

the unknowed things

by Sean Brijbasi

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SO SAD TO BE ALIVE. If it is a question of the interest Archibald drums up it is good to sell. Sad is a vitamin. She asked me: *what happened and where is the she?* I told her I saw the car tire roll slowly over the boy's body and of how I picked him up and of how he smiled at me before I wept. Such [inaudible moaning] is the precursor. In a cul-de-sac many years ago {name unknowed} sat at a table and turned in his chair, lifting his right arm and placing his right hand on his left wrist. He looked to me. This was his milieu. I paused him there and moved him from place to place. In the elevator of my building, when the doors parted he turned in his chair to see the arrival of many people. In the forest outside the city, where I hid behind a tree, he heard the wind and the water and the snapping of branches.

It has been said that the first hand is the dilemma. What to do with it? The second follows according to its nature. The boy fell under the wheel. I moved hand one but hand two did not follow. I pondered the nature of this second hand as I hoped for the collapse of something tangible in me. A collapse of the foundation that kept this worthwhile (by all accounts) structure upright and aware of its own milieu. But there was no collapse even as I took apart what made it recognizable to those who observed.

If a building is the cornerstone of 'civilization paths' then Tangier deserves its place in geography. It was a crummy way to start out on the golden trail but I had asked nicely and was rewarded with a catheter to the brain stem. Yesterday nothing drained but today was frisky with no evidence of humanity in the atmosphere. The doctors said I drained an easily quantified amount of--and then a communal

huddle followed by 'well, in any case, everything's fine'. I reassembled and set my oysters on history.

Everyone knows the plot thickens with the arrival of new invitees. I invited Perry. And then Lily. Likewise Jame. The last ounce of Jame dissolved in my preserves not long after her tale was {action unknown}. And don't forget the adventures of the cornbread maker who, despite his Marxist leaning, was always a hero to me. No one knew his real name, though I suspected it was one of those union monikers. The cornbread maker's second hand always followed accordingly.

We would hope that all futures have but one rule regardless of how those futures originate and that the wisdom of this one rule permeates false theories as well as true theories so the convergence of all that is true and false, although it does not provide the epiphany that would justify a mistaken life, at least makes one pause long enough to realize that the wisdom of this one rule is best and from here onward, there will be a new way.

--Vice Admiral Atsuko Miyazaki, interviewed on the TV2 show 'It's in the Lips'

When the show ended, I wrote a letter in disagreement with the guest's views and harangued the ever-so "quote, unquote" fair host for being a tool of the anti-{cause unknown} propagandists. To my surprise, I received a response, stating that a vice admiral couldn't be blamed for the consequences of my ingratitude. Such a knowing people, I thought. It was true. Lily had given me everything even when I didn't ask, appearing with unexpected gifts even when I deserved nothing. She told me the most beautiful stories that I, in turn, told to others as if they were my own.

She never said good-bye.

(Or maybe she did and I wasn't listening.)

In the dark end of the forest I see Frau Gretchen's pupae and then her milk situated just so beneath the ever impending palm of shuttle-shoots. We are of a like mind she and I. A minion crawling toward the calm underbrush of snow and the splintered trunk of Tiberius. She said all mornings remain the same. Just above the ground and into a thin forktwist that rebels against the natural movement of the promenade. Drill the {object unknown} to ferment the dew, an approaching opening, something slender and orb, like the ascendance of a tyrant.

We stood there. Capable of movement but incapable of reason. In the parlance of 'what have we got here?' it was a preamble to a less derisive unknown: sadly, sniff sniff, on this day twenty years ago.

The portly frau misunderstood my discontent and compared it to the time she rolled her eyes at the largest animal enclosure on this side of the peninsula. Up on that hill, during winter, they found a pair of school-girl knickers covered in what could only be described as 'the perfume of the royal stem'.

Certainly, the populace had their druthers. But wiser men believed that such pungency came with a considerably more decisive incision, although it wasn't enough to sever the second hand--the worthless appendage that 1.) hung so proudly and 2.) sought only its advantage. The wives of these wiser men chanted as if in a trance: "hack away at the bits and pieces of all it had done, all the vile,

and all the sick". And I confessed to an accomplice that it was a catchy little tune but the strength necessary for such a feat required two arms and the swing of a more foreign musculature.

Lily got down on all fours and asked me to soak in her sunshine. So warm and rubby on the face. A brilliant light that peeked through her whistle. It was a certain kind of paradise if only one could forget where one was.

But it wasn't enough to balm the infected blood, instead injecting more bile into the sting. And yet a bile that tasted like the most succulent honey the amazing honeybee had ever produced. Honey so angelic that it could only be crafted by the god of honey and honey bees. Honey that once coated the befuddled tongue of man made it a morsel that he nibbled on until he was mute and could only buzz-buzz-buzz the words he needed to say: *forgive me for all the wrong that I have done.*

It was a sickly episode. A black canard of an existence that served no purpose if one deed went undone. A puzzle that was none but chaos should one piece not be picked up and put in its proper place. A bird that would not fly should one feather be plucked and not reattached to its swollen dimple. There was time in all of this to make the right move. Frau Gretchen warned me. Jame. Spencer. They collaborated to collect my disjecta and set me on that golden trail. But Lily turned me away and had me roiling in so many timbers until the boy fell upon the ground and lay like peace in the universe.

On a warm night in Tangier, the carpenter falls in love.

I picked up his body and stood before a large window that drew my eyes to a garden where, in time, many secret villages were discovered: Sangiers and Fingiers, Longiers and Sungiers, pots and kettles, utensils for eating, hat making instruments and unused soles of shoes, moss covered dresses, pliers and balloons, shells of turtles, pictures of owls, indigenous kale, friends.

The boy struggled to smile even as his eyes closed and I wondered why at this most important moment in human history, the sun did not part the clouds and light the most beautiful face that ever veiled the blood of man.

{end unknowed}