

A Second Selection from an  
Unfinished Book of Sonnets

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This work has mature content, and reader discretion is advised

## Section One

Before I introduce the two main Furies,  
I will milk my nostalgia utterly,  
And sing of secret nymphs and hidden houris  
That live within my faded memory.  
A miscellany of naïve adventures,  
All insignificant in their degree,  
Is all I have to ransom my debenture  
To the Eumenides' captivity.  
The girls were beautiful as ostrich eggs,  
As lithe as undines, innocent as doves,  
And even simile this question begs:  
What can compare to youth's first ardent loves?  
Youth's arrogance and sin outweigh them all,  
Like paradise by Eve and Adam's fall.

A silver chain, to which there is attached  
A silver plaque, on which there are engraved  
Two sumo wrestlers in heated match,  
By lively coloured painting over-paved.  
Was this an object in reality,  
Now represented by the mental image?  
Or is it insubstantiality,  
Unreal the metal as the painted scrimmage?  
At least, that jewelry without a jewel  
Is gone with roly-polies and ravines,  
Gone with the habits of a private school,  
Perhaps on earth, gone from frequented scenes,  
    Unless one counts those scenes which have their basis  
    Not in external, but internal stasis.

The weaving of the wind, two gone by guile,  
A summer's day, the pimp of vanity,  
A cave of trains, a bus ride several miles,  
Baptism and a holy trinity:  
Were three in consubstantiality,  
In spiritual essence unified?  
Or was it merely a reality  
By mnemotechnic's blur now beautified?  
Can fortune now subsist within the past,  
When opposites annihilate the best?  
Can pleasure thereof to the present last,  
When the escape therefrom is heaven's test?  
    That fortune and that pleasure cannot die  
    Which are projected to the inner eye.

I was infatuated by a glimpse  
Of what the laws of modesty conceal  
As you leaned over me discussing prints,  
Unmindful of the beauty you revealed,  
And by the time you lay in idleness  
One afternoon of empty tasks and plans,  
When you gave me the chance to idle less  
By finding an employment for my hands.  
So I dished out my store of silver words,  
And tried to make you want to be my lover.  
I told you of my plans and of my works,  
And you conversed with me as with a brother.  
    But I could not perceive your inner heart,  
    For I did not possess the lover's art.

You said you did not want to be my lover,  
So I wanted to be better than you,  
So even if you chose to love another,  
My name and fame would be in public view.  
So I gave up the empty entertainment  
That kids our age would use to kill their time,  
Ignoring doubt that my addicted brain sent,  
Changing my habits to make virtue mine.  
So I became a man with crystal thoughts,  
And you remained a girl quite ordinary,  
And you could see that I had mastered lots,  
Except my heart, which I still tried to bury.  
    But that is fine, for if I'd stayed in vice,  
    Both heart and brain I would have buried twice.

As radiant as the moon, and just as chaste,  
You listened to my chatter for a while.  
Whether with pleasure or disdain of taste  
Did not appear beneath your pretty smile.  
Forgive my folly twice with your discretion,  
The words I spoke considered not as thought  
But as a random jumble in succession  
Of empty air tied with semantic knot.  
About your thoughts I then would often wonder,  
Though your politeness then would reassure.  
However, I have guessed them since our sunder:  
My folly I leave to a gossipier.  
    Though ignorance is what hindsight discovers,  
    I've no regret that we were sesquilovers.

You were three friendly girls, not girlfriends, friends:  
One half of a platonic hang-out group.  
We'd play fun games and walk the suburbs' bends,  
Make dinners, go for swims, but not speak truth.  
Though you had breasts, I tried to not look at them,  
And not to think of them in onanism.  
Your kind caress inspired in me passion,  
But I concealed my passion: foolish wisdom.  
What will become of all our youthful hours?  
Will they be made time's victims, turned to nothing?  
Now that you are dispersed from youthful bowers,  
What will remain of all our youthful bluffing?  
    Time will leave this, in which you'll live undying,  
    Even when you are bones with earthworms lying.

You said you did not want me, for I'd loved her,  
Though you tried to express it more politely.  
You made me feel my love had dragged me under  
Real women's standards: now they would not like me.  
I was no more an ordinary boy;  
I had the reek of shame within my conscience;  
You smirked in pity at what I'd enjoyed;  
You put the fear of love in my unconscious.  
And now, though many circling years have passed,  
I still feel dirty, marked out for contempt;  
And though few know about my youthful past,  
My inner view remains by it quite bent.  
    For if you did not want me, for you knew,  
    Another's love, not knowing, is not true.

