



Palm

Ishion

Hutchinson

Liechtenstein

Liechtenstein

Tremor in his hands. He turns obsolete
leaves edged with thunder since the opening scene.
What he sees he reads under croton shade,
out in the sun. Restless peninsula,
dog-earred, melting off into the blue.
The blue breaks white as hallucination,
more haggard than foam. What he reads he is,
in all unlikeness, except in margins.
Patiently there his patient, brisk notes skim
clean out of reach of spite he despises
(malice, another matter, which he likes)
that idle country, the cruise ship, curdles
in his eyes, edgewise, blocking St. Thomas
from view. The last he had seen of it, dusk,
at noon, recoiled from the cinder barracks
at rest from working iron into sugar;
long, shingled rows of them, glittering red
and silent, and in that silence, Daniel,
the brown boy, ripening by lamplight, died:
remember Daniel, remember Daniel—
he remembers Ariel in midday's cloven dusk,
writing by *Fine apparition* "doubtless,"
adding, on the next page, "mirror." Sheer pain.
Untarnished and all-circumscribing bright,
the pain grips what he sees, his father's shanty,
fallen, shining, like hard rime against day's

violet's blues in a mass of green leaves;
his father, where he is gone, no one goes
to come back. There the green dyes blue white by
misprision, which underlies all he reads.
An intimate limit strikes the pages
still. As breath. Still as the nocturnal pool
his face vanishes and returns again
and again into, vanishing and returning,
until, irrevocable, he cries out,
"I am the island. I alone am it!"
Which he repeats, counting each syllables'
weight on the flyleaf. He enters a sound
unheard of in paradise: redemption,
a word he does not write, not knowing it,
not more than its ghosting of something loved,
less of something forgotten, passed over
on airy nothings. Sun strikes the sea blank.
He grows dizzy on his coral Shinar.
Heat enamels his eyes. What he sees is
conditional, all of it survival's
vast, charnel sea, from which the ship is gone.
An unfulfilled progress. Another looms,
pitch black on the horizon, impatient
parhelion, Daniel-Ariel,
shining unburnt there! He sees what he sees.
Then, at one strike at his notes, he shatters
noon; the croton leaves flare coronal red
and the sea shimmers tinfoil on his face,
haunted with a baffled stare at nothing,
nothing never before seen in such stasis,

as of the galleon, coming, frozen
between worlds, half seen, deformed
as twilight, fades off into a scolding
self-effacement on the page. He strikes it
again. This time it tears big and opens
oblivion. The hacked margin coalesced
within the text. He concentrates hard
for what is contingent, then looks away,
for a word that is not; the clanking heat
in his mind, writhing its wordless syntax
towards some core, less than clear, a mercy
buried by the shanty's bare brilliance,
his father's trumpet tree droops and withstands
the corrosive green, innervated. Here,
triumph is concession. That is the pain,
reversed easily, which he bows to see,
turning the page, writing "that is the pain"
in a fresh spot, but turns back to the tear,
hazed wider what he had cried out, "I am,"
as if to proclaim *All /ost!* he shivers
louder; all lost, and yet so much follows,
delayed to be named or renamed, snapshot
unaware, as he, by distant lightning,
as myth, etiolated, blackens the sun.
He concentrates. Asks what is contingent.
Is oblivion possible after
all that the lion of God has suffered,
burning in fields to find grace in himself?
(Grace is another's word. He strikes out grace.)
There must be an error, that fiery

calm, that mighty constraint to make witness
antiphonal, with zero exposure
within his indigo shade, at half-mast,
by a pure blind rage, the little lines cry
out for apocalypse and find dumbstruck,
four chemtrail claws husking the sky; blue falls
into the sea and barely remains blue
before disintegrating on the page.
Are ghosts photographed flash on or flash off?
(Do not torment him. Do not torment him.)
His father can be anywhere and is.
Tomorrow, for instance, and yesterday,
too, the white-teething waves, silent now, will
be delirious. More cruel than vain,
the missing link chimes and reconfigures
his rattling babel, bleached black in the sun.
Is that bushfire ravaging the green?
Has he given up "grace" for gravity
to fall over, almost, rekindling
doubt to write "hope" over the holocaust
gashed into the scene? What is it to die?
Tremor as his hand stops, abrupt. He hears
a belated thunder grazes quiet.
It disappears into the void the ghost
ship had lingered, where dividing extremes
met, now something else, steady abounding,
breaks in abundance, the less the more so,
between promises and no promises,
an unbroken light moves and redacts his voice
of grief, a grief that cannot be disgraced,

whether a demon's or a martyr's wrath,
refracts all one, the page, the sea, his face
glaring from the shade. Do not torment him
for hearing double a depth charge too deep
to sound, bent, lifting wrecked songs of ascent,
kindled against noon's mute samphire blaze.

2

What a lot of little music can do?

The blind farmer Daylights in his cabbage
row, going crouched down between leafy skulls,
knows. He rises indifferent, far-gazing
as a fine haze disfigures the mountain.

A lot of little music can do that.

Aunt May opens her oven and Egypt
comes to town. She closes it, and sorrow
fills the coves, for she refuses to sing,

“O Jerusalem,” but would rather say,

“Justice and devotion are my riches,”

which her grandson says to the ixoras,
naturally, stroking their small bonfires.

Mad men proliferate in the town's square.

