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Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Jeremy Ra: Two Poems

Jeremy Ra · Thursday, September 8th, 2022

What Jesus Said While in Line for the Bathroom

Shit is a more onerous theological problem than is evil . . . [because] [t]he responsibility for shit . . . rests entirely with Him, the creator of man. — Milan Kundera

It's a shame that an absent father
figure should define me so much
when I am still a son to a mother.

When the breezes pierce with the matchmakers'
tattles, I get tired of being the anointed one,
written on the nails by suffering beholders,

shaped into a figurine or a painting
that shows how I bleed and bleed
even as my abs get better over time.

I don't have any blood left in my veins
but boredom from hanging everywhere.
I am more than the sad eyes that follow

while you exit past the pews
after a long-winded sermon about whores.
I never wanted to be a poster child

for the celibate because I am
also a minister of the flesh.
I did not intend to disguise shit.

The bathroom stall without a lock—
this is a matter of wine
and salt. Desire is the dirty miracle

that lets me walk on the Sea of Galilee.
So dearest, take me by my waist,
and swear me by my given name—

Jesus H. Christ.

*

Coronavirus Loves You

I sprang across the seven seas for someone
who could handle my love.

Some promised they could,
and I was happy to love them like they wanted
till their breaths were shorted,
cut into a million lightless shards.

I was called names that missed who I am:
excessive, easy, bat-shit.
I let them all go.

But a fraud?

What I am is acid-pure,
bearing a fevered beauty that sears off fingerprints.
I've taken out no insurance
on anyone's mortgaged life.

I used to believe that a god should have a purpose,
but my lovers kept becoming epitaphs.

Say, death is mysterious—
throat-quenched,
body-bagged, the appalled skins piled up
within the hospital walls—
it also lacks subtlety.

Those who didn't catch my fever
became little gods as static as a couch,
afraid of the empty roads outside,
chilled to a pin-dropping silence by my passion.

I wish I could give you the strength to forsake me,
and vice versa.

Once I was even mistaken for a beer; it amused me.
I heard booze helps you forget.
I heard you drank to endure me.
I envied its canary-tinted levity,

its short bursts of joys and pains.

But love is the thorny crown I wear—
I must be requited.

The taste of my loss is not felt on the tongue.
I mutate to always be a part of you.
I medicine you to keep you alive,
immunize you of little deaths
with the fresh poison of a bee's stinger.

My once fatal care tamed to a puncture.
In the end, what doesn't kill you
will leave you enfeebled.

With every prolonged breath,
hate me a little less.
Here, in this home we have,
we must learn to die

or coexist.

(Featured photo of Jeremy Ra by Alexis Rhone Fancher)

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