

LEFTY CALIGARI



AFTER A CENTURY
OF SHADOWS

AFTER A CENTURY OF
SHADOWS

5

4

3

TO DUTCH

After Last Years Book

Today Grandpas eye opened
with the addition of some singer
We see clearly now as we spend
forgotten scenes together
playing round and around
helpless as children with their circling hoops

We blessed those
who could help themselves
We felt the lonely occupations of time
coming to an end
We threw away our first draughts
Refused to keep hold of our diaries

Was it really a year ago?

Trains

buses

taxis

come and go

We merely go

Four wheels good

Two legs bad

Those who know

are so sure of themselves

that even the magpie

is afraid to take wing

Reel three has past us by

and we have bid farewell to distortion.

Tomorrow being the first of another one

we will take time to clear the passages

Watching

always watching

Probably steaming from the fine downpour

Now we say

this thing is finished

Our frightful insanities

have churned to their end

The laurels are not the stomping ground

we are lazily familiar with

Capital

Apparently

the eyes can still see

for a short time

after the act of decapitation

How these fantastic acts of barbarism

can fascinate us all

Privately

Imagine

Space played a large part in our frame

The saw bound to the trombone

was practical

Totally unknown

until a few years ago

We took the ladder to the crypt

and in all silence

stalked the thin shadows

while the candles on the boat

illuminated the sailors

pulling on the oars

Pulling for freedom

Pulling for now and the future

Pulling for the snowball fight

Watching the shadows in the snow

Killing In Slow Motion

Entitle me this freedom

Allow me one last stab at liberty
before the blade drops
or the bullet makes contact

Both contain a rending of muscle
and tissue

Shall we play charades tonight
or how about some Tarkovsky?

Footloose

Here we hold hands

Buy a ticket

for this thoroughfare

down which we may drown

in sweet memories

of one hundred years ago

The infants stumble

in front of their nannies

with their cautious ways

and feed the cat

in a perfect composition

Scales

I dreamt of giant eggs

The period of a chicken
you replied

Giant chickens
More for the weighing scales

We created flame powders
and mystical movements

We were two tiny infants
from the enormous egg
of the insect

Last Rites

Oh

the squadron where so courteous

towards their guests

with a table full of food

Beds and candles

promises of all that was to come

Turning the pages

and feeling free

Now

This stick can create fire
It can multiply figurines

It can make them disappear

Motion Pause

As the people had fun riding their bikes in circles
and standing on the saddles
Get the camera
was shouted

We will be protected
by a policeman
and travel on a moving pavement

Where were you?

We had an idea to wait
by the watershoot
where the guy who smoked
poked his stick into the water
inventing incident and movement

The horse standing nearby
allowed men to spring upon his back
and their comrades
bounced one of their number
into the air from a sheet

Keep Them Scarred

You hit people over the head
then ask them to queue up
to use a bucket of sand and a stick

They would not understand
But after such treatment
why should they?

Out Of The Box

We shout at each other

You jump out of the window

We run

We fall

Peering around every corner

seeing what is to come

Our endings are caught

impaled on the fence

Approached at various speeds

we were taken to the fade out

from both sides

Posed In Stillness

It is all fans and chairs

Beautiful fans

Practical chairs

There is something flying in the room
You try to catch it

Hand

Net

Trap

I kneel at your knee

You are many

I am one

We know no more

than the tears

of our falling

On Location 1

The women are not looking at the camera
No animals pass by
Today it is grey

We have all decided
to study the accidental happenings

We need to know
whether to accept them
and allow them to become
part of our future

The character to the right
always overacts and laughs
then settles down
to devise ways of cheating
in a football game with no ball

A bizzare choreography
fools not just our eyes
as the workers race in sacks

We like the loser very much
he reminds us of ourselves

We watch him change the screenplay
making the boat go out to the rough sea
from the safety of the port
while he casually
straightens his moustache

