

Kevin Magee / THE COMEDIAN AS THE LETTER M

"A little dramatic, don't you think?" — Robin Blaser, February 13, 1997

Victor Serge said, "He was not at Naples
writing letters deemed mutually expedient
to adopt several years disposed beneath the pavement
called, heard, recognized his own reflection
far below the flight of steps or was it high above
their registrations, which are not grandeur
no more than some sort of short note or preface
for a book I've made, and will mail you a copy
after your return to the hotel not in New Haven
having signed for the first time a name recently
issuing from underneath all the years the silk awning
filmed him in the heat at the base of those crowned
prejudices mastering us, a knowledge of industry
which impels all actions, and expands all hearts.

Addressed, he inclined his head, as when
the communist refuses to condemn the executioner
for his false consciousness every spasm of his
meditations that succeeded each groan in the night air
not quiet and the world far from calm, how
could he ever sanction his own opinions serve according
to the wisdom of the ancients, nor was it trifling
this homage of hers to his instruments. A house
he had visited in honor of one astride every
pleasure on the bay, the hills, psychedelic terraces
crowing some weird susceptibility, a 70s memory
writing out the lyrics to *The Wind Cries Mary*
disturbed by her person who to modulate its cadence
gliding forward toward the figure station, rose.

On a late June day in 1381 the tape rewound
and he listened, spy of his steps, anticipating
no reception I heard a person approaching
at the end of the question, *but where have you been*
and who have you seen whispered the Messenger
disappearing too feared to be believed in the glowing
accidents a human voice pierced his ear, a recess
my only resource, I went twice to that house
where the light foot hears you removing a page
out of the single copy permitted among the originals
in the British Museum should I be in danger
of forgetting that apartment with an agitation
equal to every stanza in the heavy air, degree
as her presence would or would not have done.

What was to be done without awakening
to the chords, his own, first posted to Paris
it was the not the word "pejorative" that hurt
like a demonstration on the swiftness of penmanship
sent back in code, *elegance* the signal passed
without an opportunity to afford you a moment
for refuting it, for myself authority contradicting it
as some reparation for the Reign of Terror
in *Enter Mob* the rioters are observed transfiguring
their Observer, and tore the veil the virtue
which prevents me never a moment to forget
decorum, follow it with inexact form down
all the labyrinths of bold and broad argument
loved to suspicion his vitiated mind receiving.

Other than to secure an imaginary dignity
a careless promise circumstance must counter
after the party, when the conversation
was every day less likely to happen so long
into distances the sails of Indonesians...
The trance of the fishermen and peasants
on the lookout for approaching gunships
mingled in the resolution of asserting
a transient remark that might be trusted
or, once remembered, it was desperation
to depart from the usual policy, menaces
of the masses impended far over the sea
along the corridor that led to them
she passed the one where the body lay.

Poe's *City by the Sea* had been flushed royally
supple and turbulent, a city of men circa
1949-1993 chanted the summer morning
mythy in midair, I got drunk as a skunk
on the lengthening echoes of their orgies
evacuations of terror you may withdraw
from any event connected with my future
approaching, and thought that he saw a Spectre.
Was it the one from the body he inhabited
taken on to affirm it was not impossible
new impatience and apprehensions arose
the fate we accept remaining anonymous.
I am not that name which at the first feint
at generosity incited her honesty,

And prepared his pen to greet the mastery
it was when the heat and light were tapering
to a point exhibiting *material pickets economically*
disabled reviewed by the inquisitor drawn aside
and rested a few hours from my chores on the farm
marching to Nicaragua with Guevara's Bolivia
his protection and guidance, pride of conscience
worth in her Presence, go visit her cell assailed
state of sorrow, where she practiced a forgotten art
so far as to command my every respect whose
expression immediately see the sensibility
wrenched in the face warding off whatever
accompaniments appeared considerably uneasy the way
was not simple to the Temple of the Mind.

