



# Harmonia

outfakes and B-sides

Don Share

*Argotist Ebooks*

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Argotist Ebooks

Dedicated to the Old Man and the Puss.

# Harmonia

## **Fantasia on the Rapture**

- for the esteemed poet, B.K.

The rich people in my town live on a street  
that smells like ass.

They give over their opinion as if it were  
a terrible stone doll.

As for their houses—at least paint  
doesn't make noise.

You know that part of a movie where  
it's almost over, but

not quite? And you're glad? Well, that  
is where I am with life.

The horror of just being a line, or being  
contracted into a line, a line

That shatters into a thousand aberrations—  
I could not even retreat dead

into emotion, so... Measure my life  
in Wikileaks and recycling instead.

I had learned to dissemble, *mon frere!*  
And if I had any real

gumption, I'd machine-gun that great  
big collected poems of so-and-so.

"We have come," Yeats was told by  
the unknown writer,

"to give you metaphors for poetry."  
Like him, my wife tells me,

I have been engaged in bouts  
of snoring, of "sleeps,"

of dreams with sounds, hallucinations,  
scents, flashes of light,

And movements of external objects, namely  
mosquitos and cats.

On whose esoteric authority are we  
to accept all this rapture?

Isn't it all just a hearty bit of *temps  
perdu*? I eat. Pray. Leave.

I asked for some TLC, but all I got was  
The Learning Channel.

Well, life is nothing if not edu-  
cational. Cultural

crapital... Absolutitis... I don't believe  
that an individual is

the result of a crowd of a million  
divided by a million,

and I don't believe in pinning you  
down like a butterfly.

As you know: *Affliction most doe  
give us eyes to see.*

## **Praise the Lowered**

*-seen on tattoo*

It was ever thus, spake Zarathustra.  
Drinking beer with the neighborhood

Obama-haters, when putsch comes to shove.  
We're all embedded in history.

I said: You have to veil the evil,  
to some extent.

But I was caviling the clover,  
staring into my wobbly glass.

God invented the meniscus  
to save idiots like me.

Here comes the litany. Its gurning face  
poking through the curtain has launched

a thousand angry ships bound to land  
wherever the sowers of discord moan.

## **The Kind-Hart's Dreame**

The cruel know to whom to be cruel.  
A thunderbolt strikes before the victim

ever sees the lightning. Even if the cruel  
were angels, they would have to be turned

into devils. And their victims?  
If I were to give them dungeons,

they would, to a man, write their last  
testaments right on the dingy walls

*in their own heart's blood.*

## LA BOTA (Loteria card)

*The boot in the face, the brute / Brute heart of a brute like you. – Sylvia Plath*

I.

*Das Boot* must dive deep to survive,  
its crew keeping silent to minimize  
noise and avoid detection; they're bored  
on board, our jackbooted cast, but attacked

and reattacked, avoiding dejection, they're more  
or less alive. *Das Boot* returns under cover  
of darkness to New Rochelle in the next reel.  
Make that La Rochelle. But then, well,

everyone dies in the hell of a U-Boat  
bunker, strafed cinematically by the Allies.  
All is lies. All is horror. All is over.  
All's well that ends über alles.

*Every film buff adores a fascist, a heel.*

II.

Many employees have gotten the boot.

III.

Do not attempt to remove this locking device  
from your vehicle.

IV.

It follows me wherever I go.  
In particular, it loves the snow.  
It has soul. I get a kick out of it.  
It's made of I know now what.  
It tries to stay in step with me, but –  
I yell at it when I'm running late.  
It hugs the hollow of my foot.  
It looks lonesome, it has no mate.

V.

Nancy Sinatra was made for walking.  
Her black boot was made for her stocking.  
One good boot stalks another.

VI.

When you fell

one boot,  
please yell:

*TIMBERLAND!*

VII.

Every poet adores a boot,  
the black boot  
in which we have lived out  
our dark days  
like a fist.

## **The Arrow**

The arrow leaves Cupid's quiver, pierces the heart –  
But not really; tells us which way to go;

Reminds us to be straight, though  
Where it lands I know not; no.

