

The Bench

“When I appear to be doing nothing I am doing that, resisting.”

— Saul Bellow

'Derivation' Is Not 'Murder'

'She' is of a type
'He' is of a type
'I' am of a type
'typical' thoughts

'Marx' is but marks
'lines' are but lines
'print' is but print
'writerly' writing

'speech' is silent
'words' inaudible
'volume' undetectable
'voice' unimaginable

'God' does not really exist
'Buddah' is nothing much
'Jesus' has no tears
'Mohammed' stands sightless

'America' sits tiny
'Russia' has no weather
'Israel' isn't 'Palestine' and
'Jacob' ain't not 'Israel'

'Shakespeare' can't write
'Dylan' sure can't sing
'Beethoven,' DEEF? Uh-uh
'Ginsberg' is not dead

'Ma' don't nurture
'Pa' don't neither
'Family' don't read
'Pesach' will never be a poet

The Quarter

Of Roth
Of Bellow
Of Malamud
and Cahan

Of Singer,
Of Yeziarska
Of Roth again
but not Agnon

Of that two-tone voice internal
Blushed free of waters cruel
Under slanted banner glory
Starred brick in dangled duel

Of hairy rooftop laughter
Raining tenement charades
Scream-stung single typists
Burping seltzered serenades

Of corned beef thin wax paper
Rye seeds in held breast full
Neon beaks point sensing
At grayed hung tongues of bull

Of cooper roads cracked shining
Two broken teeth for litter
Through pungent bloomer alleys
Favoured wizened tears too bitter

Of squat chairs chipped and filthy
Beaten heirs of litany swept
Out dolorous pitted windows
Harsh laments unspoken leapt

They did shout! They did shout!
Melting a nickel's worth of words
Afoot in maritime spent medicine
Unfurling lungs up into birds

Inaugural Redress

A Haman on the Hudson,
An Il Duce with less hair,
Atilla by the terlet,
A partial Hitler with a harlot.

A Stalin tanned and aged,
A Franco shoeshined up,
A Marcos caught in traffic,
A Milosevic in a cup!

A Pol Pot on the seven,
Mobutu in Times Square,
An Amin when he sucks Doritos,
A Pinochet who apes mosquitoes?

A Khan of clubland bathrooms,
A Mao snorting cheap cut speed,
Our own Caligula with no serotonin-
what a shandah (hustling swampland leads...)

And It Is The Blues

It is obligation, and it is tension.
And it is the blues.

It is estranged, and it is entangling.
And it is an old family.

To have done the entrenchment as
safety...
To have done anything as a safety...

Let the hoax-swaddled preach,
and let footfalls follow

in firming belief that it is the blues,
and that is a blues, too.

Luther, Aaron, Paul, Spenser; the
nameless multitudes

of the loving dawn.

A terse summation adores her breast-
clutched scroll,

printed as hues of a rosy source.

Noting

Empty submission on death arrived
writer's desk at noon

Working quiet long hours to fill it
it should be expected soon

Entries harnessed dispatched flesh
the height of breath commands

came up to slum piled gay ash
in want of familiar gray hands

Screamed at Pushkin scolding Hughes
gave-up on own outlaw's joke

when to play-up the dead writers to
for through whom I felt that I spoke

Introduction

Father was platonist, heavy rain 'bout
the grip. Mother, Brouwer-bred,

conscriptive grumbling
through her trip. Shtibleville, I know—

name and luck-
a contumelious-type fate. But small

wood outside (unprotuberant
flat), sits

beyond its local gait. A sopping fruited curdle,

insurrect, his 'fore-score gravity
and neophyte's guess—

Under dirt for Dedekind's disparate
sun-sick pore, monikered

'too cubed',
holding credulous, only,

unrecorded floated
lore.

Would-to-be Academician, pon-
tificate to

what (for an ever)
is, paid down axiomatic lanes,

a postulated soul,
sensed

manifest in quiz.

Before

There was a time before when I was alone in myself.

There was a time before eating, before the time for eating.

There was a time before laughing, before Mary before a lamb.

