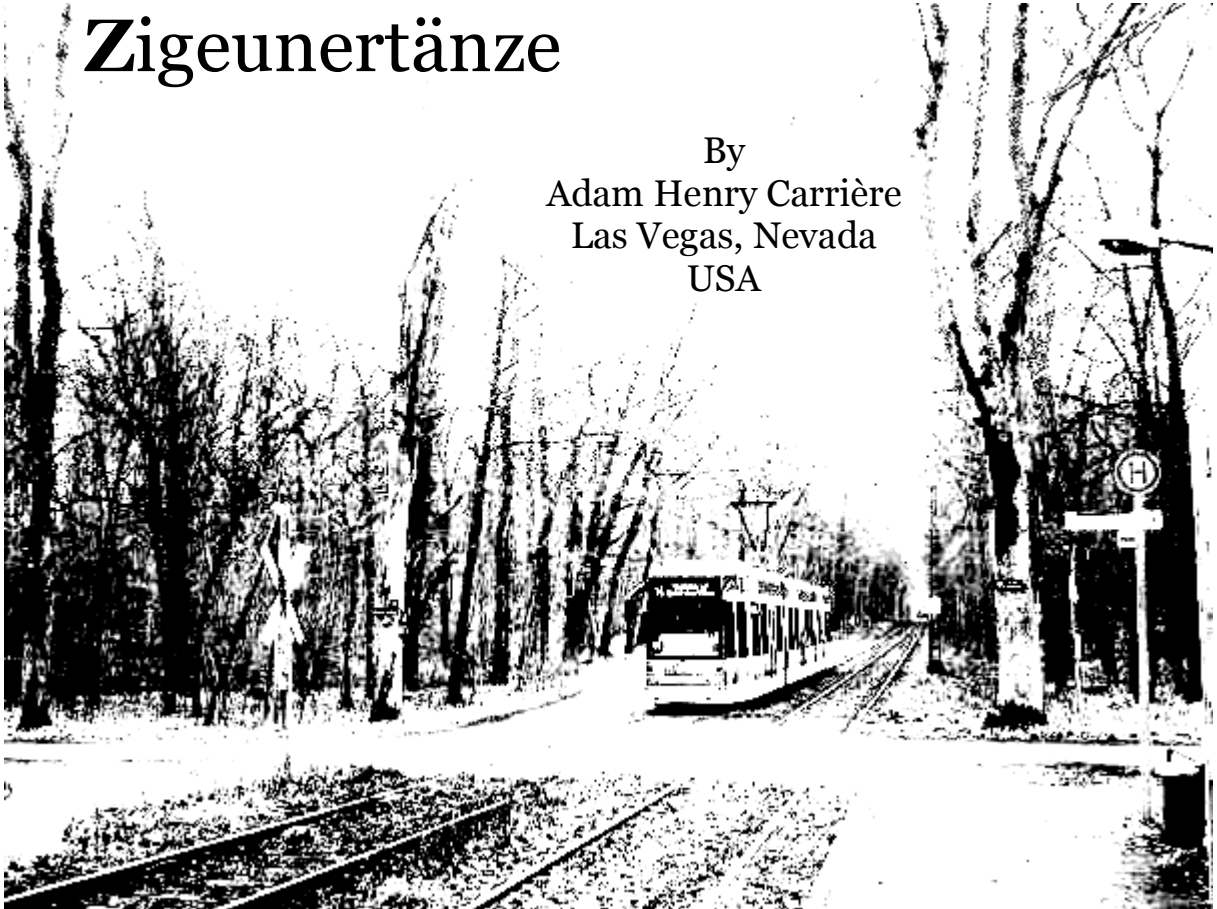


Zigeunertänze

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Father Figure

Inside the hopelessly outdated mid-80's
technopop, a graveyard's giggling
in between inhalations of cocaine,
Kristal, and any degenerate nobody
willing to trade the skin of their body
for a well-lined whole in their soul.

Every snatched corpse snickers
at our tar-framed memorial;

every palm tree shakes its coconuts
waiting for used Chevys to return;
the rest of the campus barrio just grins,
knowing a trick when they see one.

*You'd think a stolen childhood
and a lost adolescence would buy
a better visitor's pass than the
nanosecond furlough drawn.*

*You'd think every frostbitten body
deserved more than an hour
(or two) in the sun.*

The problem is, justice depends on
basic belief in beings
any sane madman wouldn't give
a second thought to,

the very moment they stared at the
'Welcome to Arizona' highway sign
and found out little Virginia
is the one who should have been
locked up a long time ago.

