

Wild with Rage

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Collection 2.

Introduction

This collection of poems is very much a companion piece - neither prequel nor sequel - to the play *Flowering Desolation* that I wrote in a similar way in 2018 and my first collection of poems *Perfectly Careless, Final Desolation*, which was released in 2022.

Each poem has been carved out of a single novel which has been read, sliced up, and reorganised into the linear poem that is presented. These fragments of sentences have been removed of their original context and used as the raw material with which to craft new meaning, however the content of each poem has arisen naturally, always being led by the source text itself.

No word besides this short preface has been written by me, rather they are hijackings: unofficial collaboration for which I did not seek approval nor ask for forgiveness. I take full responsibility for my misgivings.

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Divine Emptiness



Fernanda Melchor
Hurricane Season

He was lost in the middle of nowhere
With one eye on the sky
In the midday glare.

A great cloud veiled the sun and
He wanted to sleep, but every time he closed his eyes
He felt himself plummet.
Unable to explain the overwhelming urge
That came over him.
About to fall into the abyss;
Lulled by the numb languor of that divine emptiness;
Devoid of even the solace of the incandescent fires of hell.

His body felt numb
With a kind of cold fury,
But he couldn't make out anything other than dust and
Darkness and that stench of death.

With time his fears abated.

Life's suffering was over now
And the darkness would soon fade.

Out of Everything



Virginia Woolf
To the Lighthouse

A downpouring of immense darkness began,
With that solitude which seemed to be
Impeccably candid and pure.

This impure rhapsody
Which was yet so penetrating:
Past everything, through everything, out of everything.

Some deep, some buried, some quite speechless feeling
That one had for the heat of love,

Its horror.
Its cruelty.
Its unscrupulosity.

It said something about death;
It said very little about love.

To rest in silence, uncommunicative.
To rest in the extreme obscurity of its intricacy.

Very rough and isolated and lonely.
Distance had an extraordinary power;
The space would fill;
Those empty flourishes would form into shape
That broke up the thought and dismembered it.

This Mundane Ritual



Yoshihiro Tatsumi
The Push Man

To survive in the crowd you have to struggle alone.

I can't take it.

It's been so long

This mundane ritual
With no passion.

The Conquest of Chaos



Saul Bellow
Herzog

Between oblivion
And molten sorrow:
Risen from terrible defeat.

It was painful to think of it -
That it might be a symptom of disintegration,
Almost, of intimacy.

Not terrible decadence,
Endless anxious tedium,
Without sufficient courage or intelligence.

The drama of disease
And similar paths of horror.
Of self revenge;
Suffering without proper dignity.

A fatal attraction to the
Symptoms of disorder.
Metaphysical, transcendent pleasure.

Sentiment and brutality -
Never one without the other:
The conquest of chaos.

Crumbs of decency
In lonely decay.

Speaking of slavery and freedom;
Of hypocrisy and calculation:
Ideas that depopulate the world.

Death watches:
Intimate, unclean

Ruin comes to beauty inevitably.

Small Humiliations



Octavia E. Butler
Kindred

I raised my head
And I acted out of desperation.

I felt a little guilty.

I don't know what to think about -
No sense tormenting myself,
Just struggling with my own perversity
And putting up with small humiliations.
Trying to suppress my nervousness and praying to go home.

As the days passed, I got into the habit of being careful,
And somehow, that disturbed me.
I obeyed silently:
The fear was long dead.

That disturbed me too, when I thought about it.

I needed desperately to be alone,
I didn't even know why.

To give me oblivion.

Most of the time, living just isn't worth the trouble.

With Dignity



Jhumpa Lahiri
Interpreter of Maladies

Her voice: brittle with sorrows
With eyes cast upward.
She didn't turn away or try to stop the tears.

Making love with a desperation they had forgotten,
Pausing every now and then
To endure with dignity
All of life's mistakes.

Like the type of woman she'd once claimed
She would never resemble,
Who had already fallen out of love with life;
Retreated into a deep and prolonged silence;
Into a shameless delirium;
A magnificent desolation.