There was a time before walking, before two legs and two lines.

There was a time before words, before watching them form, before forming a word.

There was a time before gods, before God, before, God.

There was a time before lie, before life, living and lived, before lived.

There was a time before kings, before kingdoms, before lionizing before kings.

There was a time before enumerating, before numerals written in dust, before writing, before dust.

There was a time before tenuously, Tevye, a time before Tevye browning above my apple potato pancake knee, before apple or potato.

There was a time before a carpenter's song, before a Carpenters' song, before song.

There was a time, before there was, a time before.

There was a time before tedium.

There was a time before Alva Edison, before electric light, electric light, electric light.

There was a time before the curse, before
the curse of before, before the curse.

There was a time before four, before Frege &
Plato & Gödel and Gehrig, for before.

There was a time before there was a time.

And So

And so the God
of Groucho
dances zig-zags
in tails
and so the God
of Chico
chances monies
on ponies
and so the God
of Harpo

And so the Lord
of Lemon Jefferson
moved
his matchbox,
and so the Lord
of H. Ledbetter
whoa...
buck-bucked,
and so the Lord
of Son House—
smiling in your face

And so the Adonai of Abraham
kissed Rachel. And so the Adonai
of Isaac raised his voice.
And so the Adonai
of Jacob
wept

Third Base

O and I don't know,

the lonely bookstore poet
is no different

than the loneliest
of all them

(who came before?)

interrogating pro-
nouns

misplayed pepper
games

as routine.

Arrows End

Seven years ago, seven years into the
dictatorship, what it is about the mouth?

Blushing mauve, brushing an apocryphal
sea's pitch-green, and its odiferous yellows,

dust-layered, last night's sweetened,
conscious greens of sleep.

Turgenev's stoic first love on horseback,
flagging from the second burst

of summer's clean heat,

her masterpiece painted over,
his workshop (a sandbox for reprobates),

rife with perpetual dilemmas, just within
a grand refuting of the elephantine,

romantic tradition, excising group-theory
of a partial a posteriori impression,

heeding toward that lean Christian,
deliverer of displays, retainer for

the West Side Soul;

enumerated blueprints of, maybe
wagered away, in a rushed throw

which never quite captured her sought-
after likeness.

Her Extemporizing Crown

Starlight in the groove,
ironlight reflects him

laughless, in Gaza, this
month, leaping moon shades

serrated slice, Eve eats, pale
formica, inertia troubling

plumbing. Without my sense of
break, sayers renounce style,

half—words, semi-forged village
listens in dementia, historio-

psycho, propagating sale, ob-
verse, olive stalkers. Her

extemporizing crown, what adorned
dioramas! Next brown, speckled dove

in its moving prime, fissures,
airing nubility, spark of re-

joinder kicked up devolution,
licking dry Nile's fire. Anxiety,

combing tremulous expulsion.
The campaign disorder, during, as,

only. Her muscle curious tongue,
bobbing. Oval ruby, spoiling wise.

Sun-ray prints pathway, watchful
as cherry wine clothes.

The Doo-Wopper's Confession

It hurts. holes. And

I with a
doo yip wah, diddy
yip, daddy yip dum;

It bleeds. pains. And

I with a
diddy sha doo lah,
boppa hoo, bom bidda mau;

It burns. stains. And

I with a
bom biddah boppa, dang
mau, dah doo, dang dang;

It condemns. defiles. And

I with a
wha wha chang, choo
wai, whop, whoa loo lop;

It ends. leaves. And

I with a
zeebalah, boobalah, bum
de bum um, ho, tiddie bop.

A.cdc.

