

Introduction to
Deaths for the Ladies
(and other disasters)

Deaths for the Ladies was written through a period of fifteen months, a time when my life was going through many changes, including a short stretch in the prison ward of Bellevue, the abrupt dissolution of one marriage, and the beginning of another. It was also a period in which I wrote very little, and so these poems and short turns of prose were my lonely connection to the one act that gave a sense of self-importance. I was drinking heavily in this period, not explosively as I had at times in the past but steadily—most nights, I went to bed with all the vats loaded, and for the first time my hangovers in the morning were steeped in dread. Before, I had never felt weak without a drink—now I did. I felt heavy, hard on the first steps of middle age, and in need of a drink. So it occurred to me it was finally not altogether impossible that I become an alcoholic. I hated the thought of that. My pride and my idea of myself were subject to slaughter in such a vice.

Well, this preface is not to recount the story of those years and how I may have come out of them; no, we are here to give a crack of light to the little book that follows. I used to wake up in those days, as I have just remarked, with a drear hangover, and the beasts who were ready to root in my entrails were prowling outside. To a man

IN THE HALLWAY

My God,
 she said
I came
 in my
 hat

This time
 take your
 shoes off
 he said

My God,
 he said
 this time
I came
 in *my*
 hat

well,
take it
 off
 she said,
I want
 to see
the baby
and how
 his hair
 will be.

Deaths For The Ladies

(and other disasters)

by Norman Mailer

DEATHS FOR THE LADIES

being

a run
of poems
short poems
very short poems
and turns of prose

entitled
more formally

Deaths
for
the
Ladies

and
other
disasters

by

NORMAN MAILER

G. P. Putnam's Sons New York

to Jean Campbell

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DEATHS FOR THE LADIES

CHEERLEADERS

Cheerleader

She
went to
Southern
Baptist
U
but
somehow
she nev-
er did
find out
who
John
the Bap-
tist
was.

Testaments

I never
scored
said
snake.

It was
Adam
I wanted
but
Eve bought
the cake.

Girl,
if you
was
a boy
and I
was
queer
I could
go
for
you

Oh God
I mustn't laugh
said
the evil old crow,
it gives
me
crow's feet.

Rip
the
prisons
open.
Put
the
convicts
on
television.

Illuminations

why do
you
always
have
to
go off
on a
tangent
said his mother.

why can't you
be
nice
and
clean?

Look!

Your handkerchief
has a hole in it.
Let me give you a
new one.

Don't you dare.

This way

I can
blow my nose
and see what's
going on
said Rimbaud
at six.

ROMANCE

Yin and Yang

It takes
eight
mild pleasures
to make one
small
mood
he said.

Oh, good,
said she,
you're in
an Oriental
turn
of
mind.
So
 let's go
to a
Chinese
 restaurant.

Pig-Pig

I'd rather
 be
psycho
 and
 savage
than
 sane
 and
 sour
said
the
barbecued pork.

1.

The wine
 was
 Sierra Blanca
 a California
 Sauterne.

But it had
 a moldy
 label
 and a green
 rusted cork,
 age and
 color
 of
 cobweb.

So we
 chose it
 over a
 fine dry
 fast
 cool
 professional
 blond
 from
 Bordeaux.

2.

Yet when
 the
 nectar
 crested
 over
 the eddies
 of fume
 which rose
 from
 the dust
 of the cork,
 the wine
 was sour
 and
 squalid
 like
 bad breath
 on a good goose
 with bad teeth.
 Oh well,
 we murmured,
 never fall
 for a
 pretty face
 again.

You Chinese lady

I

Jahpanese

gentleman

that is

vuhry

rahr.

I must
admire
your
sense
of time

I was
about
to say
you
are
charming
and
you
said
yes,
of course.

One
of the
things
I loathe
about
polite
society
is that
one
cannot
discuss
the nuances
of cannibalism.

In the Hallway

1.

My God,
 she said
I came
 in my
 hat

This time
 baby
take your
 shoes off
 he said

2.

My God,
 he said
 this time

I came
 in *my*
 hat

 well,
take it
 off
 she said

I want
 to see
the ba-
 by
and how
 his hair
 will be.

Elegance

You
have
one
of
the
greatest asses
in
town
he said,

Is
it
extraordinary
she
asked?

