



The Poet Assassin

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By T.R. Pickerill

1997-2014

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“I would like to make a book to disturb people, like an open door leading them where they would never have gone of their own free will. Simply a door communicating with reality.” Antonin Artaud

Preface by T.R. Pickerill

The poetry and prose that follow are taken from several performance texts written between 1997 and 2014. Following the tragic events of 9/11 and the ensuing wars they were written as a response to our history of being the first country to wage Nuclear War. Odysseus, wagging war without end upon an earth crying out; so many mothers, daughters, sisters, wives turned back into the soil covered in blood. Man adrift on an island of sorrow. Only his thoughts and memories of all he has lost remain without consolation.

Somewhere between the heart and the mind
something went wrong.

The Poet Assassin

Silence

Do not speak her name
The stars have fallen
The ocean is dry
The corpse has been reduced
Only a residue of ash
Descends through a void in time
A phantom without form
Memory running from final heat death
Universes hidden
No mirror
No name
Love
The shadow of a hand
Reaching out of the darkness
All I ever wanted was her love
All that remains, a claw crusted in blood
Rasping across the earth
A dream
A death rattle

Shadows dive and run in long hours sleepless
and heaving with labored breath, summer
burdened and loathsome. Hours checked off
marking the cadence lumbering with a
groaning remove from decency, shirking layers
of cover from bodies prostrate to the fetid air
of a city moaning for an end never to come.
Bellies bloated with a poison riling and
expectant rising to the sky, a great soufflé of
human guts and flesh, roiling with sweat and
sex blistered and oozing forth a tide of death.
Careening off reasons vacant steps, pressing
lips to stone for a damp reprieve, cooling with
deaths hardened remove. Oh, how to be
human again.

What do you say to a man who has spent years dreaming of home, of black and red earth between toes, the kiss of a lover, the embrace of friends, but for whom only death comes calling with the piercing cry of a dying star? Beaming rays clawing back time purchased, a debt to be payed once and finely. If one remains to cast the net and return the children swimming through the sleepless night finds with space an open grave and time a delirium, what is left to say? What answer for the dying when blistered tongue and eyes remove all chance at one last word, one last chance to be human, to speak, to cry, to kiss, to feel, to know, to be heard? What of poetry then?

Five fingers have I
To wield the sword
To sever the head
To clear the field

Five fingers have I
To wield the knife
To end the dream
To uncover the eye

Five fingers have I
To wield the ax
To fell the tree
To recover the life

I know what you are thinking
I can see your sneering
But I know better the stink that's in you
That you try to cover with your Masquerades
The pustules between your legs held tight

Where I stand I see the reek
Run down your thighs
And when your towers of gold crumble
And heavens fall
How will you shriek?
When famine runs your family through

And flies feast on bosom and bone
What think you then of one such as me?
Will you fight?
Will you take flight?
When tongues grow fat and cracked
How will they wag?

I am the mother returning
To take back the rotten earth
Slobbering down bloodied thighs
And shit crack
Sipping poison from virgin lips

You've idolized death
And called it life
You've run aground
Time to kill the captain

I am the Assassin
Come for your ticket

Soon we depart

Thrown apart
Against the wall
Blind folded
Singed
Burnt
A coup
A riot
An uprising
A virus
Freedom fighter
Terrorist
Revolutionary
Traitor
Freeman
Patriot
Reactionary
Slave
Intervention
Censored
Programmed
Gunshot
Tear gas
Roadblock
Car crash

Drive by
Forced down
Restrained
Censored
Retrained
Strategic bombers
Smart bombs
Lasers
Microwave guns
Anti personnel mines
Collateral damage
'Dead or alive'
'Dead or alive'
Guns pulled
Finger on the trigger
On the button
Razor wire
Watchtower
Compound
Cage
Ethnic cleansing
Electric fence
Cyanide gas
Mass grave

Killing field
Machete
Ovens
Concentration camp
Trap door
Hangman's noose
Camera in the corner
Watching you
Watching me
Relocation
Refugee
Crying baby
Crying man
Dead mother
Falling building
Fallout shelter
Firestorm
Firebomb
Sirens
An air raid
Duck and cover
No more shelter
Buzz bomb
Suicide bomber