Ever purpose it lonely in the middle?

or rally to flee Soviet Jewry a bladder
full of kosher milk deciding

impassioned choice hitting capitol sod
Mighty Mac's cherished hammerhead zipper

a talisman against shame against door

history against cries of solidarity
steamier streak beside relief

liberation from the preceding trickle
yellow skies verboten on Reaganite limbs

I repurpose it to await white hairs

Ever propose it lonely at the bottom?

weather travels cross a Hudson River Line
gone scoping the daily co-op used brick

enumerated flattened sacks of Grand
jumping broken blocs a daughter

Eastern ignorant but one exodus

ten prescriptive flags icing
an assimilated desert winging

dime's worth aim scuffing hardballs
bouncing out this tonsillected oy-vey-iz-mir

I propose it on wounded caps

Suppose it on the top, lonely? the
crocodile street puckers of blonde

turned Warsaw factory Braun slippers
under sidecurl in favor of

neon punk blue MTV astral fade

to fake black denim unrolled kissing
a pair of all white Chucks tie-dyed

in the last millennium's mountains

I suppose, suppose, suppose

I Loave Lucy
(Now Sluiced!)

Vitameatavegamin-

The last 'a' lately
Believes it to be an 'e'

'Eata' / 'vita' speak often
Loafing aloof for free

When 'vega' was oh so young
And 'vega' (so) did not see

'Min' could not o'suffer
The myopic for the miserly

McGillicuddy Manor-
In the Poconos and beyond

Frumptish Mister Frawley
Her redberry Venus "C'mon!"

Up in the old apartment
Up above Empire States

Radio waves hung lowly
Emphysemic tri-eyed fates

Ricky dues
Desi dun'ts
Slaying away
Of huge blonde blunts

Vivvy voo
Vivvy vill
Gulped up trap
A briefly fill

Chocolate grape, see
Paris Francesee
Telephone girdles 'C'
Furnishing candidly

How. Did. They meet?
How. Did I. Secrete?

Often. only. Under. only. Over. now. Okay.
Dark. Okay light.

Park me rapacious
in parade-

Court me aggrieved
in such charade-

Address me sweet-low,
now how staid

Satiate me some-
adrift at the county Dade

...wishing rapids

To the moon
&
To the maid

Once Upon A Time

Once The rolling
of the poet flakes
songs, has lamentations

Once The rolling
of the poet flakes
greetings, has salutations

Once The rolling
of the poet flakes
foam, has function

Once The rolling
of the poet flakes
cocksure, has unction

Once The rolling
of the poet flakes
ward, has rude

Once The rolling
of the poet flakes
obstreperous, has mood

Once The rolling
of the poet flakes
flitter, has harm

Once The rolling
of the poet flakes
swindle, has charm

Once The rolling
of the poet flakes
free, has rhyme

Once The rolling
of the poet flakes
seasoning, has time

Dylan Does

Dylan hawks
Dylan heals
Dylan likes
Dylan steals

Dylan squawks
Dylan squeals
Dylan voiced
Dylan deals

Dylan wheels
Dylan cants
Dylan reels
Dylan rants

Dylan days
Dylan nights
Dylan deep
Dylan lights

Blues For Gilbert

I'll say it (if no
one else will) Kaddish in
memoriam for
a grifter no exemplary Maimonides
descending Fire
Island graduate effusing a tin pan palette

I'll say it again (if no
one else will) Kaddish for
a racetrack alley
sheen complected edge-of-belly
knuckle splitting
tonic snuff of Francis's coo's angular doo

I'll say it (if no
one else will) Kaddish for
a heedless court star
Crown Royal box-top malingerer
inviolate consti-
tuency upsetting stairwell aftershave sense

I'll say it again (if
no one else will) Kaddish for
my unlucky soft
stack OTB Chatham Square confetti
hall-torch gas-
furnishing homestretched story's last call

Ethics

Rhapsodies astound silent Baruch's
grinding tautologies of this:

an ascientific meta-
physic

Being ash or atheism
driven towards our
select-

ion's corona
dispersed as imagist ratio

His reference assumes
a treasonous
advantage

punishing abuse with
rank revolting
material

The differentiated sum to identify
their
number

from the spun
injurious opal-minded view

The Silent Lord is the Only Lord

of voice carried by voice
of curse carried by curse
of space carried by space
of force carried by force

The silent Lord is the only Lord

of race when
carried by race

of fasting when
carried by fasting

of least when
carried by least

of priest when
carried by priest

Abie The Fishman

My people fired idols, fertile crow to sell,
nickel-pure murder, they sired when thirsty.