Who wrote with less composure than you'd expect
to find behind the doors opening on to the scullery
where her transactions occur, a solitary cliff
the repeated effect her affirmation of the mountain
whose utmost precipice was unable to prevent you
Prometheus, I chop it down with the edge of my hand
who have advanced your way to Mephistopheles
carried away by order of the Author racing the routes
she allegorized a welcome that question from the fieldhand
at the door no one ever comes to anymore avoiding her
example I have feared the fury of a sudden rapacity
liable to ravings here comes Clare's Blue Devils why
do you protest we bring you *Residencia en la tierra*
left untranslated and renewed, as I was saying:

If I get there it will be you I saw there in *The Morning Walk* after undergoing the five fathoms fully refusing self-murder's infantilism, a leftwing disorder fermenting the direst I have not scrupled enough to display me fallen from the indignity having been tendered an opportunity to insult all professors when that professor the performance scourge of my resentment prevails speak explicitly, it may prove possible to hex the folly in the strict severity of martial glory Macbeth convinced by strange portents occasioned wrong roads branching off into foray, visiting these to make out what they riddle the prophecy that will come to pass if the path is not lost in the austerity of the office of the War Pig.

Malignity overspread the features exposed in the splendor of her ephebe's expression exiting the passage leading to the hall across from the kitchen the studio now thrown back, the abrupt explosion of it after he had aggravated his offenses to which of the two his cause belongs in the Field of Mars recruited and deployed. Retreated a space was left for a folding door immediately arch following with a torch at the foot of it another iron gate led to this immense, he had heard of the institution perverted against myself who have never read that summons and doubt my direct words writing out her name your cup of sour wine and a crust of bread.

And yet so apt are my rapidities that leave
me no pause having passed over the very day
she merged among the banners the marchers
my army whose ranks have no measure for
judging what demonstration directs conjecture
seemed to impart somewhat of someone's
private conversation with the physician.
Not a single human being was invisible.
We made our sacrifice at the shrine to Priapus
the shallow dash of symptom sunk into the arms
of some he was going to the prisons of opinions,
heterogeneous, he was a prisoner on his way
among the races, astounding immoral majority.

The second day was dawned along a runway
a road it couldn't be called asking how
can my aesthetics influence the injustice,
Recent Events is a disassociation wrought
for the Great Migration of Chinese peasants
underway, they will find their Whitman sleeping
on a mattress two or three broken chairs
and a hundred dollar table conviction struck
when he awakened to the chords, hers,
a corridor that led round pauses in the surge.
It will have told of a comradely attempt,
some decisive step, the inconsistencies,
contradictions, a doctrine that can embody
emblems of conduct from the countryside.

I have brought you some breakfast
as far at least as through the forest that echoes
with the fame of Faustus and Helen
first passed through these oppressed, William Langland
told me more than I knew, without food
I lay me down my soul to sleep on *Mace Hill*
... 'a rip-tooth of the sky's acetylene' ...
confusion following apostrophes my guide
a shutter-speed in the bands of holy dream
down Wall from girder into Street
that mystifies its auditors, their abolition
my breath, my body, my day a late stage
raised to display the frenzy of vendors
in their apoplectic role as principal buffo.

Dumbfounded and open mouthed I knew my Stevens
had the master hand, his effortless Shakespeare
and peered at me pretty *mon* Professor Vitoux visiting
Iowa from the University of Paris in 1982, I've forgotten
to mention his wild Milton, Blake and Shelley arms
electing me to read aloud once more from *Samson Agonistes*.
Here's a morsel of what you heard, Monsieur, a plate
was set out for the farm dog, though I have often defiled
my self portrait, as to his fear of it federal officials
represent the sentinels that destroyed the university papers
containing the education of a Prince who trusted all
to the impression of awe, arm of the better Artisan near
he leaned away from her an investigation might be made
into who had assisted to administer the drug."