Quiet as Rain



Caleb Azumah Nelson
Open Water

You meet the love of your life:
She appears noiselessly beside you.

You received a new way of seeing, a new way of being.
*She could see you were a little awkward,
A little overwhelmed.*

You lost her gaze for a moment and your breath quickened.
She smiles a little.

You feel a nervous shake as you embrace.
She takes your hand in hers, and rests it in your lap.

You begin to confess, your joy, your pain, your truth.
She doesn't say anything.

You know what you want but you don't know what to do.
She would need you intact and you are not so.

You hear her low exhale and know she understands.
She knows before you speak.

You tell her she deserves to be loved in the way you love her,
And she starts to cry, quiet as rain.
She kisses you.

You are tumbling in the heat of a fever dream.
She takes a moment to steady herself.

You ricochet through the dark.

She hesitates for a moment.

You wrap your arms around her, letting them linger,
Comforted by her warmth.

She handed you her vulnerability.

You don't want your time together to end.

You find yourself falling asleep alone
With but the memory of intimacy.

You realise she is gone.

You kept telling yourself you couldn't lose any more,

It continued to happen.

Wild with Rage



Fyodor Dostoyevsky
Memoirs from the House of the Dead

I studied his face.
An impression of oppressive, stifling monotony
Lit the fires of indignation in his fine eyes,
Making them even more beautiful.

The lips quivered.

His insatiable thirst for the coarsest and vilest pleasures
Was oppressing and stifling him,
Unrestrained by any internal standard or discipline.
His resentful bitterness grew greater and greater.

His past, however, was shrouded in a mist of obscurity.

It began to grow dusk and suddenly he turned to me
To talk under the evocative influence of the night.
He put his questions definitely and precisely:
“Why don’t you give up?
You’ve been here long enough.”

He was already in the last days of his life.

In the grip of a raging fever
He seemed incapable of a genuine understanding of his guilt.
Choosing any way of escape, even death,

From such degradation, shame, and suffering.

He knows, in addition, that a terrible punishment awaits him.

His eyes were glittering with the fires of hatred,
The desire of accepting suffering.
Filled with curiosity and disgust:
They have lost all love of humanity.

With a certain amount of forced solemnity,
He died at about three in the afternoon
Of a clear, frosty day.
Seething with malice, wild with rage.

We shall never get another like him
(Feral characteristics do not develop equally in all men.)

It is impossible to live when one is completely without hope.

The Little Death



Frank Herbert

Dune

Feeling the compulsions and unable to inhibit them
His world emptied of everything except that
Moment of peace between periods of violence:
In such perfection, all things move towards death.

He was like one come back from the dead,
Not yet fully aware of his return.

His eyes half shut and glassy with the inward stare
Trying to still the tempest within him.
But terror remained so near;
All around him was abyss.

His own terrible purpose
Was suddenly more real to him than it ever had been before.
The rage was difficult to suppress
In spite of fear and the aching desire for rest.

A beginning of compassion for her crept over him
But this made the empty place within him no easier to bear
And with this realisation, the terrible purpose filled him.

Still, he felt the edge of fear within him and knew it's source:
Fear is the little death that brings total obliteration.

And in the sudden intensity of darkness
He experienced a chill.
Wariness veiled his eyes when he glanced at the
Shadows so black they were like bits of night.

There was a heavy, charged feeling of anxiety in the air.
The sense of waiting ended,
And the storm was gathering:
Reaching for the future in the midst of death.

Of Tornados



Herman Melville
Moby Dick

A most miserable plight
When dusk descended
Down the throat of the tempest.

These terrors seize us:
The vesture of tornados,
Free from all ridiculous false delicacy.

To lose oneself in such inhuman solitudes:
Nothing but the dead wintry bleakness of
This desolate vacuity of life.

Infinitely outdone by the madness of men.
Torn into a quick eternity.

Remorselessly dashing each other to death
In the heart of such decay

And a fatalistic despair.

The Feeling of Suffocation



Jean Rhys
Wide Sargasso Sea

“If I have forgotten caution,
Still I hesitate.”