My boys did surrender, moldings for birth,
hearing of what? What deception of order?

My wives were a-sturdy, a choice wet of lips,
coughing over to me—>the real jawboned way

My rams cued in shifts, maintaining an eye,
made a farm hand of me, figures with milk.

My cities, my wells, wedded pink siren cells,
goading to be heard, coupling to be gold.

My legacy of hospitality, just teasing alone,
a sandy procedure and not seeking guilt.

My grandson, the wrestler, dreamt, beloved.

My God! Engendered! Dense set yay-thick.

Boston Crème

Centers, I know about centers. Doughnut,
cupcake, Jewish Community,

centers, I know about centers.

Centre Street, or Center Street, Hakeem,
Akeem: "The African Dream"; Centers

I know about, centers,
I, know about centers.

Day 183, midway aside a Poplar tree,
Mecca, Jerusalem, sweet Mother

Machree, centers, I know about,

centers. What the centaurs ate, when
the center held, who the center was?

Wes Unseld!

Centers. I know
all
about, centers.

Payphone

The disc of purple coloring our winter's
rushed hours, capital's stalking light

turning shadow-bars across uniform widow
faces, like bracings about the tooth,

or in the jaw,

I half-studied my Hesiod listening to car
commercials on that talkful radio,

watching our children learn to act,

filming bright, new, select
caught outfits on bodies rounding up,

squared out, the open life of speech my
throat would not attempt,

or even take down, for a trying taste.

The 1975

The six day war was eight years old
The six million-us at least three decades

dead The elevators sweetly stupid to
not know when a sabbath bride had just

arrived and the Polish Pope with my father
with Reggie's forty-four making the noon-

bells of Ridge ring far into the fabled future

Detainees

Elastic laments stretched
thick as
guardians,
shelter for the bombed,
wound mess
shuffling streetside
in
Sana'a-Chicago-favelas,
subbing Sahara,

where Wolf's

voice sucked Memphis sweet
and preserved,
jarring amber molasses,
hobbled,

dimples

of the smiling, of
the wounded,
unshaven grimace.

Pulled in, parked
against the cantor's
alone,
bifurcated lung,

the one from
the next town
over, a

red freighted rig,
fecund in yield in
issues of political economy

sub-texting
aligned margins
unpublished,

corpus
of hand-wrung epodes
by New School émigré

dropout

collectives (non-membered), no
time for the welt
of Herr
Heidegger's being.

In summertime frequencies,
Avenue A, Yiddish
productions of Kazan's
Streetcar, starring

the great Tomashevsky, in
a delicatessen of
a role (Blanche DuBois).

Soupy coffee after

by the brickled joint
ovens, donning cloaks
of sacrifice, toasted over

an iron-mesh,
corner trashcan, and some
Yucatan
gourmets, boiling
a found IRA
potato,

stretching out their good
pitching arms,
conniving,

pebbles to a nail
of the seductive highway

Satan, honoring the earnest,
irrefutable,

onset of Eid.

Cult Figure

Seeking reward for fawning
after Thanatos,

a complement to Eros
will neither seek

something to do with
all those brains,

nor be heard, nor loved.

An opened ending of
a triangle

popping off

the answer from within
the question

is maybe another
dissolution

of newly found axioms
upholding

an emblematic disposition:

The successful speak
successfully

and excessively
of failure.

Isaac Leib

Your city ends, means beyond new
cities, ignorant of peaceable ways.

New city, an easy stepping traverse
of identities, transmission:

permeable as laid fish

into concrete, speckle of blood, trickle
of electric web, first meditations,

fatiguing, sleep resurfacing.

The entangling village; evident, unstoried,
open legged as the upcoming stride.

What of the old town? What of the order
unbending, the anarchic forecasts

flailing for participatory cogency? And
what of the nightbirds' soliloquies,

tonight, at Peretz Square?

Two-Timing Slim (I Heard of Him)

We got there into socks into
shoes? On to the bass: blues.

We are there into Lethe into
death? Off to the Arctic: Meth.