You walked away, and you were in the right,  
For what I said did not deserve reply.  
A thousand times remorse outweighs the slight,  
But what can thought exchanged for speeches buy?  
You laugh at my mistake, and no success  
Can undo your opinion in my mind.  
You see through any knowledge I profess;  
You see through any secrets that I find.  
You know it is the boasting of a boy  
Embellished with the faculty of reason.  
You laugh, because beneath the outer noise  
My motivations are as you perceive them.  
    But know that if you had not baited breath,  
    You would have been forgotten after death.

All who said no were right in saying no,  
For I was arrogant, my manners grating.  
Quite destitute of what gives men good show,  
I spoke my empty boasts instead of waiting.  
With the persona of a well-read joker,  
Concealing my sadistic anima,  
By day I spoke of Bibles and stockbrokers,  
By night panting perverted mania.  
And this was normal; few would think it wrong,  
For all submit to this wide world's untruth.  
Though all perceive their living all along,  
All feel for vice an all-too-yielding ruth;  
    For without understanding sight is blind:  
    It cannot in its seeing meaning find.

Shakespeare was wise when he knew W. H.;  
He was a learned, wary pederast;  
He had already reached his genius age;  
His *Sonnets* in the present tense is cast.  
I knew my master mistress at a time  
When I myself was still a foolish boy,  
So this belaboured, learned, wary rhyme  
Is not the fruit of present love's annoy.  
This is the poetry of hindsight's grief;  
Not love, but hate for lust, inspires me;  
That I must write is of my wailing chief;  
To write Eumenides require me.  
    The Furies are sick Muses; they don't sing;  
    Traumatic sin's bad memories they bring.



*In the tentative ordering of the unfinished book of sonnets,  
the content of “A Selection from an Unfinished Book of Sonnets”  
is placed here relative to the content of this selection.*



## Section Two

Romantic love is full of treachery:  
In essence it's a mutual deception.  
But in the bosom of the family,  
Surely a troubled youth can find protection.  
Alas, my father died when I was three;  
My mother is insane and does not love me.  
The masochistic lover's enmity  
Was rivalled by the half-creator of me.  
The woman who gave birth to me with tears,  
Who played with me, who fed me at her breast,  
Who chattered with her son for eighteen years,  
Betrayed my trust and made me wish for death.  
And she still lives, and schemes for slander's sake,  
So with this poetry my shield I make.

When I was haunted by regret of lust,  
When I could not contain my thoughts inside,  
I thought that of all people I could trust  
The one who had been always by my side.  
But you betrayed me and you broke my trust;  
You put a mask on when I took off mine;  
You made our prior chatter turn to dust;  
Your actions cannot be erased by time.  
For if I live to be a thousand years,  
Or if I die and speak to God himself,  
Or if I meet the wisest of my peers,  
Or if I'm offered beauty, power, wealth,  
    I'll never speak my thoughts to anyone:  
    The age of innocence in me is done.

The prophecies you made did not come true:  
It was with justice they were not believed.  
And though the days of poison words are through,  
I feel the trace of that from which I'm freed.  
My dreams remind me of the bitter past,  
Though I awake to find myself alone.  
I hope that I in solitude will last,  
A stranger in a nation far from home.  
Have I the strength to play this weary part,  
When all achievement seems to me but flat?  
Can I find peace within my troubled heart,  
Or will my human nature grudge me that?  
    Today and yesterday are like tomorrow,  
    Immersed unchanging in a lake of sorrow.

You envy everyone; you envy me;  
So you built up a castle in the sky  
To make yourself the all-important queen  
Of your chimeric, self-deceiving lie.  
Defaming me to make yourself feel great,  
You taught me not to trust how someone seems.  
With tears and loving words concealing hate,  
Your shade pursues my mind in my bad dreams.  
You used to be the one whom I loved most;  
I used to chatter to you every day.  
But you destroyed it for an empty boast,  
And made the one who loved you go away.  
    You ruined everything; you broke my heart;  
    And now we must forever live apart.

You say you know the secrets we do not;  
You say you are in a conspiracy;  
You say you can hear voices in your thought;  
And when we speak you try convincing me.  
I wish I could convince you you are wrong,  
But I cannot: it is just how you are.  
So you are doomed to sing an empty song,  
Wasting your life in solitary war.  
You cannot win against yourself or others:  
Yourself you cannot heal, others persuade.  
For those around you, your influence smothers  
All love and happiness beneath its shade:  
    The sad misfortune of your family,  
    From which by duty we cannot be free.