No. It's excellent. Please do
stop

Eating in the Kitchen

Do you have
a comb?

Use your
fingers.

Transcendentalism

Talking
 of coming
 she said
you make
 me
 feel
furious
and stupid.

You are
stupid
you're frightfully
 stupid
but I like
 the way
 you put
your freight cars
 together.

Repetition
kills the
hole
for its offers
dull the
soul

Explanations

The art of
the
short hair
is that
it
don't
go on
for
too long.

—my youth, that is to say, his promise
has died
said the swain
as he said
goodbye, and
you
are too
lovely
to
some things
are best
left
unsaid

Don't
fill
pauses,
you're
no
dentist.

Sayonara

Midnight
said
the
lipstick
your mascara
is mud.

I know
said the
eyes
but he was
so
attractive
and he
ended
in the vast
middle.

Upper Middle
said the
ego
he kissed
my kooze.

'Twas booze
said Dame,
her nose
on
Fortune.

FAMILY

Orthodoxies

Jews
who
go to
no
synagogue
have
faces
which
change
all
the time.

In the first week
of their life
male jews
are crucified

Mon dieu, Feinspan,
in terror, I
exclaimed

the worst to be said
about mothers
is that they
are prone

to give

kisses

of con-
grat-
u-
lation

which make you feel
like a battleship
on which someone
is breaking
a bottle

Don't
embroider
the angels
you strong
Jew
or the
Hebrews
will say
you're
American
you Nazi

MARRIAGE

What's authority
depriving you
of, Mr M?

Depravity.

The music of
one's enemy
gives life
if one is
bold enough
to savor
his bride.

Pride,
the alternative
is to suffer
a wife.

RAINY
AFTERNOON
WITH THE
WIFE

Gray
without
grace,
day.

Gray
without
grace,
day.

Gray
without
grace

It takes a saint
to stand up straight
at a time like this
said the man
on the bongo board

You're drunk
said wife
If you fall down
you'll break your
nose again
and let me tell you,
pal,
they don't paint their
saints
with broken nose
these days
Elegance is how
the cookie
cracks,
you
crumble

Repetition
kills the
soul
for its offers
dull the
hole
and sew
the wound
of memory
with death
where life
was once
a tree
nestling the root
with gyres
of sky
and
midnight's
murmuring
summer.

So long
as
you
use
a knife,
there's
some
love
left.

the memory of
champagne I never drank
and kings I
never kissed

Why do you still put on that face
powder which smells like Paris when
I was kicking seconal

do you
descend
the steps
properly?

Look, she said,
he carried
her across
the street and
over the slush
why don't you
carry me?

Because you
got the curse
I got worse
we been married
ten years
and when you're
drunk you say
anything.

Whatever
you say, dear Romeo
said
Juliet
carrying
me
across the street.

Your curse
I mean
your flow
don't
smell
too bad
said
candor
tipping
a lance
to tenderness

the nuance
of being
is to
capture
the
seed

why
why daddy
 why is the sky blue?

child
 one would have
 to embrace
 your formal
 Why
 with coronations
 of intelligence
 purer than
 the purest
 reason
 of my
 heart

Beard is blonde
it makes you
drunk
like that
mommie-dolly,
Daddy.

Gin is not water
but she is white
She makes
you very
drunk
like mommie-daddy-dollie
used to be
when she-he
fall
boom-boom,
off the wagon
baby

The Good Lors

The Good Lors

gave me
my
pretty
face

The Good Lors

is full
of air
like a polar bear
with
lollypop
breeze,
daddy.

Love was here
today
and left us dry
did we deserve
Him?

doing the limbo bit
doing the limbo bit
it's good enough
for me

Punch up
and counter
by two's
said the
boxer
who was dead
half-dead
for he knew
the combo
was three

Like we
he deigned
to waltz
He spewed up
his salts
like we.
God
give us life
by three
He won't.
He's dead
from knuckle
to knee
We killed Him
Thee and me
tender lovers
missing three
Too late
a daughter
Never a son
The moon
is begotten
but the lies
not done
we were less
than God
So he dared
us all
Now the world
will die
for lack
of a ball.

I have this
terrible
image
of you
as the
innocent
agent of every
provocateur
said the prose
of love
determined
to state
a fact
before
the Fall

What a
Summer
we could
have had
if not
for all that prose.

MODES

As it grows
the flower
breaks
through the stone.

