we disproved theories. It is a beautiful bed of earth. It is along here. It is impossible not to recollect. It was here. Towards the west. Towards a zone of dormancy. Towards the very beautiful frieze of the lyric class. Towards the frieze of undone agency. Towards the modern. Maybe in shade. No great things along here. No hard treatment of them here. People ought to be happy. So good as it is here. So that here is a falling off. Some of us love its common and at times accidental beauty. Springs start here and there. Streams sift chop up spit out knots or clouds. Still there are some spots here and there. Stuck up here. Such are all the places along here. The thing is not done here. The thing will not stop. There as well as here streams sifts chops up spits out twists passes and too remains. The hour has reached its peak. There being here a sort of dell. There has been rain here. Maybe pointed and folding. There is law here all languid and lax. These are the subject of conversation. They have begun to trust here. Passing and remaining and awaiting. This has been a sad time all along here yet full of a detailed lust. Trees are nearly as big here. Two branches meet. Very little along here. Here upon a bed of chalk. Got here about three o'clock. There was an alterior atmosphere. What a pretty thing it is.

Residence at C__

It was Jessica Grim the American poet
who first advised me to read Violette Leduc.
Lurid conditions are facts. This is no different
from the daily protests and cashbars.
I now unknowingly speed towards
which of all acts, words, conditions—
I am troubled that I do not know.
When I feel depressed in broad daylight
depressed by the disappearance of names, the pollen
smearing the windowsill, I picture
the bending pages of *La Bâtarde*
and I think of wind. The outspread world is
comparable to a large theatre
or to rending paper, and the noise it makes when it flaps
is riotous. Clothes swish through the air, rubbing
my ears. Promptly I am quenched. I'm talking
about a cheap paperback which fans and
slips to the floor with a shush. Skirt stretched
taut between new knees, head turned back, I
hold down a branch,