A Part to Play

Dogs are better friends than spiders,
and white is more colorful,
more enduring, than yellow.

Venus and Orion watch over poets
even while acid rain falls,
helping hide the photographer's tears.

Distance is a matter of how well
illiterate hearts can read a map,
whereas directions write their own Braille.

The mosquito and forest-strewn shore
is proof apostles hear the despair
hidden in most bedside prayers.

The next empty night
will prove every word in the world
is worth less than a tiny candle.

Me and Kevin's Secret

Kevin says he wants to toboggan down a naked body
while it rains on the blue shingles of the garage.

He's fourteen, wearing jeans with no underwear.
His bare *la grange* feet are chlorine soaked
in the sno-cone pool left behind us.
He sees me squirm in the dark and smiles.

A monsoon of brow-beating Grandfather clouds
radar over the hallucinogenic distance,
where the sun swims in charmed shade.

Garbage-picked fans rattle in the floor way,
pressing sweat into the stuffed animals
with terror and glee
we lose our virginity upon.

Under graffiti-covered beams,
we seethe, we experiment,
hidden on the hard carpet below
our shadows.

Amid entangled sobs, we wonder
if a Tarot card will seduce the other
into coming first, or if God will bother
to keep me and Kevin's secret.

sale gosse

(*Walloon*; dirty kid)

Do orphans live amid happy homes, comfortable
hills, nesting in the vaguely illegitimate?

Dirty kids bent backwards, bastards
deserve their presents in stained-glass
places, where no one runs up the halls
under pain of release.

Refugees clamor for their pubescence,
one basement motto at a time.

strange brick forts
brigs of trees, moats
planted in muddy silence

Fugitives by their teens, run off
from the pinkish dark, for auction
on private deep-seas, awash
of neither cash nor balls, unable
to sail away or re-write the fable.

Trailing spit and jazz in unseen
but noisy shackles, they trip
up great badlands in which to hide
the wilderness of their voices

to which, melancholy smiles.

Of truant age, it's polite to lose one's way
and wind up back in loathing, in recognizable
maple-branch fencing that snare mislaid angels

(bloodying their wings
in panic, dropping their gifts,
ribbons a-straggle, the holiday
paper hopelessly torn).

Souls, by now, falling out of myth
wind up less unclean, if not alive,

in an Age of Reason bedroom
whose lights never dim.

These mute prophets honor sexual religion,
sermonizing the old to discover new forests
where families rain kindly, in cosseting rooms
that always seem just around the corner.

Swanking the touch of compass and sextant,
merrily lost in a timeless cemetery morn
where granite warms in the background,

the gaily abide

in the hands of darkened opera houses
good boys, hoping Matthew Shepard
got his Christmas presents
in all those weirdly mystified elegies.

Devices of Sexual Saturation

Incorporations of perversion

a personage –
the canonical code

a past...
morphologically indiscreet

a case history?

Anatomy
of, perhaps
a childhood.

Mixoscopophiles
gynecomasts
presbyophiles:

raison d'être.

The stone and the wall.

Amiss

I woke up and fell out of bed,
about to touch a mother's son
I hadn't seen in any adulthood:

This life-like dream, when I laid
a hand on his unspoken elation;
the rainy sundown we slept in,
where I underwent his breathing
in a union-labeled city
concentrating
in the same Catholic camp.

Foolish twosome, wisely knowing

*unruly hush-hush
minds ne'er straightened
Boy Scout whispers
and Marine sobs*

more truthful lies on the subject
puberty's under-the-sheets tattle.

By God's amused grace
some videotaped evidence exists
that the two of us met at all.

Watching it heart-broke my delirium
while a cold search engine spits out
a handful of lines, drained of color

our once upon the other.

Occasions in later lonesomes can't skew that.

Negre

The black is night,
the voodoo heart,
the ocean without sky.

The white moon in black eyes
makes tears move
like constellations.
The skin warms brown
and glides copper,
ebony as all sundown,

but all are negre.
People apart,
lady women,
boat dwellers,
boys who do with boys,
 all are negre.

Negre freedom is the mirror,
the chicory reflection
seen by mulatto eyes,
a second-class image
murmuring, with ivory smiles

'Negre...I am negre.'

I Keep Driving Past the Last Time I Was Here

Ne remets pas a demain ce que tu peux faire apres-demain.
Never put off tomorrow what you can do the day after.
— Alphonse Allais

I keep driving past the caroler
unmindful of the cold
or the growing cab fare.

In this unending winter
lays the tang of red-dyed lust.