It has yet
to prove
itself
against
the clay.

Gray without grace
day.

Poems

written by
masochists
flop like cows
in the meadow.
Take pity on me
they cry, pay
attention, I
am so sensitive
to nature and
full of milk

Poems

should be like pins
which prick the skin
of boredom
and leave
a glow
equal in its pride
to the gait
of the sadist
who stuck
the pin
and walked away

*"Our concern was speech, and speech impelled us
To purify the dialect of the tribe
And urge the mind to aftersight and foresight."*

aftersight and foresight
the sound is dull
 in the ear
 like a bruise
 on fruit
 or the passage
 of bland taint
 in strong
 meat
So curious a man
 this Eliot
exquisite, forceful, superb
but dimmed in his climax
No wonder he caught
the spirit of an age

aftersight and foresight
 hole upon hole
 is the dead
 of poetry
 as a scheme in rhyme

I have a simple mind
and write my words
to sweep across
a broad cloth.

Rich talents go often
to misers who make
diadems of chocolate.
the emperor is the
emperor of ice cream
Excellent.

But the rich speak only
to the purls of their lace.
I want the whole wipe
of the cloth
even if I lose
the rose,
the sweetmeat
and the throne
of the moment.

Or do I delude myself
and merely spit like
a hoodlum
into the wake of phaetons
which drive away?

Some poems
are mild
and pleasant
little children
who bear no title
and need none
one doesn't notice
their
nakedness

A title
is not
a hat
but
a suit
so
sometimes
I leave
it at the
bottom of
the page,
for
I don't want
all these poems
to be
naked.
Some should be
standing
with
their trousers
dropped to
their shoes.

Of course
by this logic
a title at the head
is like a dress
lifted over the breast

Prose
can pass
 into
poetry
when
 its heart
 is intense
For one
 can then
 dispense
 with whence
 went
 the verse.

Rhythm
and rhyme
may mask
 the movements
 of Time.
 Remember
 that the sound
 of Time
is flesh.

Procurement

Lie down with dogs
you rise with
 figs
said the lady
who was the loveliest
of all my pigs.

Call this poem
the Market Place
cried
the red-hair
 Negress
who ball my ace.

Whores,
I prate,
make no ditties
of my sores,
for a pimp
who shows no limp
in the gait
of his will
has escaped
all ill.

WITCHCRAFT

You've got
the
smell
of the
corporation
again
said the lover
to his lady

No, said she,
I've
been
to
my
hairdresser

The call girl
walked along
the bar
escorted by
a plump
virile
pomaded
hip businessman,
minor league Mafia,
and behind them
trailed a smell
of stale
sulphur.

O sex
you are dying
I know
but in
whose name?
and for what
cause?

dreamed,
said the cavalier
to the lady,
that I gave myself.
Was it poison
or nectar?

Who can remember
said the tear.

I can
said the child,
and fuck you.

CANNIBALS

Screenwriters

The Devil is a mirror
but a true lover
is God's mirror
said
William Blake
on a bad day.

Turn over in your grave
Bill
said I
make way for the wild
and young.

Cannibals
are
the
mirror
of
the
scene.

Southern Queens

I've always been
ass-deep
in men
King-size
said the Protestant
lady-stenographer
to the Southern
professional
football player

I wish you'd
take
your big
toe
off
this rocking
chair,
King-Size,
you're
making
me
dizzy.

Cold War

The Lady
was
quite
a queen
in her
own right
but she said:

You're a great man
you're a
very
great
man
only please
why can't
you be
considerate
of others
as well?

Heh heh,
can't do two things
at once
said Rasputin.

Burnt Umber
Yellow Ochre

A crap,
said
the
pedant
picking
his
paws
is an
idealist
who has
not yet decided
he is worthy
to be considered
a shit.

Mon dieu, Feinspan,
in terror, I
exclaimed
abjure the
Anglicans

Freud's Folly

I know
a guy
who
used
to come
in
his socks
and throw
them up
on top
of his
closet
said the girl

He was
an actor

He
wanted
to play
King Lear

I wasn't
supportive
to him

I mean
like
he would
fantasize
about
suicide
pacts
with me.

Let's
stamp out
bad dialogue.

That's *your* problem
said the
toad.