Look Over There

R. was messing in his kitchen today

He had realized that if he created a little chaos

then the whole world would ignore him

Scott's Memoir

As you scribbled in your book of truth
the paper flapping birds crossed the path
of our loneliness

Never reading the newspapers
we have always struggled
to make beautiful things

We always seem to go out of our way
to walk uphill
We have no friends
We are old

In this darkened library
we are suddenly surrounded
by sisters and dying mothers

Shipping Forecast

This is the captain of the ship

the ghost ship calling

The ship that charts unknown seas

where islands can be named

after each of us

as we find them

Where strange animals can be discovered

duly noted

sketched even

then made to disappear

almost as if God himself

lost interest

The good ship imagination

sails an unsteady course

mostly off

rarely on

Our compass is broke

or fooled by the magnetic tides

Our portholes are smashed

by gannets and seagulls

all at sea

in their search for cliff faces

Blinded by the streaming rust

of our mast lights

This ghost ship will haunt you

scare your horses away

as we wave from corroding decks

resplendant in our punctured life jackets

adrift in the canyons and concentric canals

of your mist drizzled memories

This is your captain
Hoist anchor
for tonight we sail again
among the dark fogbanks
of our human regrets

It Occurred At Noon

The wrathful demon is always out on a chance
As we spend the night in this deserted cinema
hoping to prove that ghosts are here
you shiver and hold your body closer

We peer into the dark
at the torn screen
where figures used to run

Concentric Canals

We devote ourselves to walking

Arriving

Leaving

Our hands a little harder

our minds tired

as the strangest machine ever seen

captures that illusionary diagonal

and the factory workers

complete striking compositions

What a beautiful film it made

The camera was placed across a river

Venice provided so many opportunities

for you and I to meet

the beauty of travel

allowing us the theatre

of our personal cinema

Watching as the parade of top hats

were immersed by the spray from a firemans hose

Long Distance Photography

Meanwhile
 in the studio
 the lens is set
 the focus unclear
 although the gate is clean

Now the wheel begins to rotate
 as I turn to you

The chair is positioned
 You are asked to sit down

The hem of your skirt rises
 as the screen is lowered
 and the assistants take their places

With our arms and hands
 we will capture this moment forever

Lost

There we are

The two of us

The head of a woman

between us

As you crawled under the table

we felt there was not

a lot to choose from

The crowd started to dance in celebration

while on the snow heavy rooftops

the angels gathered

and as the bell swung

the pigeons scattered

colouring the sky

plumage black

How To Read

I would not have it any other way
 To see their reactions unlocking
 the code of a lost language
 looking for clues over many meetings

By daylight we had not seen any further
 than shapes which moved away and about
Why must all have a purpose
each a name?

We try to remind ourselves of that

We fail
 Through our failure we find
 a new level
new meanings
 a refusal to accept the mundane

We long since stopped making statements
 of the obvious
 We strove to imply the different

We did not preach
 never pleaded
 cap in hand

We simply wished to offer
 what was available to all
 to be enjoyed
swallowed
digested
 to the delight of our empty stomachs

Living In Pieces

Looking in the cupboards
and in the book

all we see is figures
with blankets over their heads

heading east
spurring us to stir the pot faster
allowing us no breath of air

This is the cavern
where you crept around your cauldron
as I asked for your help

The bones on the floor
should have warned me

In The Storage Room

The new tenant has moved
 into his apartment
All he had was a bag
 containing his table
 chairs
 ladder and safe

The noise was incredible
 The dogs trembled in terror

 We were not sure who this man was
 He danced around the room
 putting order to the pictures
 arranging mirrors
for the clearest view

 He produced family members
 on a stage filled with hats

We fought long and hard
 to shift this satanic tenant
 but he went of his own accord
 having bought his own ladder

If only we had known
 We could have nailed the window shut

Monastery Of A Kind

A kiss of the skull
and all the women of your life
spring to mind

surrounded by barrels and blankets
tumbling from bed to floor
never the convent types

Where Satan plagues the corridors
his imps
with heads bowed
are suddenly frightened yet impervious
to spear and crucifix

Who told them
we rode a frog that day?

