

1. THE SKELETON'S DEFENSE OF CARNALITY

Truly I have lost weight, I *have*
lost weight,
grown lean in love's defense,
in love's defense grown grave.
It was concupiscence
that brought me to the state:
all bone and a bit of skin
to keep the bone within.

Flesh is no heavy burden
for one possessed of little
and accustomed to its loss.
I lean to love, which leaves me lean
till lean turn into lack.

A wanton bone, I sing my song
and travel where the bone is blown
and extricate true love from lust
as any man of wisdom must.

Then wherefore should I rage
against this pilgrimage
from gravel unto gravel?
Circuitous I travel
from love to lack
and lack to lack,
from lean to lack
and back.

2. ASLEEP

*She retreats
Into sad diminishment,
That one,
She folds
Into flowers of defeat...*

She is
Asleep
In the depths of bourgeois morality
Which is also cop
Morality
She is beautiful but does not fully believe

In her own beauty
(Though she will play upon
The belief of others in her beauty)
Fear rules her, fear
The night was cold, and I was nesh
Her fear focuses on
The Other,
The one who rules her with an Iron
Fist
Threatening to remove (what else?) Love
If she does not behave
If she does not remain
The obedient child
She
Tells stories which she pretends
Are true—sometimes to flatter others
(She is wonderful at flattering others)
Asleep
In the depths of bourgeois morality
Which is also cop
Morality
She awakened
Once, I saw it, but she ran from it
Fear
And need
Drive her—
She can write brilliantly
But then close down
And write badly
(Her hair, her hair, her hair)
She is ambitious (and will flatter)
But she is also ignorant of her own true sources
Asking for love
From those who will surely deny it
And then, in splendid masochism,
Asking again.
She awakened once (I saw it)
And I feel at this moment the terrific sadness of that awakening
As I think of her (her hair, her hair, her hair)
In physical pain which is also
Psychic, spiritual pain,
In fear of Death
(And there have been deaths)
But for her Death is truly

The one who lives with her daily

gikdubg a bet kiijs kuje ab wawbubg 'greeb
tremendous distance
yrge
urge him
to killowatts
it is not done yet
figure on this (as so many things)
the rain jumps
the man jumps
historic fiction with a bearing
in Latin lettering
the story contains
any account of
naturally divides itself
the
dawn in a period when no dawn is possible
rare blue and green unknown

the page is not the
natural dividing point

4. JOYCESPEAK NEAR BAUDELAIRE'S BIRTHDAY

Och, and the times they were
It's the law of arrearages, I say
And that Germs Choice,
we're all his gangsters
in our verbilious ruckmaking swayways
What bloods
What bodies
What histories
of sister Eve's
What bodes with Baddyloosely?
"My infant my sister
I will be your mister
quick! down that alley where nothing's except ordure and looks"
and there shea is, that booty,
slipping her ringtongue round your dingdong—shhhhhhhh

What just desserts are here?
What slurps?
Why, it's nothing more than we'd do for the presquedent
if you'd believe them that tells
bad cess to them all and sundry
shea is whur shea is or shea isnt!
glimmerglam shivvershoes on her
and a shopping lust that's more than the two of us
Two died I say?
Twoo?
One we ayre
or is that wan?
No different than Tick from Tock (or Took!)
Look up
Log on
Shea's still the shame
Hadn't I told you
Didn't I tell you
Didn't I?
It's the Baddy Lairs
and the Bold old leery lusters
upchucking varses in drag
in the hinter regions
of the inter Knot
what sextrammeters!
what nudes of nuggets
what passover flyploys
what oyster messengers
(did I see a WING there
duck under
give it a gander
Bland blind St. Goosey is what a site!)
We goes on babblin and brooklyn
will we never seas the day
or the seasoning
oh ho there she goes with her drawers adroop
her panties a pied
(and me haven't peed for an hour
what air ya holdin it in for
is it the Second Cummings you're waiting for?)
Oh, her mellowing yellowing musty dusty rosy dosies
(that water the miracle mush of her!)
Have we flayed the peacock yet?
I could use a feather, a quill (I will)
My Smile is my Simile
and I lost my--head--for Semele

They didn't but I did.

Was she worth trashing after a while? Sure.

Did she come back to haunt you in dreams? She never leaves my dreams.

Would you ever write a poem about her? Always do.

What kind of poem would "that" be? "That" poem.

Would you call it "Release me and let me love again"?

"and let me lust again"

Would you rather go to a monastery and study Thomism? I'd rather go to a monastery and study Madonna.

Do you still feel it was worth it?

I mean this imaginary life you call poetry?

Imaginary? Life?

After catechism, confession and release. Transformation. O Whoolly Fatermutt, ringding my renaissance, it's been yares since the last and maybe niver a gain, maybe only WARDS in thir foibleness is all that ere exploded in this vacumm of mine headset. Crusts for the cranium. Bliss me.

5. BUKOWSKI

I wrote this poem in response to a poem in Charles Bukowski's book, Mockingbird, Wish Me Luck. The words in the first, third, fifth, etc. lines are Bukowski's poem; the words in italics are by me. When I perform the poem, I speak the Bukowski portion in my "normal" voice; I speak the words by me in a whisper. I call this way of responding to a poem "writing between the lines."

the mockingbird had been following the cat

there was this cat

all summer

and I only saw him

mocking mocking mocking

once

teasing and cocksure;

when he gave a

the cat crawled under rockers on porches

reading

tail flashing

and burped

and said something angry to the mockingbird

at the audience

which I didn't understand.

yesterday the cat walked calmly up the driveway

and he read this poem

with the mockingbird alive in its mouth,

about a cat

wings fanned, beautiful wings fanned and flopping,

and a bird
feathers parted like a woman's legs,
and he was both
and the bird was no longer mocking,
the cat and
it was asking, it was praying
the bird
but the cat
and he was devouring
striding down through centuries
himself
would not listen.
through the poem.

I saw it crawl under a yellow car
And I listened
with the bird
letting him die
to bargain it to another place.

summer was over.
Bukowski.

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Bio:

Jack Foley is a poet and writer who lives in Oakland, California. He is a septuagenarian and he has published many books. His friends say that he is fit to be tied.

Bio in French:

Jack Foley est un poète et écrivain qui demeure à Oakland, California. Il est septuagénaire et il a publié beaucoup de livres. Ses amis disent qu'il est fou à lier.