Departs on-time-every-time from its blow;  
With skill (not its own) finds the target –

Bloodred, bullethole round, shaped like an O;  
Has tailfeathers, a slim sexy shaft, is never slow.

The arrow joins arrow – in a row – all *eros*.

## **Lost Roads**

Don't think of her, think of Frank Stanford.

## **The Rapture, Again**

I'll be there with ringing in my ears.

## **Librido**

Our ancient cat grew  
itself a tumor

between its eyes  
that furrows its eyes

even further,  
for whatever

of its life is left.  
A cat is not an it,

you tell me.  
It is now,

I tell you.

## **For a Dying Cat**

If the continent  
of black is landed

on your white fur  
expands and shrinks

like ocean's tides  
then I know you

are still breathing  
my dilatory old friend.

## Harmonia

Inside every *mensch*  
is a piano-playing feygella  
who wants to play Carnegie Hall

With his pants down,  
and a gold Cross pen  
to help commemorate the occasion.

## **I'm So Glad We Had This Time Together**

The fat rabbis who fathered  
my father's forefathers hungered  
for truth, justice, and a real schmeer.  
They were well-fed, ill-informed, imperious,  
and full of fear.  
Their ungainly bodies defeated introspection.  
Only the vagaries of their shabby wardrobes  
admitted abstraction.  
Wooly-minded, genial except when provoked,  
their disputations, never-ending, were yoked  
by violence together: interrupted by children and wives  
who sharply reflected their faces at them - like knives.  
The war interrupted all that; their way of life ended  
without even a prayer or good-bye,  
and they left behind only whatever there was to find  
in the violent rolling blue, before he died, of my father's  
one good eye.

## **Toiling in the Mills of the Kavanaghs**

What couldn't I do with a pen  
of iron with the tip of a diamond?

## **Mirror**

She looks good  
in the mirror. So  
do I fall in love  
with the one  
in the mirror  
or ... ?

## **I Can't Believe You're Standing on Your Hind Legs for a Tuber**

In my mind,  
it's almost pumpkin pie time.

The lattes are on the froth,  
and Mr. Blue Sky has banged

his purple fists on a table  
ably set for two.

*What is the purpose of a scolding?*

## **1,000 Places to See Before You Die**

No bad idea goes to waste here.  
Nor is daydreaming necessarily encouraged.

## **The Ages of Man**

Who knew that eyedrops and buttcream  
mark the many ages of man?

As the boy who quit saying Kaddish  
for his old man, I had glimmers of the rage—

Well, who wants to go on living these days?  
A sage? If I will, I can. It's my turn.

On the first and last page of my will:  
A scream.

## **The Lost Language of Umbrella Makers**

Pitty-Pat on the way to the pity party,  
singing: "The Grass Won't Pay No Mind"  
in the rain.

Pray she won't get wet, smarty-  
pants, or you will find  
that nothing

Comes from pity but pain. I quote that  
last bit of piety because I'm in a bind.  
I have to ask:

Is it quiet now? I can't tell. I can hear  
what goes on, but only  
partly.

I am not nothing but love.

## **Over, Under, Sideways Down**

According to the crystal monarch of the air,  
the revolution will not be theorized.

I have a sadness that is almost Jewish  
and a veil of ideas I can't think

through, or around. Mostly, nobody  
can tell if a stone was put where it is

by design or not. My word I poured:  
so there! The past is too tight?

So are these plaints.

## Sow and Grow

*Sibley's Guide to Birds? Or Trees?*

Crazy people are the first not to know

that they're crazy. A disturbance  
of just under an hour's time can seem

like an eternity, if you're a crazy person.  
The police will come; you'll wish you

were the one who called them: banging  
on doors, garden plants overturned

in rage, above all the yelling, from both  
sides of a closed door. It's late October,

and some birds – I wish I could say  
more about them – still linger, singing.

Fewer of them, I gather, thanks to climate  
change; but the survivors mate and sing

just the same, thank you very much,  
and there's so much less raking of leaves.

## Genealogy

The sons of the fathers count  
for so much less than the deaths

of fathers. I cannot chuse but  
love them, the fathers. Counting

my blessings backwards,  
teeth on the blackened edge

of the soul, I study his unsteady eye.  
Therefore language. Therefore eyes.