*Alice had her Toyland babes
sold off to pay the Queen's debts;*

now the yellow tea cups sing
in their same bubblegum song,
hopscotching for Buddhist priests

whose chants remind me of
the last time I was here,

with a child, whose bowed appetites
made a man of him

in a candy garden made of stone
and filled with rice flowers.

They play like Alice's topsy-turvy toys.

Before the part-moon begins
its ritual struggle with resurrection
poetry will out

to the very edge of the soot
that weighs on birds' wings,
keeping them deep inside
the looking-glass city.

Sleeping with Degrelle

I bedded on a hard rock, listening to Haydn.
Gassy water churned my frame into pale cuisine
as the Metro stopped in my dream. Even homeless
immigrants, stars, carried on as proper citizens,
comfortable in their arrogant tax-paying.
My storm-tossed pillow time gave up
to the secret police, seeking a collaborator
for inquiry into dark passages they'd been told
of in recent sermons ignored by the networks.
No body rose in the clatter of the abstractions.
Yet I kept running, a store-bought allusive force
disco to disco, smashing open painted windows
to let in fresh diesel exhaust, allowing beer
drenched sweat and mass-marketed smoke respite.
Run-down neighborhood air invaded the dance floor,
staccato electricity circuited into glorious acoustic form,
transforming the half naked into proper believers
clad in white tuxedos and perfectly applied makeup.
Galley slaves swathed in sero-negativity; they wept
with humble Pei, leaping through glass pyramids
onto displays of tourist-friendly masterpieces.
The cold barrel of a very old profession woke me
with a start. My panic left fitfully sleeping puddles
on the boutique of far-right barricades,
where the rest of gay had been concentrated,
unable to correspond with the rest of Europe
without handcuffs, plastic gloves, and generic facial masks.
At an insensitive distance, ruined Lutheran temples
and looming Roman Eglise kept egalitarian sympathy
over our huddled bodies until one of us fell,
at first from exhaustion, then from hunger, finally,
from a luridly antiseptic fever, a disease so clinical,
so mathematical - democratic, even - in its efficiency,
in our death throes, we called it civilized.
With perforated arms I pulled a young missionary close,
mud and rain caking his corpse blond features
before using him to shield my unnoticed passing
into the side walks of the unborn.

Licorice & Incense

Streets of sophomoric mementos linger
like the taste of licorice on your earlobe,
antique saltwater filling in the scenery.

I gaze at myself trying to burn the karma
of our harvest in September's early leaves,
our penance still dripping inside my jeans

while you wait for dire Sunday aphorisms
to make wise propaganda out of us.

But the dry abstraction of being apart

reddened telephone whispers at midnight,
lyrical yet rationalized sobs at dawn

drove our badly-arranged families between us.

Still, we land like heaven's own wreckage
atop the playground's monkey bars,
tangled upside down over the trodden mud,

drizzle untucking our shirts
kisses, in slow motion freeze-frames.

I can swallow memory better, as embers replace the flame.

The incense of space fingers the air;
your fragile photograph all the evidence
that's left, this pair of echoing boyhoods,
this opiate survivors call a sonata.

sinistrose, morosite
(dismalness, gloom)

Mon amitie est vive encor, malgre l'absence. Hate-toi!
My friendship is warm still, despite absence. Hurry!

– **Guilliaume Apollinaire**

Small pretty statistic, what's the use?
A person's gloom is their birthright.

When I left for the glowing pink neon,
you were shed, a mirror image
spilt over colorless sand.

But, like old cobblestones, you still smile,
hiding the affectionate beach in the mortar below.

You have no reason to sero-fancy and forget-cell;
Feel the atlas of your remaining
body the way I once did,

Put up, put out ... *out*

the stiff upper lip sewn into the quilt,
tripping up your one-step on the way in.

Do not swallow the pharmacist's pleasant
jingle; build the home away from home
sweet homo we naïvely wrote of
in puppy-loved Valentines
illuminated by medicinal torches
now lining our hands.

Your bodily breakdown, dismalness bathed
in light, dines with us in Thanksgiving,
this hospice meal.

I am your last, best friend:

No matter the blueprint of the coming
lull, your voyage is mine,

our antibody leaves fall together.

The dialect of our Magyar and Saxon eyes,

incandescence

full of unlived yet permanently minor life,
lurks almost deliriously
behind the Hapsburgs' many great facades.

Its gloom burnishes the epitaph
haggard pilgrims shamble toward.

Fleur-de-lis

*In our city darkened now, street and square and crescent,
We can feel our living past in our shadowed present*

– Noel Coward

Talk trash to me, baby,
whisper sweet Tchopitoulas nothings
into my desirous ears.

