

Bernadette Mayer

ceremony latin
(1964)

Ovid

I. The Golden Age

page 1

At first the golden age was the first
to spring up, which, with no avenger protector,
by its own will, without law it was established, a
good & right thing.

Not yet had the pine tree felled come down
from its own mountains to visit a foreign land through
the clear flowing waves sea. Not yet were the towns
surrounded by deep ditches; there were neither swords
nor helmets; nations passed their leisure time free.

a high room floating away

I can see praying to the sun
or maybe the rain because they cover
everything & come from apparently nowhere

giant people

a desperate feeling like trying to explain
yourself in 25 words, talking faster than your
heart beats, away from everybody with bad music
playing too loud in the room & the chatter growing
louder & further away

two clocks in the same room
ticking out of time - same feeling

reading a poet's life
preconceived ends
real life of the poet

impressions accidental
animals' intelligence

Mary Jemison White Woman
of the Genesee
simple writing w. form personal
James Baldwin stinks
nobody tells the truth

smells
my body is full of sand
yellow and green cannot be
escaped I write like my mother
the doctor

kidney man
I got to buy potatoes
fertile period

The old man with the
jaundiced eye is watching

The laundry-sex

smells

lemon sachet: heavy sweet

unsettling

sandalwood smell: drunken

violets descending

penetrating perpetrating

sex

air wick to drown the

shit smell

cooking

flying room

“...how terrific even the music of some of the lowliest composers can be.....the chorus from Boris....”

I spoke with my tongue: O Lord, make me know my end.

And what is the no. of my days: that I may know what is wanting to me.

Behold thou hast made my days measurable: and my substance is as nothing before thee. And indeed all things are vanity: every man is living.

Surely man passeth as an image: yes, & he is disquieted in vain.

He storeth up: & he knoweth not for whom he shall gather these things.

And now what is my hope? is it not the Lord? and my substance is with thee.

Deliver thou me from all my iniquities: thou hast made me a reproach to the fool.... And thou hast made his soul to waste away like a spider: surely in vain is any man disquieted

Psalm 38

And Lamech lived a hundred & 82 yrs and begot a son.
And Lamech lived after he begot Noe, five hundred & 95 yrs
& begot sons & daughters

V28, 30 Chap5 Genesis

A car full of telephone books

Mozart Serenade NO.12

Man is a master of everything. Woman is or ought
to be one of the things. There are half men & half
women. Christ.

Good & evil cannot exist absolutely in the world.
Their destruction. Billy Budd.

A dirty man who knows Mrs. Vergara.

A woman exists who gives parties every year
& makes movies with narration out of them.
A western party, Ves tal Virgins

Father Burghardt's speech
Honor convocation 1962
Adventures of the Intellect
accuracy of fact universality of
knowledge integration to form view-wisdom

Because i was silent my bones grew old whilst
i cried out all the day long.

For day & night thy hand was heavy upon me:
I am turned in my anguish, whilst the thorn is fastened

Psalm 31

Give praise to the Lord on the harp sing to him
with the psaltery, the instrument of ten strings.

Sing to him a new canticle sing well unto him
with a loud noise

Psalm 32

4th Symphony Beethoven saying yes

Unmarked and unnoticed & important so alike
the words are the dust on my floor under the radiator
and the wine of the men who love men that i cherish.
I masturbate with you I hope and my love is greater
than yours.

I worship poems when I write them but the
next day I am horrible. Too bad I could get further.

O yes drunk.

Ludwig go after them.

I can get out of you Bob
And if the blues too were whiskey
Lord I'd stay drunk all the time

obscurity of a barbershop
stepped on cookie
this is indigo

world haunts back of mind like lens

Dreams in violet: Running thru a museum half an hour before it will close I see rooms full of dying saints -- no works of art --some times two in a room. Saints lying in bed wax saints cases full of relics which we all admire. One saint a girl has a fetus wrapped in a blanket swaddling clothes lying at the foot of her bed.