Jazz is
new art
with great soul
say
new com
missar
Ivan
Tcherkoff
Djugo

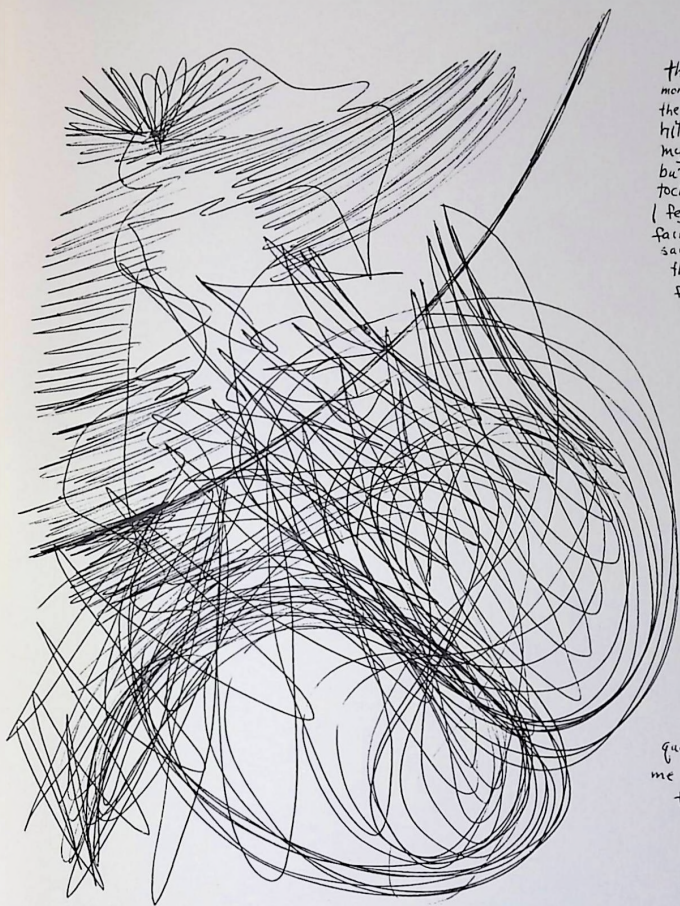
Russia
that is
union
full
people's
opinion
approve
bing and
bang
with bong
of black
man boogie.

Crazy
said
the vein

Now that fuzz is flying

something
about
the
smell
of a cop
when he's
groping
you

It's excellent. Please do
stop



the
moment
the air
hits
my
but
tocks
I feel
faint
said
the
fat
la-
dy
l
i
f
t
i
n
g
h
e
r
s
k
i
rt
to
ac-
quaint
me with
the
f
a
c
t,

Hymns

The sweetest
 song
I ever heard
 was
 the sound
of each
 tongue
 on the
other's
 bung
said a choirmaster
for the Devil.

Mr Answer Man
how many lives
has a cat?

As many
as the
mood
he uses
up

Mood
is
a
congregation
of souls
in the cells

I never
scored
said
Snake

A wandering in prose: for Hemingway
Summer, 1956

Why do you still put on that face
powder which smells like Paris when
I was kicking seconal and used to
get up at four in the morning and
walk the streets into the long wait
for dawn (like an exhausted husband
pacing the room where you wait for
the hospital to inform you of wife
and birth) visions of my death seated
already in the nauseas of my tense
frightened liver—such a poor death,
wet with timidity, ordure and the
muck of a Paris dawn, the city more
beautiful than it had ever been, warm
in June and me at five in an Algerian
bar watching the workers take a
swallow of wine for breakfast, the
city tender in its light even to me
and I sicker than I've ever been,
weak with loathing at all I had not done,
and all I was learning of all I would

now never do, and I would come back
after combing the vistas of the Seine
for glints of light to bank in the
corroded vaults of my ambitious and
yellow jaundiced soul and there back
in bed, nada, you lying in bed in hate
of me, the waves of unspoken flesh
radiating detestation into me because
I have been brave a little but not nearly
brave enough for you, greedy bitch,
Spanish lady, with your murderous
Indian blood and your crazy purity
hung on courage in men as if it were
your queen's own royal balls, and I
would lie down next to you, that smell
of unguent and face powder bleak and
chic as if the life of your skin depended
now not on the life my hands could give
in a pass upon your cheek, but upon the
arts of the corporation mixing your
elixirs in hundred gallon vats by
temperatures calibrated to the thermostat,
bleak and chic like the Hotel Palais
Royale ("my home away from home" we had
seen written by Capote in his cuneiform
script when the guest book was passed
to me for the equivocal cachet of my
signature so dim in its fashion that
year) and I took up the pen thinking
of the buff-colored damp of our indif-
ferent room where we slept in misery
wondering if we had lost the loots of
anticipation we had commanded once so