Martyr
Madman
Angry mob
And mad dog
Lynching
Guillotine
Table and syringe
Dead end
Suicide
Empty shell
An atom bomb
Electro magnetic blast
Liquidating souls
Foaming at the mouth
Warheads
Glistening teeth
Red flashing lights
Open mouths
Screaming
Flash burn
Blisters
Radiation Poisoning
Silhouettes
Empty

Lost
PTSD
Water Boarding
Black Sites
A running crowd
Falling down
Panic
Stampede
Alarms
Cops with whistles
Breach the barrier
Molotov cocktail
Boiling over
Raised heartbeat
Sweaty palms
Red in the face
Eyes bugged out
A paddy wagon
Raised club
Barking dogs
Shadows
Stitches
Trash cans overturned
Cars set aflame

Over run
Pepper spray
Rubber bullets
Bloodied face
Torn clothing
Blood being washed down the gutter
White silhouette on the pavement
Fear
Power
Powerless
'Your either with us or you are against us'
The sky is falling
Only a shadow left
Aids
Anthrax
Smallpox
Plague
Biochemical
Nuclear arsenal
Strategic reserve
Total war
Total war
Total war

My lips brake
All is silent
I has wandered

No thing
No where
No shelter
No mountain
No valley
No skin
No flesh

"I can't breath"

"Even the Birds were on Fire."

Time has ended
With an open mouth and an open ass
Screaming into the void
As my sex crawls beneath the night

My sex
Enveloped in the boiling of the sky

My sex
Tuberous snouts probing
A cankered earth
Extracting poisons
Time honored

Tongues
Canceling the void

Silence scattered
Between cries

Forget
Everything
Forget
Everything that
Has ever been written
Or said
Forget all that you have been taught
Forget it
Forget
Everything that
Has ever been done
Forget
Everything
Forget
Everything
Forget
Everything

Your
Time is up!
Mother fucker!

I am the mother
Returning to take back the rotten earth
Slobbering down bloodied thighs
And shit crack
Sipping poison from sodden lips
I am the Assassin
Come for your ticket
Soon we depart

Within me is the essence of light
Light unseen
Surrounding me is light ruptured
Torn apart

On all sides space reverberates
A voice never to be heard
Here there is only death
Filled with contempt
In hail stones
I fall upon
My self
I shriek
Falling back upon an idea of self
I once held to be true

My ancient teeth turn liquid
As bile rises
Flesh rescinds its friendship with bone
Shattered
Splintered
There is no longer any connection
Oracular orbs eclipsed in
Watery graves
Puked up
Over board
Sails torn from masts
Limbs flail
Over board, I fall
Through the earth
In spite of my vile taste
It swallows me in bits

The castration of the father
Flayed
The word is separated
From the action
Thrown onto the fire of the mother
Swimming amidst the larvae
Of sweltering blood beasts
The tongue runs before
The word in fear
Before I was asleep
Living in dreams

Shrinking from the dream
I still sleep
But without dreams
Tangled in stained sheets
Eyes held by salt
In a blur of intrauterine
No time
Floating with feat baked in clay
Colored with blood
Glistening with sweat
Empty of semen
Lacking

Creativity held moldering
Impotent
Yet impatient
A blind man stumbling through unfamiliar
houses
There, where life escapes me
Death is at home
The universe recedes away in fear
From the anger of man
Mother of slobbering lips
Eyes the empty plate

Sitting naked in the wrecked dinning hall
The ancient country kitchen
Meeting place in silent late night hours
When men
Ready for open warfare
Make plans
To kill each other
What takes hold?
The youngest son rushes home
"Is the house still there?
Is all lost?"

Wandering through the dust of vacancy
There is the elder son
Taller than I remember
His face in shadows
Wearing unfamiliar cloths
"Where is father?"
"Here"
Wrapped in a dark cloak
He enters like the ghost of a plague
Naked I swim to shore
Replete

Lost in the moment
I am the fish on the line
But whose line?
What line?
To what end do they wish to serve me?
I demand to know!