Her expression was so full of delighted malice
And I wondered why I had never realised
How beautiful she was.

Her mouth was set in a fixed smile but her eyes were so lost.

This never saddened me.

I see everything.

I can remember every second of that morning.

The feeling of suffocation persisted
With an alien, disturbing, secret loveliness.

Reluctant Shame



Charlotte Brontë
Villette

A heavy tempest lay on us,
Unutterable loathing of a desolate existence:
An entire incapacity to endure,
With an air of reluctant shame.

A startling transfiguration
Sufficed to impart unsettled sadness,
Grave with solitude.

This shrinking sloth and cowardly indolence
(Which was quite different from
The quickening of honest shame)
Was only desirable while forbidden.

And in the perplexity of darkness,
With some fear and trembling,
Inclination recoiled, ability faltered.

A delicately balanced combination of insolence and deceit
Had now descended.
The white tempest raged so dense and wild
In an unalterable passion of silent desolation,
Yielding it sordidly as though
Long pain had made patience a habit.

A sorrowful indifference to existence.
With the obedience of fear, not of love.

Deeper than melancholy lies heartbreak.

For once a hope was realised
And I chose solitude,
Quiet and easy oblivion,
And submit decently to the
Strange, sweet insanity
In the forlorn hope that
There can be no oblivion
With so little ceremony.

Fits of Reckless Extravagance



Andrew Key
Ross Hall

Life was restored to my body as
I was filled with anxious melancholy.

It was as if the Earth slipped
Into a deep and impenetrable shadow,
And not did I in the least disguise the cause.

These sights depress me greatly
But finally I have the solitude I have yearned for:
Less distraction, more penance.

My recollection of my thoughts becomes hazy:
I hear nothing, and I know nothing.

I am capable of experiencing old pleasures
As if for the first time
Despite some horrible and monstrous passion
Dissipating into nothing,
Filling my heart with yearning for the life I might have led
If only I had been able to behave differently.

I have occasionally regretted my actions,
Even despised myself,

But lurking behind this is a morose sadness
That I have once again attracted:
Equal parts blandness and threat.

There is no state of abjection that a heart, not formed for it,
May not recover from.

Whatever disgrace attends, or misfortune threatens me,
I am ready to meet them.

To display the shame

Such that it might not fester and ferment in my mind,

And I can only hope that I am gone before all that I have
loved is truly eroded.

I'm still alive, despite everything,

And I still feel no closer to understanding

The needs unsatisfied

In fits of reckless extravagance.

Silent Immolation



Gustave Flaubert
Madame Bovary

As the tempest still raged
Sanctuaries filled with magnificent darkness,
And her desires, increased by regret,
Became only the more acute
In the sweetness of this ecstasy.

Felicity, passion, rapture
Faded into the gloom of the sky.
Like a whirlwind in an abyss.

Every experience of suffering and of pleasure
Was quelled by absence;
For the despair of all desire
And silent immolation.

When broken up by ruins
There is nothing so admirable as
Dissolving in despair
And practising virtue without believing in it,

Only the unattainable desire for a greater delight.
A more perfect representation of annihilation.

Need into Desire



Kathy Acker
Great Expectations

I run away from everything.
At the same time I adore everything.

The world is a hostile place
It's fragile, at the edge of ugliness:
The province of the ones who think they live their dreams.

It's forgiveness that transforms need into desire;
These, are the pleasures of the mind.

Despite my politeness, they know who I am,
I'm one of the true innocents,
Forbidden to act on my desires.

Don't tell this to anyone:

The mistake is believing that
For a deadly moment,
I wasn't willing to give up my desires.

A Stillness



Kate Mosse
Labyrinth

He wanted to offer some comfort:
Say something, anything,
But he could not.
His anxiety was spreading to her.

She breathed a sigh of relief
And called his name into the darkness.
The tears ran hopelessly, silently, down her cheeks.

As she got herself under control, she realised the emotion
she was feeling was not terror any more, but grief.

A stillness descended over her;
Filled yet with cold desperation.
Not of grief this time, but regret.