They speak to themselves a shattered, civil
constitution, more music than music,

cracked parchment voices like high-tensile fence
around the Court House. Wandering mummies,

they had foreseen the past; screech owls and ruins,
tourist-only beaches, locals natives,
leaving no footprints on the sands of times.

That is what a lot of little music does.

Rosemary, self-wounding Rose, stabs Boy Blue
for dreaming of frost and the iron bird;
Boy Blue stabs Rose back and marries her twin.

All things considered he is not a dog.

All things not considered he is a dog.

Ashurbanipal, stammering from yard

to yard, with vials of ointment and powder
to cure body-come-down-ness and bad mind,
himself a market of frothing spirits,

the seventh angel, for whom there is no cure.

Night Hawk, through his burden of wisteria,
eyes caution signs outside Roofnight Club, warns

“The microchip in Revelation thirteen
verse sixteen will be grafted in all flesh.

I dreadlocks in moonlight shall not wither
like baldheads at sunrise in Midian.”

Night Hawk meteors away. The rest hides in smoke.

Sunday’s baked quiet. It is done so soft.

Like rain on the moon, like curtains parting,
and the moon is there, or else the sun is
there, full of a lot of little music

that is the sea, there, always, amethyst
and slightly drunk, like the fish-men on shore,

who, in near silence, look across the bay

at the swamp heavy with scarlet ibises,

where, alone, Cre-Cre lives, a king, having

fastened to his head a barbwire crown.

He lifts his conch horn and blows out the stars.

It can be vicious and it is vicious
to make such renunciation, such rough
music, a lot of it disposable,
yet none dispensable, rocking every night.

3

Nothing moves. The peninsula, ragged
as iced bitumen, accusatory
steam fog marking invisible Cuba,
seems to point back at him, necessity's flawed
child, lost in his marginal thicket,
grasped by a nameless stasis. The croton's
showery welder's sparks drift to his feet
and singe them. Nothing moves. He turns
within the radioactive scroll's stillness,
its Archimedean point arched on his knees
the same moment his damaged silhouette
stumbles through the brush of a qualified
silence, flagrant with hypostasis!
And so, moon-struck at the moon-wanderer,
he turns back to *sea-sorrow* underlined
earlier, alters the hyphen to a plus
sign, returns to Caliban and writes "cane."
Another stillness. The worse, a fiction
that will not pass as history to myth

as his face goes from mythic to misery,
smeared with the cane-sorrow green of rich loss,
his island's only profit: a rich loss,
the green he hears scythes any ears which eavesdrop,
not for cadence but the estranged sense of
that embittered, suspended word, cane, ringing
like the marvellous absence of daylight
stars, like an old TV set expiring
yet failing and aggrieved, dreams the scriptures'
intertestamental period, that blank
short circuiting districts with holy fire,
lit backwards each day by flailing prophets.
He has seen them go into the fire.
He has seen them come out of the fire.
Profits? Look at this phylogenetic
face emitting light, eclipsing his face!
Mooncalf's *nigra sum* unconceding bright
laminates noon, half-redeemed, and draws near
from the horizon the unburnt effigy,
which hangs like a lantern in the crotons.
It is now he sees aslant the solstice
looking back at him, that what he has torn
has rescind the hereafter-cheap-solace
to name the bigger light where name, for him,
means malice, and to confound with malice
his birthright held in abeyance of trust,
blurring with elsewhere, unseen, as he writes
(around the torn mouth) "Christianity?"
What he inscribes a thunder severs, then
a lightning flash gathers, in Liechtenstein,

the man-child, there, soot-eyed potentate, sits
hazily fingering a horologe;
with one hand, estimates the transaction
of the world, with the other, writes decrees punishing
inauthentic restlessness, attended
by a host of cabbage moths. Liechtenstein,
of all places, faux neutral fable,
brilliantly reflecting a borrowed light
purged of all memory, or if not purged,
dropped into a kenosis, not so much
different from his, now filling the margin
with crosses, pushing his cursus mixtus
to find a word, only one, without doubt,
without impatience, he could write and still
his mirrored face from drifting to its vast
throne room the sublunary stained-glass echoes
nonnes: Kali`na, Kari`nja, Kali`nya,
and a hidden bird mourns Kari`pona
Kari`pona, Kari`pona, nonstop
(for if it shows itself it would be killed
for once forgetting The Lost Name, screeching
instead, out of sheer spite, Trismegistus.)
Worst things yet when The Lost Name flings the clock,
splitting quiet to ground-glass effulgence,
which glints splendid violence like a Reichstag rave,
and then rides into the mountains to set great
hecatombs into motion. A motto
bleeds red on a banner WISE TO MALICE,
swiped from Priest VB who died at midnight.
Smoke covers the peak seeking to unveil

of what God's self-disclosure consists of.
But that slips away. The bigger light dims.
Recurrent nightmares. Recurrent slaughters.
In between, a certain peace crescendoes,
as of distant rain about to supplant
the stars, but finding a lost thing, off guard,
looking up, hearing feebly cobalt
statics. The Lost Thing seems momentarily
repaired, and can tell what the tempest tells
before it plummets right as he alters
sea-change, switching its servile deficit,
the hyphen, beyond the interrupting
rain's quota recounting feudal tribute,
rifts, just to be compensated to live,
carried over the prime meridian
the heavy spoils of forbearance music
he hears and sees what Daniel heard and saw,
"a wailing descant on the sweetest ground,"
the changed sea, now argon-blue, stammering
with what the boy is about to recite.
Conjunction of the moths and of the stars.