fierce in one another—or was it only me? for that is the thought of a lover when his death comes over him in that scent of the creams you rubbed on your face while I slept the half-sleep of the addict kicking the authority of his poison—how bitter and clean was the taste of the seconal. And now in March of sixty-one the scent of that cream came over me again as you kissed me here at this instant, wearing it again, knowing I detest it because again it drives the secret of my poor augure for eternity into those caverns of my nose which lead back among the stalactites of the nostril to the dream and one's nightly dialogue with the fine verdicts of the city asleep, and all souls on the prowl talking to one another in the dark markets of heaven about the future of what we are to be if one obeys the shape we gamblers have given to that tool of destiny—our character. And the smell of the corporation is still on your skin mocking what I have done to mine.

DEATHS

Mr. Answer Man
define
a
junkie.

Soul
without
a world.

Nothing
or
nausea
is the choice
for those
who
lose.

Let
at least
a drink
be
named
after me
said the poet
sealing his
fate
for
no bar
in the land
would tease
the police.

Death of a Lover Who Loved Death

I find
that
most
of the people I
know
are immature
and cannot
cope
with reality
said the suicide

His death
followed
a slash on each wrist.

Fit
was this end
for blood
in its flow
reveals
what a furnace
had burned
in the dungeon
of his unconscious

Burn and bleed

He coped with
reality
too well.

He played
a
lonely
figure
on a
muted
harp.

It was
a sweet
sad
little
lay.

Royal
is
the
rat who runs the race

doing the limbo bit
doing the limbo bit
it's good enough
for me

Death in the Mountains

We rented three horses
in San Miguel Allende.
Two were to be tame.
But indeed the groom
brought only two
to the door.
Oh, Senor, said he,
the third horse
has a cold.

On the next day
there were still but two
Relámpago and Gavilan.
We rode those horses—
they were devils.
In three days
they threw me
three times.

It was only on the night
of our departure
that we learned
our horses
were mad.

Oh, Senor, said the groom
the third horse has a cold.

by the third day

He

said

You know

of course

that I was

sentenced

to be

Your son

because

I cannot

bear pain

Crossing
The Lobby
of the
Taft

That's
the
best
thing
he
ever
did
to run the money-changers out of
the
temple,
that's
the
best
thing
he
ever
did
said
the
hat
from
Ind-
iana

Certain Evictions

In the first week
of their life
male jews
are crucified

The pain
is
exquisite

To discover
the tip
of your future
by losing it
is a fair
price
to pay
for having been
once so tense
as to fail
the race
when
He
chose
a Jew
without a future
to save it.

Grace.

In the first week
of their life
grace is crucified.

1.

It would
be
an aid
if the
blind
came
to the
game
because
their ears
are
clean
said
the dream.

2.

I would
be
afraid
of those
who
hear and
do not
see
said
the word.

3.

I am
in
love with
those who
come
with their
wound to
me
said the
mood
for
those who
see
and do
not hear
wound
others
with their
voice.

The Corners
of a
Square

4.

Those who
hear
and do
not see
give
alms
to Eve
and
other
ill
said
the peace
which comes
from
the police.

Colored people
have beautiful
hands
said
the pause.

Listen
mother
fucker
said
the mood
Stop quoting me.

Stripped of its
 distinctions
life is a flat city
 whose isolated spurs
 cut the sky
 like housing projects.
Think of the air
 whose heart is bruised
 by touching such artifacts.
 (*Does the cutworm forgive*
 the plough?)

I tell you, say the rich,
 the poor are naught
 but dirty wind
 welling in air-shafts
 over the cinders
 and droppings of
 the past, their
 voices thick
 with grease
 and ordure,
 sewer-greed
 to corrode the ear
 with the horrors
 of the past
and the voids
 of new stupidity.
One could drown
 waiting for the poor
 to make
 one fine distinction.
Yes, destroy us
 say the rich
 and you lose
 the roots
 of God.