Arrogance And Confidence

As I run past the statue of Aphrodite
it begins to move
Can we attack it with chisels
assume the rational
in the middle of the night
Awakening on the floor
we at first think
that we have been shot
then merely guess that
we have fallen from our beds

Choices

We are becoming ingrained in our chairs
The grain is taking over this time
Can we last much longer
without trapping our heads in the door
or shall we throw our bodies against the wall
and skip away?

It Crossed Our Minds

The women threw grain
on the ground
where the men crawled

In Japan they fought
with bamboo canes
while we drank

A knife dance takes place
in Africa
We saw it
We were there
We did not take part

We were amused
by the jugglers
who amazed the tumblers
with their pig laden machines

Approaching Three AM

As we watched your flickering movements jerking
we thought you were joking
We did not care to have much of a clue either way

At that point you asked for my final word

Seized by indecision
my nose ran
my ears rang
my eyes stung

I was as empty as the flavourless cold dish
we were forced to sit down and eat
when the fuses blew

You reached for my hand from the screen and said
When will our one word nightmare end?

Attempted

You were the woman who dropped on my head
from a cloud of ladders and passers by
the belief being it would probably save you

The Father was distraught
tying hanging ropes
that did not hold
but left him choking and bedraggled
on the parlour floor
An outpouring for the authorities

Dislocation Of The Anatomy

One arm
 then another
 Then a bash on the head

We dress as clowns
 for the amusement of others

 Would we have had to reassemble ourselves
 if we had not put
 this notorious body together
in the first place

How To Say

Be that

Do that

Go ahead then

Show us anything

Should you fail to impress us

we will run you through

with rapiers of imagination

Pages in a book

You and I

Flipped

Skimmed

Skipped

Torn out

Recreation

Let us take a break

play a game of cards

smoke

drink

and point out

the interesting stories

in these newspapers

that in days past

we would have burned

Piece For What Was

You really are running now
See
the man counting the chicks
the polar bears
the marmosets
to find how many have gone

The marmosets find time to adjust
while we proclaim ourselves
the Guardians of the Plants
We can do nothing at all
about the encroachment of time

Happy new year
Happy new week
Happy new day
Hour
Minute
Second

How forthright we have become
All jazz and no work
What an idea to thrill chill the world
I never looked to upset the dish
Had no time for well wished seconds
Took little heed
over the trails of lemon and lime
and melting nitrate spilling
from your celluloid mouth

Reaching for a string
I came across a marionette
with spread limbs jerking akimbo
As the child murderers ideas spill out

so we scrape at them
as a sieve gathers gruel

Steerage

The big ladder was used
do you remember?
As we drifted apart
it bent

Snapped

Either it was not well made
or our prayers had fallen on deaf ears

We held hands for the last time
as we left the boat
where the cow was hoisted overboard
by its neck
and opium was smoked
with our feet in shot

The Full Story

Do you remember the time
we used up our emotions?

We watched their timeless flow
as we walked
hand in hand
toward the cliff edge

Between The Cracks

Must you turn the light on

Perhaps you had a disturbed childhood

or nights sleep

The dark exists in cozy corners

along with our madcap schemes

that only we understand

We once stood holding hands here

We kissed there

We cant remember what happened next

Our togetherness became delirious

I suppose

Flickering away behind the curtains

ready to be exposed

look how the images appear

One behind the other

Cap in hand

expecting nothing

but the world

Around Dinner Time

They had no time.
Only a blink.

The sun went away,
darkness came.

The figure appeared and thrilled
the observers who were unaware

of the function of the machinery
which pulsed and turned

to the tunes of technology
under a practiced hand.