A thousand corpse dreams in flood-raised graves
swim to me in the brown Pontchatrain tides;
my tainted ears quaff and deaf from the ancient
Gallic brick your buggy horse-draws over.

Rum & sugar lace the adrenaline humping
through our hearts, reverberating
in the old, corrupt Storyville blues.

Jazz-gnarled fingers pick at Armstrong Park's gate
while ragtime eyes play together
through the cypress and ragweed,

*fondling under old Catholic cotton
in the clatter of Desire.*

Like deep-voiced debutantes,
we cakewalk down St. Charles,
dressed to the Sunday preacher nine's.

I blush when you taste gumbo inside my mouth.

Humidity sweetens the Cafe du Monde roast;
mystery pouring down in the rain.

Can the Slave Exchange hear the disquiet
of our chains?

Yes, longhair lust turns to jelly
roll love.

Overcome, my body dances -

with unknown fathers, dead
brothers, and unconceived sons

upon the washable ink
of our genteel bent julep.

Queer Quadrille

Tell me, how many of them would deliver themselves up deliberately to perdition (as He Himself says in that book) rather than go on living secretly debased in their own eyes?

– **Joseph Conrad**, *Under Western Eyes*

Aloof, Voltaire would advise looking for someone less like a character in a book; Goethe agrees, adding, 'A little less re-writable, please, or less so than I.' Genet shouts, 'I want a boyfriend!' With an anxious nod, Forester peeks open his journal, noting "He can look like this: Bare, often, warm in the dark, soft to the touch." Myakovsky growls, 'Zapadniks!' and seizes a quill, scrawling, "Short, sweet-smelling hair, fingers to glide over the ice of my heart, nipples for my erect tongue to caress." Isherwood raises a gloved hand. 'What about, "Lips tight over closed eyes picturing him, an out-of-fashion movie unnoticed by the Society page." Hm?' Fugard claps politely. Greene sneers perfidiously. 'Veneration doesn't propel boys into refuge. The wind does. "Let the West Country breeze hide with him in my soul." Or something like that.' Hiding under the buffet, Kundera tosses a note onto Schiller's lap. The German reads it skeptically: "A near-perfect banquet that isn't a black grave." La Rochefoucault pours more wine. Da Ponte and Schikaneder carouse duetally. Williams scurries out through the back door. Mishima takes his bread. Goddard scribbles up the tablecloth: *Captured in silver dust, framed in gold, the boy makes the man one.* Stone drunk, Fitzgerald approves; Gertrude and Zelda demur. Tchaikovsky begins a seventh symphony on the spot, but cannot decide what to call it. Balzac, smelling of cognac, proves no help. Marlowe begins to bicker with DeVere. Yevtushenko wins a drinking contest with a bitter Hemingway and takes the floor. 'A man's love is voluminous! Glorious! Victorious!' Brodsky cheers ostentatiously. Seeing Mandelstam hasn't yet arrived, they both weep.

Geographies

I - Interior

When poetry doesn't draw closer
all you're left with is prayer
or the coarse grain of famine
in compartments closed of reverb,
men absent of touch,
and sky, deeply
forgotten of contour.

II - Anterior

When the carnival hours end
and the long perplexed morning
of the rest of your life
begins, you, unsung
in another such man's hand,
take ownership of your irregular
heart beat.

III - Exterior

Its fairly amazing
how the colors of a rainbow
can paint a revolution,
how clenched fists
 and dissident kisses
can sketch such pride;

as the month of resistance
dawns, we still squint
for signs of light
 with the hue of pink
on the far-flung horizon.

IV - Ulterior

Deep inside the wading pool of teenagerness
I paddled into the shallows of hurt
that gave such longing
as to part the chlorine blue;

inside this dripping vice I found my real face
in the moon's crescent sigh. Discarded sleep,
after that, crept more easily.

Time Stitch

I see, I see, said the blind man to the deaf dog
to the assembled throng
of boys that don't belong,
of cabbages and kings
polar bears and whales
places and things
bedtime stories and kinky tales,
the midnight sun and the Mediterranean dawn
the full Biscay moon and faces long gone
museums in the morning drizzle
crashing waves on the shore,
as high as the angels in the Alps
alone at home, angry and poor;
the night train strangers under the northern lights
ill-dressed tourists and carbonated neon brights
what a sad sight
seen by eyes that don't work right
punctured by needles icy cold
to travel a broken cobblestone path, so we're told
cruising railroad stations for rented meat
fine dining and morphine cocktails trying to deny defeat
flying alone in a premier class seat
mountain air saliva he holds in his lip's heat
great towers bathed in whimsy
empty Norman beaches to every side
wandered by husbands desperate for their brides;
interstates and passports
postcards and souvenirs
laughter and bliss
people you can hardly miss
sights so beautiful you feel felt up by God
and shed an atheist's few tears;
I've been to heaven, and it's a lot like Paris.