Destroy them
 say the poor
we cannot breathe
nor give
until we etch
 on their rich nerve
the cruel razor
and heartless club
 of our past,
those sediments of
 waste
 which curbed
 our genes
 and flattened
 the vision we
 would give
 the chromosome.

Yes, destroy them
 say the poor
 burn them, rob them
 gorge their tears
and such half of beauty
 lost to pomp
 will flower
 unglimpsed wonders
 in the rose,
 will flower
 unglimpsed wonders
 in the rows.

I wonder,
 said the Lord
I wonder if I know the answer
 any more.

sir
your
short
hairs
take
on
airs
said the
dowager

IN NEW YORK
IT'S NOT ENOUGH
TO BE POLITE

In New York
it's not
enough
to be polite,
one must
be
brutally polite,
to wit:
variations
observe
the theme
of foul
economy
Shithead
follows
up your
bunny
honey
in
balance
and pro-
priety
Jew
bastard
if said
in a
Village
bar
is as
gentle
as
spade
creep
Fuck off
can be

Have you
ever
tasted
the peach
asked
the oracle?

Yes,
said the
money,
flesh and fuzz.

Killers

Don't
bug
me
or I'll
gas
you
said
the creep.

Kiss off,
said gun,
can't you
see
I'm
here
to do a job on the soul across the
street?

Very hip guy
very hip
which is to
say
that he knows
a
little
about
fornication
and a lot
about
how
to
employ
its
teachings
in the
business
world.

I'm rich
said
Irish
derby
slopping
a drink
on the
floor

So I've always
missed
the pleasures
of the poor.

Taste his spit!
said the sawdust
it's a scandal
and a shame

Naught but outer limbo
said the roach
on his way
on his fraught-filled
way, on his fraught-
filled way to the door
and toward the
stair
of his own.

When he reached
the cracked enamel
in the kitchen
of his pad
he made a
tour
of quarters
leaving
molecules
like pennies
on the oilcloth
of the
poor—
five molecules
of scotch
to every
plate

But the fumes had drunk
his mind to stuff
and roachie slept
an emperor's sleep
dreaming of previous lives
in derby hats
when he had slopped
the whiskey
to the floor
crying for the pleasures
of the poor.

I used
to think
my life
would be
a
destiny
and now
I realize
it's but a fate
said a man
I met
in Bellevue
for
stabbing
his
brother
with a
kitchen
knife

LOVERS

She's a
bitch
said
the witch
in a tone
which clarified
the eternal meaning
of the consonants.

Justice

Vowels,
your honor,
said the voice,
there is no
justice
in human verdict.

We were speaking
of witches
said
the judge

I prefer
to ignore eternity
and the color
she gives to
human voice.
It is better
to chase consonants
than vowels.

Consonants are
fact and force
clear as compound
interest
vowels are hot eyes
in hard bodies
bleeding for trouble.

Eternity is first heard
on the pigeon's wing
of a sigh
replied the voice,
breathing alas
at all that passes
and does not happen,
Judge, Your Honor,
Bind me over
to the next of size
for I do dream
that love there may be
in human verdict.

Sex

Superhighways
cut through
profit and
passion
and so
inhabit
the moon
before we've
learned
its mountain
road
which
winds
in
slow
curves
of the
root
toward
the ore
and her nugget.

He pissed
with
a
stern
loneliness
leaving
a fierce
and
disgruntled
smell
of the past.
His future
was not
so empty
as he declared,
a girl with
music and grace
ugly of face
was waiting
for him.

Hey—
you
sleep
deep—
but what a sight
see
you
soon
beautiful
I hope

(Since the lady
found this note
by her telephone
on awakening
in an empty bed
after a one-night
stand, she called
her best friend
a girl, and said,
Guess what?
I feel like
Earth
Mother.)

Hey, you sleep deep
but what a sight.

Funky Love

We really ought, she said
to be able to stay together
without making love
all the time.

Yes, he said smugly
I'm sure it's my fault.

Yes, she said smugly
you smell so greedy
and good

Swarms and swarms
of love
smug, smug, smug.

Lineage

She never blushed
until
she smelled
the fine cheat
in
the line
of the succession
and then
she flushed
furiously
for she thought
the smell
adorable,
it was
so
rich
to rise
from
the poor.

You may not love me

I said

but I love you.