The juiciness of the language,  
it's not perfectly done. I can't preserve

our organs from our will, or from want.  
So go stir the pot. Flay the chicken

and strip out all the nerves. Eat.

## **Perfection**

If you're going to be a perfectionist,  
then make sure you are perfect, please.

## Badfinger

I have never “made” another person happy.  
But doesn’t everybody get to start over

with a green slate each spring?  
Gone are the cold days when I sulked

in my peasoups. Gone are the icy  
daemons who nudge us when our stinky

muse tempts us. If you go down  
the wrong road, there will be a warmish

clearing, and then a fork –  
either way, you are going to freeze.

It could be the hour of the wolf,  
during which children are made

to sit in quiet quasi-darkness  
till the first lamp of light is lit.

A cold man who wants to be warm,  
even now I don’t know a water to write on.

## **Amen**

Amen is always an afterthought.  
Amplitude is, after all, part of the prayer.

And look, I'm happy to receive your pain, however  
voluminous. But isn't the same at least the same?

One is apt to overfall, the work is so unimportant.  
But the ranting has got to stop, and it has to stop.

When? And where? Come down from that mountain  
right this instant, or I'll put an end to it all, and to my name.

## The Hotel Apollo

One size does not fit my all.  
I have pet peeves, but not a pet. Yet.

Otium works for me, if it works for you.  
My work, after all, is my *manus*,

And with luck, it'll go nicely into  
my *libellus*. Might we share

some innuendo? A bit of cut  
and thrust in the public forum?

Because you and I love and hate  
and fuck and chisel out verses.

Yours are very good.  
I'm all for 'em.

So let us go, you and I,  
then to the Hotel Apollo.

## Daemons

Speaking of daemons, I'm very sorry  
that he had to die  
without his glasses on.

What do you do with the persons of your dreams?  
It is not an ego-inflating experience,  
being in the homeland of your last thoughts.

The climes of the angels, it seems,  
are not marked by a tombstone, not for a year.  
There is therefore no such thing as a near-

death experience, do you hear me?  
But there really is a chasm, and I really  
am looking straight into it, despite

the expanse of the expanse.  
He never did descend, or condescend,  
to ask me what it was all about.

He got, instead, this burial clout.

## **Cleopatra's Nose**

Had she been plainer, Caesar  
would not have invaded Egypt.

Am I writing about my father?  
Yes, and no. And I don't

feel the least bit of mortification  
I'm so doing, because uncertain

wants are more excruciating  
than certain wants. But

mostly no. Mostly just me  
and my ordinaries are here.

## **Lumps**

Take them.  
And if your heart isn't  
in it, why then  
it's just one big lump.

## **Wisteria**

This is not a wistful little French movie.

## **Seminal Versicle**

Small  
is not all  
that's beautiful.

A dwarfish whole,  
said Cole-  
ridge on a roll.

## Great House

Cheese was meat in my family.  
You wouldn't want to meet my family.

\*

Walking on tippytoes through my own house—  
but still slow dancing with you in my sleep.

\*

Everything I bought today  
is square and vacuum-packed.

\*

But I didn't come home with all this  
stuff just to fool you.

\*

Every marriage I've ever had,  
somebody came along and said

\*

*This is a such great house!*

## **Swoon**

My beautiful cat  
had a nose like

Akhmatova.  
She had

historia, and  
harmonia.

## Poem on the Demise of Doctor Death

There are  
no indelible  
marks on a soul,  
not a one.

And yet  
no conscience  
is immaculate,  
after all.

So what words  
were inscribed  
in your black  
diaries? –

The world's  
own secrets  
that you took  
with you

and spread around  
like grass seed,  
watering and waiting?  
And waiting?

## **This I Believe**

I do believe  
my cat is

behaving  
posthumously.

## Why I Am Not Bertrand Russell

They say Russell's BBQ in Oak Park  
is not what is used to be. Oh,

the sauce still has cinnamon and cloves  
in it, sure, but, hark –

the angels sing not of this unguent.  
Their heralds are mute as newspapers.