Valentines, cruelly returned for postage

The orphan didn't know how to love,
though the foster child went to the academy,
grew a badge and packed a pistol
to at least pretend.

Pairs of twins bookend
adolescence and adulthood,
not up to the snuff of either,
the not enough best you could do.

The **sop (homo) re:** love,
we couldn't
climb over our faith, and broke
something in the go down.

No anyone worth talking about
for whole school years, save
paying & red-lined children;

two years at the beach
a face to fall for every season,
but none destined to survive
tripping home;

more bunches of not worth talking abouts,
keep your hands offers, names never given.

How amazing to write eloquent
wordsmith somethings
not a whit of real experience
a dictionary could pronounce.

I'd trade the ink for kisses;
I'd kill a pope to fall in love

with a made-up character more real
than these dreary ghosts I keep walking into.

The Wreckage of It All

Letters spell; dispatches that.
Epistles, you re-open a hundred times.

The blue grey sun-up swaddles
the pulp you'd borrowed
burrowed in your cubicle,
following the mottled branches
of your hand

where ball and ink stumble
to keep up with the juniper pangs,
the black currant plumes
persistent in your linen.

Were we really so much out of season?

Is being twenty years late
a wick cut too short to light
some evil thorn
small enough to hide in a sock
(but big enough to draw blood)
or just the frosty haw of December
that dried the spit 'round our mouths?

We were lovely yet invisible...

impossible to tell apart
from the ripples frozen
on the windshield,
a new year occurred inside
our make-believe cool.

Nostrils flared,
taking in the flush
the dawn peeled crosswise
above our exchanged hungers:

*The leafless, bulging paschals
that stank of boys' sweat,
the deep-planted chrisms*

kneeling in the slush.

Elbow to elbow we toweled off
any dewdrops of shame
without knowing

as if we could

the next twenty years
were being wiped away, too.

Forsaken time, really
the shamble of the in-between
and the short-lived

where less dazed, more truthful
saltwater might've undone
the panic that never found a page.

Memorized like all get out
the imagined reconciliations
only seem less cast off.

Barefoot in the snow,
I watch falling flakes dot your i's.

Re-reading your belated vows,

*licking the paper
in lieu of the younger body*

I repeat your name, famished
from listening for its wooden strum
inside the vast, oblong winter.

Symbolism

*Only those things are beautiful
which are inspired by madness
and written by reason.*

– Andre Gide

There is light, emptying into the spirits
beside hours of darkness, hiding in intimates.

High school yearbooks echo, tomb-like
so many prayer cards,
written in tongues other than Rome's.

The pulp of the dusk -

rumble and clatter.

Ghosts alight in the ruddy firmament;

Mozart sweetens the blood I sip like wine,
an amethyst hung on the corner
of a far-off semi-circular sky.

No soft lighting hides such unimportance.

The only symbol left is the small
ink I trance within -
uncovered, unspeakably and no-one else.



Adam Henry Carrière is a poet, teacher, and broadcaster who has crashed five states, committed radio in three, frolicked in some fifteen countries, and even played on three Navy ships before Rummy got wise. Recent publications include *The Smoking Book*, *The Mayo Review*, *Counterexample Poetics*, *Tonopah Review*, *Juked* (2008 Poetry Prize Finalist), *Zygote in My Coffee*, *Oak Bend Review*, and *Tattoo Highway*.

Born on the South Side of Chicago, Adam now resides in Las Vegas, Nevada, where he has personally bankrolled the renovation and/or expansion of at least four neighborhood casinos, won the Nevada Arts Council Fellowship in Poetry, and publishes *Danse Macabre*, Nevada's first online literary magazine. He's also presented a wide range of papers at the Far West Popular Culture Association / American Culture Association's annual Conference, and serves on the Editorial Board of *Popular Culture Review*.

Working on a doctorate (or, working on not being further impoverished and/or disassociated by said pursuit) has not dislodged from him the guilty pleasures of Ian Fleming, bella musica Wien, and Britain's Hammer Films. His favorite poets are Hughes, Szymborska, and Mozart. Particularly, he aspires to follow on the imaginative trail blazed by the feuilleton of Joseph Roth.

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