When I was young, you'd speak with me for hours,  
Weaving a narrative of why your life  
Had failed for reasons not within your power:  
You'd been the victim of external strife.  
You said my father was a narcissist;  
You said that greed was typical in Jews,  
That he'd betrayed you, broken promises:  
He'd just wanted a son and you'd been used.  
It does not seem to me my father was  
A model citizen in all respects,  
But now that I'm a man I know the cause  
Of why your life found failure, not success:  
    You failed because of sloth and vanity;  
    Your inner vices made your destiny.

When Abraham, my namesake, sought a son  
He went in unto Hagar the Egyptian,  
So that when he gave up the ghost his funds  
Would go to someone with his name's description.  
Likewise my father, more than three fourths through  
The pathway of our life, desired a son.  
And so my father went in unto you,  
A nineteen-year-old girl, though not for long.  
He left me roughly half of his estate,  
Turned index funds and treasury bills once mine.  
There was no Sarah: I am all that came.  
Alas, the Lord did not leave him much time;  
    He left the bitter subject of my rhyme:  
    The Lord left you, my father's concubine.

Both lovers and your son you love for wealth:  
You asked me to give you half my estate,  
Or a huge stipend for your mental health,  
So you could squander what my father made.  
You gave me a stepfather whom you hated,  
Because he gave you money for your sex.  
Most weekends, vainly shouting, you debated,  
But you got credit cards and wrote your cheques.  
I left, because I needed to escape  
From your manipulations and demands.  
I left, because our family was fake:  
It turned to dust when I became a man.  
    Now I am free; my life's an open door;  
    But I don't know what I am living for.

You secretly recorded what I said  
In conversations over several months.  
I spoke at length about the books I read,  
Making vain theories I asked you to judge.  
But one night I confessed to you my sins,  
Crying in shame at what I hid inside.  
You spoke kind words; you said, Jesus forgives;  
You said that I in truth was justified.  
But you were secretly recording me  
Using an application on your phone.  
The words you spoke, your sick hypocrisy,  
Concealed your secret scheming when alone.  
    And later when of this your lie I knew,  
    I knew I needed to escape from you.

You told me that she probably had liked it,  
And likely thought of it pleasing herself.  
You said pornography had things just like it;  
You said I needed to forgive myself.  
But all the while your phone was silently  
Recording what I said and what you said,  
For schizophrenia had violently  
Erased your human nature from your head.  
I did not know this, for you wore a mask,  
And tried to act as though you weren't insane.  
I trusted you would leave the past as past,  
Keeping my sad confession in your brain.  
    I thought that I was speaking to my mother,  
    But she was dead: her body held another.

I censored this and that from my confession,  
That previously I'd choked her with consent,  
That secretly I had infantilism,  
And this was wise. Look where truths told you went:  
Soon after I confessed to you my sins,  
You went and told them to your sugar daddy.  
And you could not keep others' secrets in:  
One of your lovers had had ugly acne;  
Two men had been molested in their youth;  
One man had been in scandalous affairs.  
All that had trusted you had been your dupes,  
For you did not conceal their secret cares.  
    No conscience is more noble than my mother's,  
    For she needs to confess the sins of others.



You said I was a fag, because I loved her,  
Though you are not heterosexual.  
You made delusions to explain my blunder,  
But it is just that I'm bisexual.  
You say a Buddhist guru you admire  
Used his tantric telepathy on me  
To give me homosexual desire,  
So that the feelings did not come from me.  
You wish that I was straight, and you don't love me;  
You say you love a person I am not.  
You love to spew your empty filth about me  
To minimize the virtue I have got.  
    You could have been my mother, but instead  
    Now we just meet in nightmares in my head.

You say the Buddhist guru you admire  
Has schemes to lure me somewhere alone,  
To rape and murder me, and then inspire  
His soul inside me to replace my own.  
You say I'll get a sex-change operation,  
Because the guru wants to be a woman.  
You castrate me in your imagination,  
Because I loved a way you thought I shouldn't.  
But I won't let you castrate me with filth,  
Or drag my life down to your less than nothing.  
My sexuality is from myself;  
Despite your raving I will not stop loving,  
    Except for you, whom I will never love:  
    Revenge and hate I cannot rise above.

You wrote a book defaming me with filth,  
Gave me a copy signed with your own hand.  
A thousand times your wrong outweighs my guilt;  
I'll never trust in secrecy again.  
You exposéd my adolescent sex life;  
You cleared your conscience of its *kompromat*;  
You made me want to pass into the next life;  
Your other deeds combined can't outweigh that.  
I'll never trust a lover or a wife;  
I'll never trust my family or friends.  
I know that nothing's certain in this life,  
That love and trust are lies for foolish men.  
    For if my mother could betray me thus,  
    There is no one on earth whom I can trust.