Pledges And Hidden Truth

Let us plight our troth
certain that after time refuses to sleep
we will endure

After all friendship has been devoured
by the dark
by the worms

we will endure

Let us carve out our inspirations
with drill in hand
cigarette in mouth

Then we shall find a cheap place to dwell
under the viaduct
of our sleepless nights

After the Intermission

Here we be

The first of the multitudes

allowed to wander

on the face of the planet

We spend our time gathering samples

that will never be quantified

storing them with care

in the rarified atmosphere

We gasped in disbelief at the canyons

we could have seen on earth

had we been given the chance

or been bothered

The Green Tint

I wonder if I was mad enough today?

Can you keep a secret from all mankind?

I have changed into a man of clay

You gave me errands

that you thought this rough hewn

soulless being might be capable of

Chopping wood

Lifting water from the well

Holding aloft

the collapsing ceiling of the palace

over the shrinking body

of the demented jester

When you gave me a rose

what could I do but crush it

in my earthen hand

The people of course fled in horror

then came to their senses

when they saw the children dance

around my cracked dead form

Still Moments In Motion

Now we wait for you by the boat
as baby eats his tea
The audience is astounded
by the movements of the leaves
in the background

Still no sign of you
while the gardener waters the grass
catching the errant child
who stands on his hose

We hoped you would appear
during a card game we played
What was keeping you
as the waiter laughed
and the empty train came in?

Music In Our Ears

We never used to chip at each other

We stood back and waited

for the falling axe

to cleave the discordant harp

in half

Then quarter

Sitting Comfortably

Are you a good shepherdess
or an evil princess?

They both met

Everybody rallied around
the good shepherdess
and drove the wicked princess away

The good shepherdess had visions of beauty
The evil princess was dragged down a well

All well and good

Saving For Later

Awaiting the return of the bearded photographer
with his smell of sculpture
time and space languished around us
as we considered our true belief
in the compassion of humanity

To live without such a thing
announces the photographer
making his entrance

That must cause you unbearable pain
At that we decided to jump into the phosphorous void

I jumped after you
to try to hold you one last time
before our bodies dissolved
and slid between our fingers
to be rebuilt in another time

Another place

Here comes the floor

The photographer had jumped after us
His neon spotlight threw our various limbs
into a sharp relief of patchwork pieces
and scatterered conceptions

Stride

While again we travelled in circles
we saw our competitors catching up with us
in their strange petrol driven shapes

We shook their hands
and moved onto the
broken moving pavement

ever in need of motion
we stood mouths open
aware of our lack of physical momentum

Speaking Of

Okay

So the man missed his diamond train
this morning

Why?

Because his trousers changed
into his waistcoat
into his shirt
into his hat

And he went back
into his sort of sleep

The Conquest Of Form

We are going to the pole
Arrange for transport

The time has arrived
to view the plans
of the amazing vehicles
designed to conquer
all our thoughts can throw at them

We are facing a self imposed
treacherous journey
with the arm waving support
of many a friend and ally

You alone
could be relied upon
to provide a suitable
dose of pessimism

*Heaven forbid
the propeller should ever drop off*

The Aforementioned Pause

Sit in front of the lens

Here is the wardrobe

Open its doors

See what choices

reveal themselves to you

The options of identity you face

Will it intimidate

or exhilarate you?

How you jump at the chance

to be immortalized

as another person

Quiet

Not moving

A permanent fixture

in a book of the dead

Step

Allow the children to play
 above the swirling of the tablecloth
 as we leave the station
all steam and prams
 hot air

*It is sweet to live in such
 an innocent
 transient
 state*

Still Fractured

Observe these confused
high contrast definitions
of all our lives
taking place without our say so

We cannot always presume to forget
the times we spent living
and the years we spent dead

The Night Visitor

The door opens
the moon bites our hands
as the shattered man in nightclothes
pleads with the devil

Beware

he says to us
He will reappear in monochrome
but you will not be able to confuse him

The Killing of Birds With Spiders

Here is a funeral

It is the only time the family get to see each other

Who was it that tried to point this out?

