

Jean-Pierre Ardoguein  
**Come Not the Seasons Here**

“For sothe ther fleten to me fele...”  
-Pearl Poet

*He was an unknown man – probably one of learning, maybe known in his day – but today we know nothing of him. He was a poet who wrote an epic of the English language that might only get mentioned in passing during a senior year AP English class, Sir Gawain and the Green Knight. I wonder if he was cold up in northern England, writing in his dialect of Middle English that would never survive the Chaucering. What fond memories did he have for that daughter that died and inspired “Pearl?”*

So sometimes it starts with a memory, the poem I’m trying to write, or maybe a story. It’s never nonfiction – I don’t write nonfiction. The world is there; what need do I have to tell other people what it is? No, the world is there, maybe vomiting up its spleen or entering a cycling race (though the world may be Lance Armstrong). I’d much rather be creating a new spin on the world, make it turn maybe northeast to southwest instead of east to west; lacking the omnipotence traditionally ascribed to God (and I wonder if He’s a little mad that we foist so much onto him), I can only roll dice with the page before me. I could also use a random number generator and a book of poetry.

“Follow those pure beams whose beauty burneth...”  
-Thomas Campion

Those beams like to come out of nowhere in my memory; they help form a scaffolding of something without origin or terminus, making me wonder which came first: the primordial ocean or the snake circling the world egg. The sea is often bright in my writing, a brilliant blue that can’t even be seen out of my mind. Not that the sky and sea aren’t radiant, but there’s a shining in my mind’s eye to the azure that can’t be seen (at least not yet, or not anymore [?]) in this world. It’s the sea that I’m dredging in my writing, looking for something deep below, because even though the waves are such a bright blue, somewhere underneath there’s shining oldness in my blood and brain and in my skin. There’s a memory of my ancestors deep in there, wherever they came from (somewhere in Spain, and maybe some Natives; somewhere in the Basque Country, somewhere in Genoa, and then the big mystery: was that great-grandmother a Sicilian fleeing with a Venetian [Venice then under the control of Austria] passport, or was she a Venetian who later lied to her children and said she was Sicilian?).

“And then they land, and thou art seen no more!”  
-Matthew Arnold

Because they landed about one-hundred and fifty years ago, give or take twenty years. I wasn’t even the inkling of thought back then, and so I waste no ink on my pages for them. I never met anyone older than my maternal grandfather, a man who I had seen only four times in my life. The last time I saw him was the night before he died at J.F.K. Hospital. I was tired that night; I

had school the next day. I drove my father to meet my mother and sister there and then I came back home. They didn't come back all night or all day. The next day he was gone.

“They're ours, though they're not we; we are  
Th' intelligences, they the spheres.”

-John Donne

*What it must have been to be Donne and done; he was a man (scratch that, an Anglican priest [they're men, right?]) who waited for his death and courted his death. Donne had a painting done of himself in his winding sheet; he knew exactly for whom the bell tolled before Hemingway ever wondered or walked.*

They cremated my grandfather and a little while later my mother flew his ashes back to the family crypt in the Dominican Republic (She told me she wants to be put in there one day; I wonder if she'd want to be cremated too, or would she need her body whole for that day when bones'd rise up? Will God need a vacuum and some glue for the cremated?). I, for one, don't care what happens to this body once I'm gone. I've grown quite fond of the idea of a Tibetan sky burial (though there's no chance in hell I'd fly my body to Tibet; I'd be dead). In a Tibetan sky burial – because the Tibetans, as a nation of devout Buddhists, see no use in remaining attached to the physical form (also, they lack sufficient wood for either coffins or cremations, and the earth is too hard to dig) – they take the bodies to high places and leave them exposed to the elements and the carrion creatures of the world's roof. Only once the bones are clean do they go back to collect them for various other purposes. I don't know what happens after that, but if they could make a nice flute out of my femur or something of the sort, then I'd be content that I've been put to use. We assume that embalming is required for corpses, but a mortician told me the law only requires it when the body will be displayed. So can I maybe go without the formaldehyde and fertilize a tree planted over me?

“Still Sappho – ”

-Alexander Pope

*She was a Lesbian. Now, if she liked girls is another matter completely. She might have been the female response to Plato – she might have taught him something of the here and now instead of ideas and forms. Would we have civilization now if instead of Plato surviving through the ages, we received Sappho instead? Poetry, womanly, fruitful, flesh, instead of manly philosophy of brain, still flesh though self-embodiment.  
Alexander Pope, on the other hand, was a self-important midget.*

Dying with a tree is not a new concept. We lost our immortality when Adam and Eve ate from a tree they were ordered to avoid, so that is a form of death; to be hung from a tree was considered one of the worst deaths according to Jewish law, reserved for the lowest of the low; the crucifixion of Jesus the Christ has often been seen as the nailing of the New Adam to a tree. Trees are one of our oddest relatives in the family tree of life on this planet – we share an origin with them in the sea as do all other living things. They are branched as we are jointed. I had a Japanese professor who said scientists are researching the possibility of consciousness in plants. What arrogance must dictate that consciousness is reserved for those without chlorophyll and

those who walk upright? What arrogance must dictate that consciousness must communicate consciously? What arrogance must dictate the silence of our dendrite brethren? It must take a lot of pride to bear what a dendrophile will pull off in silence. They say if you hook a plant up to a lie detector and approach it with a flame, its screams are registered on the chart. How funny that trees are so often the meeting places of lovers; Ovid (supposedly a man of many loves and with quite the tongue and set of hands; it got him banished from Rome but who's to say they didn't keep him in favour when they weren't put to writing?) speaks of Pyramus and Thisbe, whose blood coloured the mulberry tree. Sappho wrote some poems about fruit trees. To be a tree is to be the centre of a constellation of so many human things: life, death, sacrifice, redemption, punishment, pride, and love.

