

Metamorphoses Caught in Transition

I.

Temporality

“It passes, but it does not pass away.”

(Laszlo Krasznahorkai, *The Melancholy of Resistance*)

—thinking of those cadavers, riveted as he was by this recursive notion of a ‘wheel of life’, with every fragment of earthly existence within that spinning cycle, Bloom recalled, *“on the one hand, it was harrowing; on the other it was beautiful—iridescent and pearly, it opened up avenues for feelings not yet gelled, it had a liberating effect, I had a conviction of immortality, of being part of something permanent and ever changing, of metamorphosis as the nature of being, everything was intensely beautiful, and I had a sense of love for life that was greater than I ever had before...”*

II.

And Then Deep Into The Gorge

“The feeling that permits a person to elude death for a longer or shorter period—we have it often—has for me become crudely stapled together with long sentences, comprehensible or incomprehensible ones”

(Thomas Bernhard, *Gargoyles*)

—and some nights I stand there frozen in fear, debating the countertop, in the thickest air of that house, I stand here, this house who burns of an imperceptible flame, this house of fates who string like impassible labyrinths, the fluorescents flickering for a few seconds after I turn them off, some cruel procrastination of a death, and though they too extinguish, this moment, in a sort of dreadful frenzy, though this too must end, all is not over; it was on the overhead lights, winking in the half-light, the entirety of existence could be synthesized in a singular monologue, this grotesque paradox, that of *the harrowing and the beautiful*, as Bloom so eloquently puts it; in that surrendering flicker a flame burns with an endless momentum, like a ceaseless syntax spilling from the most theatrical of orators, one wants most only to put it out and be over with it all, but no, in this fire every object, every event, every crises and every enlightenment, each tribulation and every achievement, every night fall and each twilight rising, here they all were—I look to the flickering and take this sentence in my arms, one can hear it suddenly, every contradiction and every hesitation, every breath at the stop of a comma, every word tangling in a brazen flame as it disintegrate from my grasp, dropping to the tile like

Roark Petermann

falling corpses, every journey and every birth, every denouement and every conviction, all that was lost and all regained, standing on the kitchen floor, with a sentence on the ground, the flickering on the walls, a dust of words still dirtying my arms, I stand, with a fire in two empty hands, holding to the sky, within them a might knowing no bounds, no resistance, because this too was not over, because every spark in the candle light fluttered like burning was the most illustrious of strengths, like temporality was but a ruse in the grand strategum of life, like, and here Shakespeare laughs, *like madness is the glory of this life...*

III.

*Hyman Bloom and the Cadaver*¹

“Birth is a unique opportunity. Death is an extraordinary experience.

Life is a collective impossibility.”

(Gaspar Noe, *Climax*)

...and one is met with such an urgency, though his was the fervor of a body heavy upon him, the air itself a crushing weight, faced as he was by this bride lying supine before his eyes—and though she too, one might think, was of the state those often consider to be *passed*, as in, *passed* from a world of moving to that of the still, it was as if time was only peeling back layers of skin and sticking on new clauses, like metamorphoses caught in transition, here was a sentence so far removed from that celestial origination it was but unrecognizable; before him the corpse appeared as perhaps it always was—caught in the eternal mutation of matter—and indefatigably everything was changed, everything, he could attempt to hold on to this singular moment as it seeped in through his eyes, but just as surely a few moments later it would travel from the front of his head to the back as all memories would; so there he stood, in the sterile twitching of the half-light, Hyman Bloom identified, looking at his friend there on the table, yes, she was the one, though here the importance of *was* is once again made most upright, for really this cadaver was in totality an entirely new thing, and in just a few moments again it would be new, as he would be too, one has only to look at his collections to discern an immediate variation in

¹ Hyman Bloom, Latvian-born American painter who, upon visiting a Boston morgue in 1942 to identify a female friend who had killed herself, was irrevocably changed.

Roark Petermann

the urgency of each painting—how could it be any less obvious, this necessity, that one must capture within a canvas the constant transformation all objects are subject to—these new images vacillated with the motion of reality, exquisite, entangled oils depicting the most obscene beauties, with all the new-found force of this incomprehensible edict that struck him of the utmost importance, to belay to all who would stare at the corpses upon his canvas, *this image has neither beginning nor end, when all this is over still it will be here, know you too will lie on that autopsy table, you too lie beneath this pitiful, defenseless mortality, one might perish into a dust finer than air and still your movement is seen upon these oils, this endless mutation forgets no one, you are but a lonely clause of this single, unending, untethered sentence, its extravagant first words we all know well, “in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth...”, and that final period, well, “only God needs the period—and at the end He will use one, I am sure...”*²

² Quote from László Krasznahorkai, from the article *László Krasznahorkai: The Disciplined Madness*