

Four Poems by John Gartland

bangkok air

It had to be the emanon bar,

I can't tell you how unhinged he was to see me.

We'd had a few of their specials and we were getting loose.

I'd probably be teetotal if it wasn't for this bar.

You get drunk of course, but, it goes without saying

(you're obviously a cultured man) that context is everything,

always, and juice is only juice.

He ordered a trio of witch killers, bottled in Japan,

it's thirty five percent; strontium and alcohol.

Bottle's so cold you can't put it down but

after a few pulls you aren't afraid of frost bite

or polar bears or even the Koran.

A couple of rats were foraging

confidently under a food stall opposite,

the cat, as usual, was in hiding.

The mamasan, as only she can

displayed her astounding assets to man

leaned across the bar and lit a smoke.

There's poison in the city air,

wherever you're residing.

It's the frisson before storytime.

He looked his age, whatever it was,

but obviously he could tell a joke.

A surprising number of city folk
are masked for pollution apocalypse .

I haven't fully sussed it yet, but
it's like a horror movie set, and
maybe we don't know we've had our chips.

He allowed himself a long consoling toke.

Decomposition, baby, your place, or mine?

I hadn't planned on retirement
in a zombie social paradigm.

He looked his age, whatever it was,
but obviously he could tell a joke.

Took up where he'd begun
when an arch and sexy female voice says
are you sitting comfortably children?
Here's the latest shit from the oracle,
as she leaned across the bar and lit one;
do bars get better than this he asked
and I took that as frankly rhetorical.

She will eat you alive
but I will risk it he said,
then I'll describe it later.
I'm old, he laughed, and bent
by all the vortices of vice,

but I retain a certain skill
in my role as the narrator.

It's been poisonous for years out there
and will get worse tomorrow.

My advice to those outside this bar
is don't inhale, or swallow.

lizardvilleproductions

emanon

Purgation Day

He was there again, in the Emanon bar.

Late afternoon, and mind ajar to catch the currents
and the eddies of the soi. So he offered me a drink
to listen. Let me share my true addiction, since a boy;
it is Poetry and Awe. You've heard me speak of this
intoxicant before, but once you're hooked
you'll want to get it pure as possible, for sure
and uncut by the lizardry. You'll need purgation
of the mental palate. Comprenez? And do you
know what day is it today? I ventured Thursday.

Another two of those, he told the bar, today's
Purgation day. So, here's a picture of me,
wrong side of the equinox, And not giving
a libertarian toss for journalistic hacks and
talentless gallery clones, contemptible ageing
punk rockers, tattooed tarts and vacuous hipsters,
Spit it out bro, I remarked unnecessarily. So
to clownish nodding DJ's, and colliding drones
stumbling by, fixated on their phones.
I could go on. You ought, I said.
Purgation seemed to clear the head.

The dog ate rat poison left for his wife.

That tragedy destroyed his life;

but I'll come back to that. He went on.

There's karaoke-retards singing

we don't need no education

exemplifying thought control.

And if I had the time I'd say

when I worked in the industry

that 'My Way' was the favourite song

heard as the conveyor rolled along

and the crematorium curtains closed.

Another life goes out to high-so super

market musak from that old Vegas Mafioso.

I'd sooner go out frozen with a stiffie, on a trolley

and a modelling pouch in day-glo.

I know. It's not exactly Beowulf.

But I will defy banality.

And looking at the mamasan, he closed,

I cannot rise to the heroic,

without another shot, of illegality.

Extraordinary episodes occurred before our parting.

I resisted the temptation to reveal I liked Dean Martin.

Ryokan to Teishin

Let them read your letters at my funeral,
your reckless poems, I'll be satisfied.

Let them know I laugh aloud at death now,
never mourn me, I am glorified.

Let there be general dancing in the streets now,
and unrestricted joy, illegal highs,
your lines outblaze the Emperor concerto,
the love you give outshines a Nobel prize.

Your passion and your poetry embraced me,
I feigned the winning numbers in my ear,
chance rushed me with your eloquence and beauty,
love's deluge flooded this autumnal year.

No priests! Just read your letters at my funeral,
for hearing them will give all sadness pause;
astound them with your letters at my funeral.

I rode them like a rocket to the stars.

Seneca in Silom

Seneca in Silom

was a scoop.

He sat at the Pavilion stooped like Atlas

shouldering all the world's absurdity.

We ordered pineal gland pate, and fresh baguettes;

despite a poisonous fog of ideology

a sage adapts to everything he gets.

Especially, when interviewing ghosts, creative

adaptation is the wisest methodology;

I confess to prefer the black bandito face masks

worn by ladies; the white ones are so bland

and, frankly, surgical.

The zeitgeist, sadly's, neither pure nor lyrical

and it's likely to be this way for a while.

You may cough and spit, and fulminate with passion,

but you can at least asphyxiate in style,

and stoically still relate to fashion.

Existential nausea's out there, walking in your shoes,

tattoo-covered tourists with overweight wives,

users and losers and mafia bruisers

and tarts and transsexuals, stark exhibitionists,

staggering toppers and spiralling lives.

It takes intoxication to inoculate the blues.

Don't make a big deal out of it, the drama of extinction.

Whole galaxies of dust and gas assure us
it will come to pass, our history's demise.
Some new reactor meltdown or some warhead of distinction,
some accident or spill of really toxic and impressive size.
Just give the scientists enough rope and
you'll be a Malthusian isotope. Problem solved,
and the final answer is talking to a Geiger-counter.
Don't fret too much, don't sweat the job, as it's likely that
some globalist mob will prematurely claim the prize,
and cut the species down to size;
the route's mere technicality, we're done.

Stay busy and find things to do, lounge-lizardry,
some gallery daubs, a nose-ring or a new tattoo.
Project yourself, inject yourself,
re-write and re-invent yourself. That's you,
up on the plasma screens, there, waving to A.I.
The route to the miasma's merely technical. Besides,
they took you to the cleaners, now you're all hung out to dry.
Inevitably you'll represent the Society of the Spectacle.
I'm tired of offering tolerance to religiose insanity,
your head's a media dumpster-fire, full seven days a week,
combustible consumerism, ignorance and vanity.
Alive today, I'd deal in Zen and Situationist chic,
blast-off with Elon Musk, to Mars, and take it inter-planetary.

They're announcing a new emperor.

Catullus nods, from explorations of depravity
conducted with his usual intensity and gravity.
It's Silom, after all. And when in Rome

Offstage, more trumpets, pomp and obsequies.
Praetorian processions, slaves, robotic dancers.
We raise a toast to Gibbon from our radioactive cloud,
to knaves and touts, triumphant shouts,
sad elephants and milling crowds,
forbidden questions, brittle answers.

#PoetryThePoetNoirBangkok

#LizardvilleProductions

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