Not meaning to increase the morbidity of the event
by any means

Unfortunately

all that came in reply was

We all have our separate lives now

And death brings us together

I thought

The living and the dead sharing moments

The living

the flickering of the heart

the mind

the eyelid

Now the dead

heart

mind

eyelid

Transmission

We waited for you
to pour yourself out of the gates

A dog stood watching the scene
He witnessed a horse cross his path

Was he wondering whether to give chase
as the classes mixed silently with each other?

All bikes and shadows
depending on which version we saw

Training

We do not move

But they do

Scaling the impossible fire ladder
even though there is no fire

It is only a training exercise

that could excuse such absurdity

Allow a breath

Take time

as the women dance alone
and the men dance with each other

You Go Your Way

In 1918 we saw 16 movements every second

By 1924 we saw 24

In 1938 we hit 25

Around 2012 fed us 48

Our speed of perception

revelled in accelerating chaos

Mixed with this is our lack of ability

to witness the individual

We in turn will be ignored

Allowed to rest

but without peace

Go back

Go back

Go back

Toward The Sea

The rocks are fine for a view

The rocks are fine for a fall

Wrapped in a barrel

Unable to swim

over the edge we go

Replacing this poster with that poster

all living

crossing our legs

Waiting

Waiting

The Urgent Plea

We kill ourselves

That is all

While the dogs bark down the wells

and the mothers plea

for their screaming children

we can be merciful

We have that power

The Primitive Monarchy

Remove their heads

while we untie our shoes

to dip our toes in the blood

as it flows over the pebbles

Steaming

in the gutter

We will one day achieve a state

of musing upon monarchy

as all that will be left of them

will be lengths of string

and plastic flags

Of them personally

we maintain only a vague remembrance

of how our children lived in poverty

and their privilege allowed

injustice to strike us all hollow

Unless

like them

we screamed

Off with their cretinous heads

Court Martial

Court martial

Whose decision was that?

A short walk to be strung up

Democracy fleeing in horror

Which demographic led you

from screen right to take your place

behind the others?

Joining the queue

Needs be we must be told

We the public

Long suffering

When the credits have rolled

do we get to live again?

Here we sit

awaiting lights up

Drunk

sorry or

finally absent

of some feeling we used to call

childish fantasy

Bedtime Story

Where will I sleep tonight?

Its no good asking

our confidence to struggle
any further

I keep dreaming that I shot a man

was said as the snow fell on my shoulders

Consciousness fell away

as you approached
the gun of Bunuel to your head
once again

All was useless

as the bullet passed
through both our minds
sending us to a new

freezing world

Adventurers all

Surveying a certain amount of eternity

we drifted about

paused death playing on our memories

You pointed out

we were aware of our predicament

You saw fit to prove our existence

with a simple kiss

But of course

it did not matter really

It was as sweet

as eating mangoes

after we had waved

the flies from our chins

Regarding Ourselves

You swallow our soul
duplicate it and intrigue it
observe its motion in reverse

After a time of study
the image becomes disconnected
not a part of us at all

Afraid to face ourselves
we prefer the distance
of our reflections

In the process we lose our sight
and feel the breath of the tiger
on our wrists

The Chase

I am the witch
 dancing around
 in full hand painted reality
for the first time

Dancing now with fury
 after showing you the paintings
you wished to see

What did you expect
 after offering me nothing
but a bag of sand in return?

I am now in pursuit
with wicked intent
 Do not rest
 Do not be calm
in any knowledge of things
yet to come

With sword and broom
 let us pursue each others thoughts
Allowing no sleep
 and encouraging terrors
 never to be usurped

Time And Again

There you stood
with your box of magical appearances
Maybe that was the reason
I was never really that certain
of what to expect next

It was the creation of destruction
awaiting the lifting of the lid
Out came plants
arms
the odd Egyptian prince

You kept us in suspense
With you we never knew

After A Century Of Shadows

Here's to the time

Now

when the dead entertain the living

Our advancement of technology

has allowed this to be so

All these figures mime and move

towards us from over a hundred years ago

Now no more

Yet we greet them as they skip

fall

dance together

with our smiles of recognition

in the glowing light

The Rough House

STOP

My bed is on fire

I am awake

during the walk through your parlour

to the kitchen

for a cup of water

while the fire snuggles amongst the sheets

Is there a chance to kiss the maid

drink the water

and return to the bedroom

before the fire

throws back the curtains

creating daylight chaos

that my throat will gargle to?