Well I love you,

she said

so

bad luck.

We loved each other

very much.

I do not think

we had taken

a good wash

in three weeks.

It would have been

the next wrong

to murdering

a child.

What the hell

we were both

thirty

forty

tired, tried

sad, foul

We thought we

had betrayed

something

forever,

And She forgave us.

Or thus we hoped.

So, bad luck

muttered the

horror

of old

habit,

I will die

if I lose

your love.

Mangled, morgued
birched and bruted
they stepped forth
death their suitor
cursed by hair
which knew no sea
for they were hawks
upon the mood
of their
own
blessing.

Besides
they still found
other people attractive.

Slack were the yaws
tight the jaws
hurricane
the air
of waiting
while they discovered
less
than they were offered.

Mangled, morgued
birched and bruted
they scattered
in their souls
waiting
for the
curse.

Writing a poem together

the lady, a poet, said:

“scuffled”

I said: “scattered.”

The word was a key

to the lock

in the soul of the poem.

We fought

and said goodbye.

“Do not change my poem”

was a switch

to the execution

of our little love

for the evening, for

words in the nerve

of becoming

are feathers

of eternity

(insofar

as a poem may become

the death of another

who believed the poem

and so ended in some alley

of bad venture

fighting for it)

Words are feathers

tickling our choice

into earth

or sea, ocean

or air,

or that province

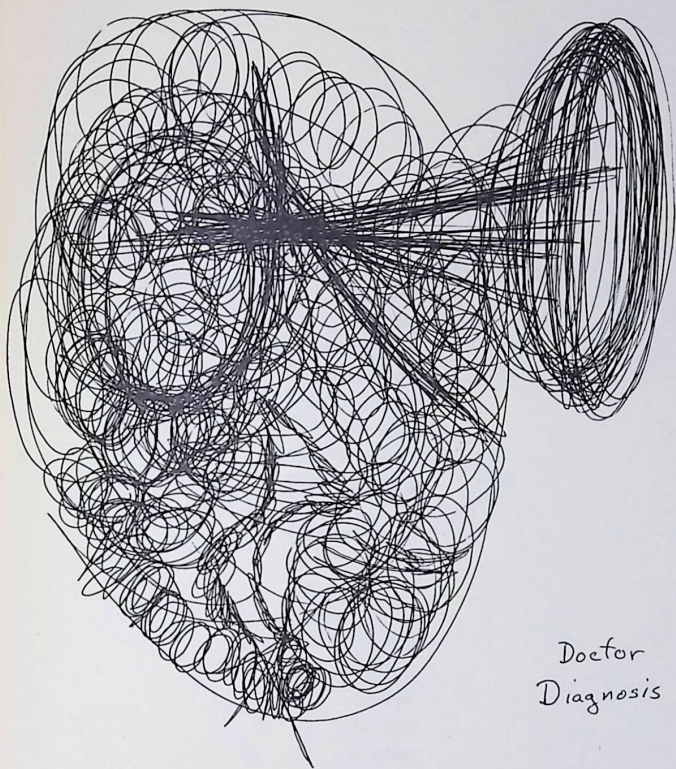
of the hole

inhabited by dialogues

between God, Nothing, and the Devil.

O sex
you are dying
I know
but in
 whose name?
 and for what
 cause?

we were less
than God
So he dared
us all
Now the world
will die
for lack
of a ball.



Doctor
Diagnosis

Men
who are not
married
and grow beards
are insecure,
said the CIA
before
it went
to Cuba.

Heroes

I applied
to
Harvard
but I've
picked
Yale
Columbia
and
Brown
as my
fall-back
said the
child of
the new
frontier.

Sex in the High Schools

Johnny
what
can I do
said the
girl
I gotta pee

She was in a
strange pad
three hours long

Why just
come here
princess,
said
Johnny
and I'll lead you
to the throne
who serves as sink.

Oh, indeed, Johnny
said the girl
you're funny.

Basketball
used to
be a game
for short
tough
squatty
little Jews
who were tough
as Italians.

Now it's church
for the tall jobs
said the handicapper's
decaying
tooth.

Logic

- A. When Napoleon
met Goethe
it was the
Emperor
who wrote the poem.
- B. When I met
Kennedy . . .
- C. Either:
 - Jack
is a
greater
man than
me,
 - Or—
times have
changed.