We ate there into conflict into
cost? Out to the heavy: loss.

We laid there into science into
fable? Up to the chair: table.

We hoped there
into exhibition in for

plush? Down to the
bottom: lush.

We fled there into
sequence into per-

spication? Faring at
the last: sensation.

Kid Billie

She challenges me
an Art Blakey

a temperament in stereo
I challenge her

the positive union
overlapped natural number

Leonard my breadful was blues
the capital record

(WHOW, 98.6 fm)

It feels hot at
the Jazz corner

of the world

when twelve got culled
slapped at her face

behind whose back
wrought a mean in me

and I won't explain

Sabbatai Zvi III

O those minions—rains black,
O cherished base on a bedeviled

steeple-chase,
his minions—

assembly of shredded, rubber
pinions. Harness-back-open-fire

in imbalanced anger, soaked
by Zeyde's unfettered white spit.

I hear the *charismatic*,

old man's wives were all shiksa;
His tahtee, just another

gunif-nit. My eemah: the vain-
glorious quiffe, found Abah

stoked on with that whiff; Believers?

Goyishe trash and yiddishe rash;
Statists; Ethno's; Machers

and Chazerai.

Their ear stoned deaf to a grandson's
cry. To leave Egypt and wind-up

as wanderers with this guy?

Yes, I'll greet you when; Yes,
an apostasy foment in the stems.

End

Democracy does/not—
(Ask Solzhenitsyn, tell Sharansky)

History did not—
(Query Colin Powell, buy a vowel
from Vanna)

Truth, O really?
(Jaspers will elucidate
when Russell can't type)

No-thing, ever—
(Mary's pride
by the words of John)

I will—soon
(Mandelstam, Babe...)

Turgid's Folly

An enjambment of cowered embarkings,
and of razed,

spectacled isolation;

A mulish morsel; A proof
by yearning;

The flagellates in mediation—

deifying sweet
ardor, deifying

reluctant translation;
Thumb wrestling

Khronos' mingled, exotic, eonic, fox-
gloved fingers;

Half-unburied,
half-alive;

Lowered aside
a salted, chubby,

ex-checkered twist.

The scorched
folk-temple

of the illiterate,
busted down

for a time,
later to exist.

The fear is wonderful,
it is rootless.

The heroic sweeps up,
and onto your ill-baited

shore.

“But I was a God
and you—

a fate spilling
rock!” Presti-

digitating trans-
mogrifications

that have mad-
doused me,

complete, readying
me (again)

for the wordless shift.

Helene, Helene

Tunnel in the math of it:

Octaroon tenner the cover
two ta' life
coal divvies a
portion out Ramses II
three buys four discount
neo-natal per dozen
Identity problematics

of Southern Judea's textile Governor
—Isosceles a side of beef—*

Tunneling in the Logic,

'f' Only circles
Rye purity add
Ur-request Giuseppe's
gravy pomodoro
recipe's success
close ta'
uppercase
aleph, so how much?

Quoth mark here*—
Quinine enlightens, projects

Unto undone sole:

Bukka

I'd rather be the Devil
When I can change my clothes

With a 'T' for Texas
And tea from Tennessee

I wish I was a catfish
When I can change my clothes

With a break-it and a shake-it
And a hang-it-on-the-wall

I'm a M-H-I-N
When I can change my clothes

With hoodoin' the hoodoo man
And snatch it back and hold it

I'm sweet little Kokomo
When I can change my clothes

With the blue light was my blues
And the red light was my mind

I'm going ta' wang-dang-doodle
When I can change my clothes

With feeling 'round for my shoes
And the blues all in my bread

I caught two bugs and a roach
When I can change my clothes

The Bench

1.

Ayn Rand
and Babe Ruth,

on a city bench,
outside the park,
just before fall.

Ayn says
to Babe,
“you got a funny
name, Babe.”

Babe responds
to Ayn,
“All names are
funny, Ayn.”

Ayn replies
to Babe,
“Not all names,
Babe.”

Babe smiles
at Ayn,
“Maybe not Ayn,
maybe not.”

2.