When the hose sprays

will the light fade

and our thirst return?

Shall we serve tea

on the occasion of a new delivery

to the kitchen?

Would the maid be opposed

to encouraging violence?

Togetherness In A Glass

The glass rises from the floor

The woman rises from the glass

The sparks fly

We are blinded

Hands are laid

Our sight restored

we journey on

Tricks And Pyramids

The skeleton will find a way
to shock the magician
regardless of his speciality

Will he then transform it
into a beautiful woman
only to see it return to
a skeletal form
framed by dancing tables and chairs?

We were like that
Once we placed the hats on our heads
everything was restored

Untitled By A Title

Around the table they ate like mules
 Their predilection for fine wine
made them unsteady
 but ready for more

 With the filmic visions
of dreams and nightmares
 they retired as the mirror came to life
 showering reflections of other rooms
other times
 other women
 all of which in our drunken states
 we tried to embrace
and inhabit

Can you not see the fantasy?
 Reality has become illusion
 and we all now spend our nights
 taunted by insects and woman spiders

The Property Lost

Here are our tickets

Where is yours?

You lost it?

What can we say?

How little we have travelled

to see you

followed by swimming horses

who tackled the shallow banks

of the river with ease

Do not be afraid

It is only a stranger

passing by

entering the dark doorways

revealing in a shaft of light

the shadow of the sphinx

Used To It

Now the situation has changed
 You change your dress
I change my hat

 Everytime we change
 we lose our temper
 Each change becomes more aggressive

It is not as if we cannot make our minds up
 We merely miss each others needs
 in spectacular fashion

Inhabited by both doctor and monkey
 the situation runs amok
on two levels

After 13

Fourteen would be next

Just after we had stared at each other
across the corridor

Time was not on our side

We could not enter each others rooms
We were watched from all angles

Over the projectors fan our whispers found
a new territory
to express our discontent

Remember that all loud noise was punishable
by the withdrawal of all kinds of things
that may not be seen as particularly special
except by the masses
such as trips to the park
rides on articulated horses
and time to hold hands

Whether we will find the nerve to shout
in our tinted silent world
depends upon the issues
we feel ready to shout about
and the sharpness of the censors scissors

A Strange Idea Of Roads

The great white moon shone on us
as we screamed over the bridge
falling from each others shoulders
on the day I saw
a bird swallow a frog

A Dreamt Pursuit

Can you remember?

We were shot at by the guards
and ran into the sunlit quarry
still shouting to each other

I begged you to be quiet
Awakening in bed I saw the guillotine
raising its shiny face
and realized you were gone

After The Visitors

*They are burning down our house
my dear
What are we going to do about it?*

*Pour flour upon them
and damn the ground
their children walk on
you said
whipping eggs and smiling
as the smoke for once enveloped you*

Spinneret

Round you went

Down into the lower levels
of the spiral staircase

Or was it the lift shaft?

Difficult to tell

It was so dark
we travelled so fast

passing the floors of our
disintegrating human goodness

Baser behavior becoming second nature

The lower depths

became an incandescent green

shining from fish which swam in the air

We held our spinning heads with hands

that did not touch

the thoughts that did not think

Falling

We witnessed from a distance too great to travel
someone burned for heresy at the stake

We felt lonely and vulnerable

amidst these glowing depths

and flying fish

sunlight sparkling from their wings

in a landscape of stairs

and concealed trapdoors

caressing an interstellar universe of cruelty

Why did I choose then
to let go your hand?

An Ending

And now the wheel has turned full circle

Our time has come to an end

We sit and consider our options

You construct the paths

I never even thought of

We shall never meet again

But I suppose we will always remember

For better

Or for worse