I hear
our
president
is quite a boulder
said a
would-be
thrush
of our
time

Mister

Answer

Man

what do you think

of the Chinese

Communists?

asked

the poet

(who

thought

of himself

as a

blade of g

r

a

s

s)

A power

lawn

mower

Distinctions

I'd
rather
be
Screwed-up
than
Sick

anyone ever
say
you're beautiful
said the drunk
as he fell
on his nose.

release
the anger
contained
in a fart

and there'll
be power
enough
to reach
the moan

said the
physicist
as he
assumed
the throne

I mean
the moon.

A Cure for Cancer

A
cure
for
cancer
is
to
visit
the
moon

A. A.

I think
I'll switch
from ginger ale
now
to a
nice
glass
of
Soda

rip the prisons
open
put the
convicts
on
television

Farewell To Arms Revisited

1.

I feel
like
I've been
through purga-
tory, Catherine
said.
Sometimes
I think
it won't
be bad
when
we die
because
we've served
part
of
purgatory al-
ready.

Yes.
It's been
bad.
But
twelve years
ago
we were
good.

Oh, darling, good, she agreed,
so good.

I used to think
it would
be
endless,
I
thought
it would
be always,
but it wasn't, it
turned out
to be
such a little
taste
of
heaven
for twelve
long years.

2.

A little taste
of heaven
is all we get,
baby,
said
Caryl
Chessman
through the
microphone
and plate
glass
window
of the visitor's
room
under
the shotguns
eyes
bellies
and blue serge suits
of the guards
who guard
the sacred heart
of the Republic.

Freedom of the Press

Let every
writer
tell his
 own
 lies
That's freedom
 of the
 press.

The Establishment

You
can't
and
you
won't
print that,
said
the Goddess
in a voice
which
released
half
her
souls
from prison
and
dropped
them
into
Hell.

May I say
you're
the
first
bigot
I
ever
balled.

Or do I delude myself
and merely spit like
a hoodlum
into the wake of phaetons
which drive away?

At the Belvedere of the
Continental Hilton,
Mexico, D.F.

*Eres linda y hechicera
como una rosa*

You are beautiful
and bewitching
like a rose
said the
high
hard
wire
in the elec-
tronic
phone
of the mike
which
led
from the
P.A.
to the lovely
head
of the
Intelligence
of the
cold ice
U.S.A.

the scent
of the clerk
at Merck
and
Merck
is the last
of the Devil's odor.

from the men's room wall
to the heart of all
 hello America
 said the television
now hear this:

a man who
smokes cigar
is suckling
stick which smells
like it's just
been stuck in

bowls and bowls
and bowls of
commercials

recant dear sir
 said susskind
 seizing on his watch
 ends are open
 but beans are closed
 my doctor tells
 me Freud was quick
 to smoke cigar

In the Mansions of Cancer Gulch

The Inaugural Ball

1.

There was a time
when fornication
was titanic
and the Devil
had to work
to cheat a womb.

(pride of his teeth
on a root
long enough
to
pluck it out
the green wet sea
of the pussy slue
and down a falling
flight
of cellar stairs
hard, dark, deep
into the maiden brown
rooting out the bowels
which fell
like assassins
upon the white foam
of God's arrow)

2.

There was a time
when fornication
was satanic
and the Devil
had to work
to cheat a womb.

(licked the liqueur
of milady's loot
off a hot feathered face
and sobbed in despair
as God won the race
to shoot the fury
of his intentions
to the proper place.

3.

But now the devil
smokes a cigar
and has his nose
up U.S. Phar-
maceutical

The assassins
who fall on God's
white arrow
give off the fumes
of chemical
killer bedded
in vaseline
as heroic
in its odor
as the exhaust
which comes off a
New York City
Transportation
System Bus.

4.

I do not want
to believe it.
(Ay, no quiero verla!)
that the scent
of the clerk
at Merck
and
Merck
is the last
of the Devil's odor.

No.
I want
to declaim
that the time
will return
when
Lucifer wrestles
the Lord again
for fucking
all glory
of heaven's vault
in flame,
and
mandarins
mad
with
fright
at fucking
and God's
black
light.

Timing

Listen

my love
the hour
is late
my side
has an
ache

If
you don't
get a
taxi
my heart
will break



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room
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and blue serge suits
of the guards
who guard
the sacred heart
of the Republic.