She could see he did not know what to do.
(It was all he could do not to sweep her up in his arms.)

A look of infinite sadness came over him.
(He had never intended things to go so far.)

There was malignancy in the darkness.

A kind of passive acceptance had descended over him

As a flicker of lightening momentarily lit the darkening sky.
It

all
ends
here.

He seemed to sigh as the life left his body.
He knew she had dealt him a mortal blow.

Not from Shame



Leo Tolstoy
The Devil

Whether she was good-natured or not
She did not know,
And could not decide.

A jealousy she restrained and did not exhibit,
But from which she often suffered.
(Not from shame so much as from vexation.)

Her only wish was to carry out his desires obediently.
She concentrated on him not only her whole affection
But her whole life.

As solitary women always do.

Never had she seemed so attractive,
And never had he been so completely in her power.

He was lost, irremediably lost.

He hoped that this meeting would be the last:
After what had happened, peace was impossible.

He felt himself to be despicable and guilty,
And wished to punish himself.

It seemed to him something like an attack of insanity he had Undergone.

“So it seems I cannot be rid of her” he thought.

That prospect disturbed him most of all.

As if by someone else's wish
He looked round
And went to her.

A Beautiful Death



Yōko Ogawa
Revenge

She runs her hand through her hair and looks down again.
I couldn't breathe.

I could tell she wanted to avoid hurting me.
The pillow was damp with saliva,
And I wanted to scream.

Her cheeks were pale and translucent.
I recalled, one by one,
All the times I had ever been rejected.

Her movements were graceful, but they seemed calculated.
It was like breathing in death.

Slow suffocation.
I imagine her naked.

Her eyes half closed and her shoulders thrown back, a
shudder passed through her body.
I noticed again that her fingers
Were unusually delicate.

In the moonlight I see those details,
Savour them for a few seconds as they pass.

The suffering comes from the slow but steady
Sensation of loss:
Something more complicated than a simple crime of passion.

I felt like I was sinking in some kind of grey swamp.
I saw nothing but darkness.
Filling my body and emptying my head
 I found myself absorbed by the stillness.
I tried to concentrate my energy.
My chest began to ache and
When our eyes met
Silence descended on us.

The woman stood, back straight, arms at her sides.
She smiled with apparent satisfaction.

It was a beautiful death.

Nothing Left Now but to Pray



Chester Himes
A Rage in Harlem

As evil a woman as god ever made
Safe for the moment in the shadows.

The spectators were laughing
And shouting obscene encouragement -
But they respected big shiny pistols and sudden death.
This was the instinctive fear of the violently dead.

Emerging from the darkness like half-dressed phantoms;
Like ghostly sentinels in the impenetrable gloom.
Their eyes searched the shadows.
There was nowhere she could hide.

For a moment the speechless dark
Was filled with violent commotion.
Convulsed in desperate living, like the voracious churning
Of millions of hungry cannibal fish.

A dead silence fell,
Then he crossed himself and knelt
Beside the table on the floor.
He saw the whores backing away.

Suddenly he was consumed with haste;
He had begun to think the lord had quit him
To wait in the endless river until he shall be taken
In the second death.

Footsteps approached.
“If the devil ain’t already got your soul after all you done
Last night, you is saved.
Knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable,
And poor, and blind, and naked.”

The air was electric with his rage.
She gave him her pearly smile of promise
Of pleasant things to come.

He mouthed in a red raving passion of rage and lust
“A good feeling is a sign of death”.

The morbid crowd turned to stare at her.

She stood her ground defiantly.
A warm wet stream flowed suddenly down his pants leg.

Nothing left now but to pray.

Warm Satisfaction



Toni Morrison
Beloved

Pleasantly troubled
In the midst of repulsion and personal shame.

She had felt warm satisfaction
In shameless beauty.

In her dreams she
Didn't really want forgiveness given; she wanted it refused.
To lift her spirits
To the place where she could take the next step.

There was no tremor in her voice,
Nothing fierce or startling
But indifference lodged where sadness should have been.

There was no defence.

No misery, no regret.

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