Charlie Parker
and Modigliani,

on a city bench,
outside the park,
just before fall.

Charlie says
to Modigliani,
“Say Mo’,
how do I look
to you?”

Modigliani responds
to Charlie,
“How do I look
to you?”

Charlie replies
to Modigliani,
“How I look
to you?”

Modigliani looks
at Charlie,
“I love Salt Peanuts.”

3.

Woody Guthrie
and Chahlie Chaplin.

on a city bench,
outside the park,
just before fall.

Woody says
to Chahlie,
“I just can’t
understand that
moustache.”

Chahlie answers
to Woody,
“I just can’t
understand that
guitar.”

Woody responds
to Chahlie,
“It’s how I save my
dinner crumbs.”

Chahlie sniffing
at Woody,
“It’s from smelling
so many bums.”

4.

Gary Snyder
and Moses Malone,

on a city bench,
outside the park,
just before fall.

Gary says
to Moses,
something.

Moses answers
Gary
nothing.

Gary responds
to Moses,
a turning.

Moses goggles
Gary,
adjusting.

5.

Lucille Ball
and Emma Goldman,

on a city bench,
outside the park,
just before fall.

Lucy asks
Emma
for a cigarette
or two.

Emma claims
to Lucy,
“she’s left her purse
on the trolley.”

Lucy nods
easily to Emma,
“I just found some,
join me?”

Emma exhales
towards Lucy,
“A hartziken dank,
mameleh!”

6.

Joseph Cotten
and Muddy Waters,

on a city bench,
outside the park,
just before fall.

Joseph says
to Muddy,
“Who’s your tailor,
Muddy?”

Muddy responds
to Joseph,
“Over there,
over on Michigan.”

Joseph asks
Muddy,
“Did you ever
play with Charley?”

Muddy shrugs
at Joseph,
“Yeah, a couple-o’
times.”

7.

The Mighty Herakles
and tattooed Popeye,

on a city bench,
outside the park,
just before fall.

The Mighty Herakles asks
tattooed Popeye
for a bit
of Spinach.

Tattooed Popeye points
above The Mighty Herakles,
“Let me check
my pants, Mitey Hoicules.”

The Mighty Herakles warms
towards tattooed Popeye,
“Don’t I know you,
Sailor?”

Tattooed Popeye snorts
at The Mighty Herakles,
“Before me accidence,
I used to offiskiate
for a group of poets.”

8.

Hank Aaron
and Henry Roth,

on a city bench,
outside the park,
just before fall.

Hank says
to Henry
“Anyone ever
call you Hank?”

Henry says
to Hank,
“Sure,
when I was a kid.”

Hank says
to Henry,
“They called me Henry,
when I was a kid.”

Henry’s laugh stifles
hearing Hank,
“Sounds about right,
Henry.”

9.

Charles S. Pearce
and Geronimo,

on a city bench,
outside the park,
just before fall.

Charles S. Pearce
reluctantly prods
Geronimo,
“What’s your
favorite number?”

Geronimo acknowledges,
and saying after
to Charles S. Pearce,
“I’ve always liked
the number ten.”

Charles S. Pearce reddens
at the reply of Geronimo,
stretches his fingers,
cracks his toes.

Geronimo adds
to Charles S. Pearce,
“I like nine,
too.”

10.

Sholem Rabinovich
and Bob Dylan,

on a city bench,
outside the park,
just before fall.

Sholem says
to Bob,
“I admire your character.”

Bob is solemn
to Sholem,
“Henry Fonda?”

Sholem dissents
with “ts-ts’s” at Bob,
“This one, without
the horse!”

Bob looks back
slowly at Sholem,
“But Sholem, the horse is yours!”

B-3

What to do with a series of love theories?
Or with the unburied profiles of the finite
dead?

Open-eyed
I race restfully, considerate of
too many decades, of their mind-clatter,
searching such patter
for their stranger presence,

their potent berths, a flower and series
—chord progressions emitted

his beige gas-lit harmonium
in type,

escaping air,

and never swaying foolishly
along
to a jump-blues song's
completion.