“Then shalt thou weep, entreat, complain  
To Love, as I did once to thee...”

-Thomas Carew

My first- I lie- my second memorable poem was a love poem (when isn't a poem about love?). The first was something about a bunny hopping over a tree (I was in first grade; shoosh); I won second prize in a poetry contest for it (I assume without fear that it was a pity vote). My second was about someone or other (we do not speak his name). I fell in love again and again- Then I met him. It was sheer happiness then, the spring and summer, and then things fell with the fall. Hell followed after. The greatest punishment about hell, if one asks any religious person (who doesn't believe in literal fire or ice), is that one is alone in hell. Yes, other sinners are there, but the Frenchman was wrong; hell is not other people; hell is being cut off from God, which Meister Eckhart would say is impossible, as God is closer to us than our own existence. We burn in God's love which we could not accept; I burned in a love that had been twisted and unrequited. I wonder if he burned too, and if not, I'm still waiting for him to.

“How could he explain to them his prayer  
That nature, not art, might usurp the canvas?”

-John Ashbery

*He's impossible to escape in the modern world, so maybe he is an emissary of the world, just as hard to escape.*

It's always difficult to balance the desires of my writing with the real world. Might I hope that one day, someday, a day not far away, physics will break down and magic will take over? It's not a bad thing to wish for, but it's obvious that to live every day hoping for an 1100 year old Time Lord to appear with a blue police box is just as bad as waiting to get sucked naked up into the clouds one day (I really hope the Evangelicals are wrong; I know for a fact God will say, “Put your clothes back on,” and cover his eyes).

It's not like life can become a videogame, like in a cute little web comic called Homestuck; a group of kids both human and alien (trolls) play a computer game that forces them into extreme danger. The ultimate goal? The creation of a new universe by paying the price of sacrificing their home planet. In the meantime, they have to fight against dark powers that are part of the game and then time traveling demons born at the end of the universe, manipulating the game

billions of years before it even began. To share an expression used by several kids and trolls from a, in the voice of one of those aforementioned trolls:

(Sollux Captor, read with a lisp)

thii2 ii2 2tupiid.

(Or maybe to speak in the voice of one Gamzee Makara, just picture a gravel-voiced stoner addicted to Faygo)

iT's NoT IlkE tHe MoThErFuCkInG pAgE cAn CoAt ThE wOrLd In MiRaCIes.

(an ornery Karkat Vantas; he yells, constantly)

BECAUSE THAT'S WHERE WORDS ARE MEANT TO STAY, RIGHT, ON THE FUCKING PAGE?

(and maybe end up an odd introduction with little Tavros Nitram; imagine the cutest little nerd you can put together: he stammers and stutters everywhere)

uHH,, i DON'T WANT TO SEEM LIKE SUCH A DOWNER, BUT WE CAN'T ALL BE pUPA pAN,

“...It was her Queen  
Victoria lamp...”

-Edward Kamau Brathwaite

*Because the Norton Anthology has only so much you can work with that you might know at any one time. He was a writer of postcolonial themes, or so I hear.*

So I hope I can steal some fire by paying lip service to the gods that came before me. I'll give them a few smiles and throw allusions this way and that, thinking that if I can distract them enough through their pride, I might just be able to snatch a torch and run like hell. Only then, when I'm sitting in a workshop after having read a poem and I get a minute or two of silence, everyone just staring around the room, I'll think, “Welp, I'm gonna go find myself a rock to crawl under.” No one gets the classic stuff anymore. You're lucky if people will even know who Queen Victoria was, let alone what she stood for.

“The One remains, the many change and pass...”

-Percy Bysshe Shelley

What he stood for, no one might ever know. I doubt he was a Platonist of any sort. He believed in free love of a sort; that is true. He was supposedly an atheist, but the above line says otherwise (whatever happened to never assuming the speaker and the author are the same?). That he died on a boat during a storm is true, though some say murdered instead of drowned. He was a poet of colour and image, who might have stood with Yeats and Pound at the centre of a vortex, writing a sound and a fury that signify nothing, or maybe everything. Pound, in Vorticism, said, “I am often asked whether there can be a long imagiste or vorticist poem. The Japanese, who evolved the hokku, evolved also the Noh plays. In the best ‘Noh’ the whole play may consist of one image. I mean it is gathered about one image. Its unity consists in one image, enforced by movement and music. I see nothing against a long vorticist poem.” So Shelley might have been

a writer of Vorticism long before Vorticism, a memory of something not yet come.

“What are we in the hands of the great God?  
...A very little thing, a little worm,  
Or hourglass-blazoned spider, it is said,  
Can kill a tiger.”  
-Robert Lowell

*He would stay free during the bouts of depression because he could handle them, but when he could feel the mania coming at him like a train, he knew he'd have to commit himself. Wise man. Not everyone knows when to lock themselves up.*

Every little poem is a spider I'm fashioning and letting loose – some occultists think spiders and creeping things of the earth were made when the metaphysical Moon ruled over the earth, long before humans ruled – as the moon changes, so does the hourglass on the back of that spider (or maybe not). Occasionally, or more often than not, they try to come back to bite me.