I am capsized
I sink to the bottom
Holding heavy weights
Where is the end?
Head splitting pavement

I throw myself
Upon the verge
Captivated
I verge

I am the mother
Taking back the
Rotting earth slobbering down
Bloodied thighs and shit crack
Sipping poison from virgin lips

You've idolized death
And called it life
You've run aground

Time to kill the captain

I am the Assassin
Come for your ticket
Soon we depart

Wake up!
The house is on fire

Wake up!
Feel the fire flicker
Upon your toes
Feel the smoke roll
Across your nose

Wake up
Unconscious dweller in dreams

Wake up!
What opium daze
What blind maze
Keeps you here
What fancied illusion
What dark confusion
Keeps you near
Flames flicker
Smoke rolls
And still you sleep
Though not so soundly
You roll and struggle

Toss and turn
And still you sleep
Unconscious dweller in dreams

Wake up!
This house is on fire
Wake up!

Oblivion

I have tried to avoid this moment
We may never meet
But I need to say goodbye

To everything that is lost
To the other to the rest
That I will never know
Where are you?

The night is cold, dark and hungry
And I run
Naked and bloody, screaming even

I hate you! But little do you care
You are lonely, and still you turn away
Hungry, yet still you eat dirt
Oblivion is not enough for you

So many times I lie to you

I love you

How long has it been since I've seen you?
I dreamt of you again. Sitting
Smoking on the edge of the mattress
Not naked, your innocence
Not yet relinquishing your body to the world
Then you were gone
A mirage could not have been more real
I searched for remains of your cigarettes
Like bread crumbs in the forest
I ran my hand across your impression
cradled my head in its saddle
A well to pull forth memories
To peer into its dark still water
Hoping, in that mirror
I might find that you have returned
Your hand on my shoulder
Pulling me back to bed
To rest again in your arms
The stillness is shattered
A feral cat mews
And neon hums and flashes
And I am alone

I saw you again, in my dream
You were the Earth
White and glowing
Heat and wetness
The universe in revolutions
About you spinning

It is morning, but still I am not one of the
World's creatures
Creeping forth out of the slime
No one answers me except the mirror
It is cold
Still
No Sun
And yet my eyes are filled with light
Colors vast
Mirages are more real and solid
But I do not believe them
Yet I am convinced
My heart soars
Is it you my love?
Is it sleep that keeps me from you?
Under cloak have you secreted to my bedside
To draw the curtains which hide this sun?
Morning rising bare and virgin in golden veils
While I sleep
Ashen lips lay silent, senseless, unknown
Lost in valleys of ocean deep
Where have you been?

Three planets
Three mountains
Three pyramids
Three space ships
Three actors
Three masks
One is lost

I do not belong here
This world is vaporous
Lying
Eternity a twilight of fire
A clawing rock of destruction
Bearing down upon the mind
Of another world I am
Searching
She is my heart
Lost, I have
Love, she is
For this, everything
I would give
But for life
I have nothing

The cliffs rise up
The sky falls
Upon them
Waring
I am stranded
Head on a pike
Body open for display
Blood crying
For the night
And sleep
For the stranger

You lick your wounds crying out
Wrapping your bones around an empty pit
An Engulfing, yawning, desire to be empty
Cultivating sorrow, walling one's self off
Bitterly tempting fate
You ask where I have gone?
Though I have never been apart from you
Loving you, calling out to you
Blindly you deny me
I am here in your heart
Why do you run?
Hiding like a child in a dream
Unable to awaken
Pinned with terror
Crippled with your thoughts
Imagining what is not there
A bitter world, body falling away
Untouched

I am a maggot
Death is not far
On my side
A body grows foul
Waiting to rise

Holding back beasts with
Outstretched hands
Searching the abyss
For a look from her

The sky is purple and there are
Yellow stripes like veins
I bleed radioactivity off the thermal piles
Complex molecules ignite
My veins are rivers
Liquid fire
I flow across her body

Born on cliffs and rocky slides
Terrorizing the earth, piercing the sky
The little girl rode the small Mongolian horse
Slowly traversing a sky masked in haze and
Dust, lifted on heels searching the abyss
The caravan is pursued as night
Rises up in shadows vaporous and milky
She is alone in her fear
On either side the limits rise and fall
In rocks and crags, toothy and howling
Indifferent to her loneliness

Death is old
The oldest thing that I can remember
I watched over her body for a week
With a stick and a fire
First a Lion
Then Vultures ringing the sky
So in a pit my hands buried Her
With a bed of flowers
And veil of stones