Russell's is closed for X-mas, they say.  
I hope they have had a lovely holiday. Or he.

Today's storm has stranded weary  
travelers in windswept droves.

The snow has fallen, as have we,  
in great drifts. An unbeliever, I find

that I'm praying nowadays, are you?  
It's quiet. It's wine-o'clock.

I've no more thoughts on the matter.  
I'm just saying.

## **Zero Degrees of Separation**

He had nine lives, but he did not have ten.  
Pentameter meant not a thing to him.

We buried him in the heel of a storm.  
What was the weather when he was born?

That's precisely what has died with him.

## **On All Fours**

The way you treat me –  
must be  
a post-axial development.

It's not at all susceptible  
of explanation  
in terms of instinct.

Who invented this taxonomy?  
Who put the con  
in contempt?

He who put  
claws on the tiger  
for all to see?

And the harsh  
black pepper  
in my dyspeptic eggs?

*A termagant.*

## **The Right to Bear Arms**

The grace of the childhood bed.  
Someone usually ends up dead,

or “clinging” to life. That’s the night,  
throwing us what we can bear.

## Cleopatra's Needle

After  
a period  
of illness  
I lost  
my father  
(sorry  
about the bad  
grammar  
there!)  
in Central  
Park.  
I want  
him back,  
the little  
prick!  
Come back  
before dark  
or I'll be stuck  
with this  
most odd  
nostalgia.

## **I Expostulate; You Reply**

Collateral damage and opportunity costs aside,  
if you won't say good-night, then *I'll* say it.

## **Like As Not**

You told me my simile was not “the same.”

## *Tempers fugit*

Never tell a dying man to go to hell.  
Never say you're going to put an animal  
"to sleep," oh no. And well,  
promise nothing "till death do you part,"  
because death is the part you don't understand.  
Do not say you're "tired" when (dead to rights)  
you mean something else, or "I love you"  
when you mean something else.  
Don't blather about the Northern Lights  
or Perseids if you feel isolated,  
or talk about maybe buying a piano.  
You should never go to sleep angry—  
no, stay up all night, feel furious  
rather than waste any dreams you might have  
or find yourself merely elated.  
Just because I'm an atheist doesn't mean  
you don't have to pray for me, you dope.  
When you reach, as they say, the end  
of your rope—hang yourself.  
Otherwise, just hang in there and love  
somebody else even harder. And if you fail  
at what you set out to achieve,  
find a rhyme for "fail" like, say, "tail,"  
"pail," "ail." But never tell a dying man  
he can go to hell. We murder to dissect,  
as you always say. As you always said.

## On Bellowing

If words fail me, oh –  
you will supply them, loudly;  
nor are they luxury items wasted  
on flunkeys, horses, cats and so forth.  
Nor can I hide among the thickets, no,  
for these words render me, lowing  
like a cow, inexcusable: callow.  
Please stop yelling, though.  
I already know that if you fail  
yourself you fail everywhere—or so  
said a bellicose man who called  
himself **Bellow**.

## **Somebody Soul-Murdered Mike**

Somebody soul-murdered Mike!  
That little bone in his heart got broke.  
He never reached his full height.  
He still has training wheels on his mental bike.

The person Mike of whom I spoke?  
His bird-like movements when he told a joke,  
the way he told me to go take a hike?  
God preserve my soul-murdered Mike!

## Receipt

It was the added shake  
of salt, the sharp

comments  
that did me in, that  
peppered our talk.

But tears spiced the stew.

## **Parable of Arable Land**

The man always dies first, as my dad always said.  
He built a brick house for his family, a new church  
in his town, and a slim wooden coffin for himself.

His trowel fingers flew like birds, the nails he hammered  
bit faster than cat's teeth; he never got drunk  
and wouldn't speak about his work.

The ingratitude of his children was sharp like sawteeth,  
and when he died, God built a for him a storm  
that washed away every stone he ever laid. Sad.

But the coffin survived, and it sang this tale like a harp.

## Essay on *Mañana*

That opens up a can of worms, but I am just a worm.

\*

He must increase, but I must decrease.

\*

Your family will always find you wanting  
the family you never had.