You wrote about the troubles on your mind,  
About the rape-based sexual encounters  
I'd had with a transgender friend of mine,  
And tearfully confessed, put in your power.  
You wrote about how you'd been most surprised  
That I had dated a transgender girl,  
Since I'd always been straight, liked girls, not guys,  
Discovering awkwardly love in this world.  
You wrote about how I'd been brainwashed by  
An evil Buddhist guru from Tibet,  
Who made me feel the love that made you cry,  
So I'd always been straight: the love was set.  
    Though I destroyed the book and ran away,  
    It stays within me to this very day.

You did not care that I'd escaped from vice,  
And disciplined my mind, made past things dead.  
You did not care about my human right  
To privacy in what goes on in bed.  
You did not care that I'd learned how to read,  
Found the material interpretation.  
You did not care about your family,  
About our eighteen years of conversation.  
No, you just racked your brain for sordid secrets  
To hurt me in the lowest way you could.  
My sin: three years of virtue cannot bleach it.  
Envy's ad hominem sees past all good.  
    If only I had spoken to you less,  
    And never loved you: that would have been best.

You chose a lover who left me some wealth,  
Put me in private school and summer camp,  
Fed me with healthy food, cared for my health,  
And put the books of learning in my hand.  
But I wish I was destitute of wealth,  
That I had grown up in an urban slum,  
That I had been malnourished, sick in health,  
Illiterate, a fool, blind, deaf, or dumb,  
Rather than suffer what you did to me  
When you wrote down and published my regrets.  
Worldly misfortunes are felicity  
Compared to shame at deviance in sex.  
    Most can lament with pride to listening ears,  
    Except the pervert, who must hide his tears.

Those sonnets that I wrote to that poor girl,  
Who hurt me at the age of seventeen,  
Whose offhand threat drove me across the world,  
And my belaboured, grave apology  
Were written to her, superficially,  
About the things I did with her alone.  
But really they're to you, to set me free  
Of your twice-threatened blackmail, book and phone.  
At first, despite your sick monstrosities,  
I felt required to give you my money,  
To leave my friends, read rants you sent to me,  
Because you knew the secret shame about me.  
    But now that I have published blackmail's truth,  
    You're dead to me; I am not forced to ruth.

You tried to write a book of sonnets too,  
To your admired guru from Tibet;  
So this my book is just to outdo you;  
At least, a shrink would say something like that.  
I read your college books of Hume and Berkeley,  
My father's *Ethics* as procrastination,  
So you're why I learned metaphysics early,  
Found the material interpretation.  
And since you secretly recorded me,  
And wrote down secret knowledge in a book,  
Years later I am still compulsively  
Confessing secrets to get off the hook.  
    I did not choose my mother, but I chose  
    To rise above her vices, so I rose.

You said that it was good my father died  
(Sometimes, in our long chats, your mic turned on);  
You said that he hoodwinked you, that he lied,  
That he'd have made my thoughts twisted and wrong.  
But would he have recorded a confession,  
Or kept me up one third of nights with fighting,  
Or wheedled with a kid for his succession,  
Or circulated my sex life in writing,  
The way that you did, mom? Don't you remember?  
I hope you do, the way that I remember  
Choking and almost raping that transgender  
Girlfriend who made you dream of me dismembered.  
    No trouble to make Moses' rule mine:  
    I will not love my father's concubine.

I hope you're happy, mom, with what you've done;  
You would have got no sonnets if you'd loved me.  
But since you've hurt me more than all but one,  
I must let fall the sword that hangs above me.  
The only thing you ever did worth mention  
Was give me trauma, evil memories.  
Your literary, grandiose pretensions  
Have now turned into full realities.  
For all posterity will now recall  
The deeds of great significance you wrought,  
When you poured in my heart your poison gall,  
Made eighteen years of love decay and rot,  
    Immortalized by this my spell a goddess,  
    A Fury in the mists of hell, Tartarus.

No, you are not my mother any more:  
You are the woman who gave birth to me.  
My mother's death cause have I to deplore  
The more that you, her shadow, still are free.  
My mother's aspirations knew no end:  
She wanted knowledge, genius, wealth, and fame.  
But for that she her vices could not mend,  
None of the things she hoped for ever came.  
In bitter disappointment of her pride  
She wove a web of grandiose delusions,  
So that according to her view inside  
She was the center of the world's confusions.  
    She killed herself, left you who look the same:  
    The living body that still bears her name.