\*

Sweet nothings once in a blue moon  
is all I ask.

\*

We never died of tomorrows yet.

## **On Rhetoric**

Mincing words  
is not what  
I do.

I hack  
their bloody  
arms off,

and mouth  
their expiring  
stumps, even though

a full meal  
is a crime  
against God

and man.

## The Pilot

Who tells *me* what to do?  
Somebody always tells me what to do.  
What to do?

I have a list: a what-to-do  
list, and, you guessed it: it's much to do  
about nothing. "Nothing to do,"

Says my daughter. "Nothing to do?"  
I reply? "What's it got to do  
with me?" *To do or not to do,*

That is the question; it's die or do.

## **The Pearl of Idolatry**

Value, price, and profit?  
Come off it!

Shades of Hades?  
Miss Moffett, your tuffet.

What is it  
about a man and his mower?

His wife, may she glower  
in Hell with other ladies  
as the Lord sees fit—

That pearl I gave her.  
Why didn't I ever waver

from the throne where I sat,  
and still, forever, sit?

## Word Problem

*"In my life the furniture eats me." – W.C. Williams*

Home is a place  
to think about something else.

The yelling  
is scarring.

Eventually, the battery  
will die, and it will stop.

Home is a place  
where they serve you slop

and you must take it in  
like a kitten from the midden

who has hidden a herring.

## **Take Me to the Pilates**

My dog is downward-facing.  
The Cow. The Plow. The Pegasus.

What's left of my heart is racing  
With the Devil. *Ow!* "Don't cuss!"

## **I Wandered Lonely as a Clod**

The cracks in the ceiling  
are edifying as anything.

## **The Most Certain Thing**

Shakespeare's sonnets  
were his most exact copies.

## **Hello Is Other People**

The denial of co-evalness, for instance.

\*

Grief is like coming home from the doctor.

\*

Please have your identikit ready.

\*

Posthumous advice books for mothers.

\*

Hell hath no fury.

\*

Hello, My Name Is.

\*

The cat continues to be angelic

## **Home on Derange**

Hypnogogic nonsense:  
speaking with dead Father,

stroking long-gone kitty,  
cuddling with You.

Our roses are heirlooms  
that come and go.

I gather them as I may,  
and wither.

## **“Why Am I the Keeper of Every Goddam Thing?”**

Fatherhood is like listening to other people talk about some wonderful dream they had:

It is not a pleasant feeling,  
and it doesn't change the world.

## **Intimidations of Mortality**

The rose of Sharon  
in the Hebrew Bible  
wasn't even a rose.

## People with Thin Skins

Gravitate towards  
other people  
with thin skins.

Like pharaohs,  
they build great dark  
chambers, and take

everyone with them  
when they die  
in a golden blaze,

their skins  
crisping into  
thin black leaves.

## **All Stories are Likely**

I keep thinking  
that the rocking

chair creaking  
is someone come

to see me here;  
wrong again, but

no violence has been  
done to plausibility.

## **The Sorrows of Young Worthless**

Were so  
outlandish.

If you can read  
this, *save yourself!*

## The Origin of Speciousness

Years passed.  
Everybody in the whole-  
sale block

was dancing  
to the Jailhouse  
Rock.

Then one day  
I walked freely into  
a plate glass door

after which I saw  
things very differently.  
Like stars, or

your precious aging face.  
Those accusations?  
Look, we all of us

end up on the wrong foot.  
That is to say,  
on our backs. And fast.

## **The Encountrist**

What the cat doesn't grab  
the crow takes away. How  
can anything be saved?

Sometimes I'm just so  
subtotaled. Jerks run  
the world, with their bad

cologne and playlists;  
spouses freely espouse  
little, or nothing at all.

Maybe I shouldn't talk to you  
about poetry anymore.

## **Black Mark on My Permanent Record**

Every OCD should begin  
with his own penis. That's why

I am a B student for life,  
washing my hands of love,

a notwithstanding kind of guy  
who continues to think

in percentiles.

## **Use Your Words**

Your dad is in my handbag.

## **Fireflies on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July**

I've been so unwise.  
Don't let this be

my last book,  
or despise.