Bob & I are at a political convention sitting first next to, then opposite, each other. A gaudy parade comes down the aisle. We throw nickels at the clowns and knock them over. I go out & return with a friend's servant. All laugh when he holds my hand leading me back to my seat with Bob opposite. Joe & I a vague distance from Janet & her parents -- then it is the war. I am at an army camp. All the buildings are of weathered brown wood like old barns. Trucks carry cases of coke bottles filled with orange red & blue-black stuff. We are walking thru afraid of being shot. Planes are overhead. Two women are later discussing the war sitting naked and completely hairless except for eyebrows and lashes. One is 189, the other 144 years old. Their breasts are large and firm. They do not know how they can be so old. Their conversation is trivial.

I am at a party at a swimming pool. I am wearing

a pink dress. One boy standing on the diving board is shot falling dead in the water with several shots. Others who have not been fired at fall down, wounded thru him. My friend & I are chased around the pool with a gun. We leave terrified and climb out the basement door of a house in Ridgewood. Mary Jim & I go to another party.

I am on the beach and see two factions that are political rivals -- one group is fair-haired and naked until we arrive. Their skin is white. They put on yellow tunics. The other group is dark-haired with orange tunics & flowers. They sit on the sand dunes.

Next I am to meet Rosemary at a museum. I am there early though my license has been taken away for driving into the entrance illegally. There are combined sculptures -- 3 in 1 -- made out of granite. Only the sculptor's school is given on directional signposts. Rosemary arrives & wants to leave. We make money on the token machine. We go to the beach.

Return of the parents dream.

Always pleasant I am favored, prodigal.

Dreams more real than life. Every old woman
is a fetus at a phony saints feet. There are no works
of art without sentiment. I doubt Rosemary's interest
in art. I never dream about Vito. My conscious feeling
about him must be more real than dream. Jealousy is
worse than morality. Instead of a harmless father image
he has turned into a lover image and I was too slow in
realizing it I have committed my self to a whole set
of institutions superstitions prejudices projections and
customs which I denied & deny in my mind. Marriage
like this is half old and half new. I love queers.

We live our own lives only

In the castle a knight capped
the jongelling jungaleer
the fool scapped
helmet helmet finally
you look like a vase
in a painting with fruit against a wall
Yumpke holding your pants
Pies where Mohammed speaks
We sat each to the other silently
deciding what to wear
then fucked in a hurry
and rode our fullness home
stiff with yellow brandy
and licking the empty cups

On Barnard

Send me the tone that sings
"Cockroaches in your ass
and a flying ride home."
Is there a cure for elephantiasis
And if not why fabricate
the breeches that will
keep us in our cocks.
A couch is but an imprimatur
for farts.
And candles and flaming
irons light the purple
caves of dripping maturity.
Put on your cloaks and
daggers will assume the
places of slaves.
In the quivering
equivalency of lengths
of hairs and days
the women will be the boys.

Song

Live forever
Live forever
Live forever
in a pastel portrait
Fill the wine & follow on
to the judge
to the judge
ing
Holy is thy name
Fill up on custard
pie & hives
and shout a dead bear will roll

Dream after bring caught in the subway:

I am riding on a train walking from car to car
sitting stretching my neck I dream that I am tormented.
Whatever a girl tells me to experience I must experience.
I walk over a bridge and feel crushed in my stomach
my clothes fly all around me I myself rise into the air
tangled in my ragged clothes and doubled over, then
backwards.

I am at Bob's family picnic. It is all ritual.
Mocking honor is paid to some nuns. We all get new
shirts to wear. I walk away. I run down a cliff to see
if there is a road along the beach for some travelers.
A nun helps me climb back up. I cling to her wondering
how my body feels to her. It is natural for me to be
clinging to her and not a man. At the picnic the nun
must dance & do tricks with her skirt in order to get out.
She must run a sort of gauntlet.
A contest in a library.
Gargoyles.

The cat is on the back fence pissing on spit balls.
Check.

Grandfather wants to be committed. He has pigtails
& rolls over twice when he says it: "Who will come to
visit me?" "Me, Bernadette, your family."

Relatives come to visit & they have all ugly children.
Two are small & brown & fat. Their toes & fingers are
long & flowery. They blow in the breeze. (Bob's relatives.).
Linda has to take care of them in the cellar. They open
all the drawers they can find. Another son is blotchy
distorted ugly but someone says he's 'very nice'.
One side of his face is blown up. To eat the children of
the ugly family face each other. We have orange & white
cake. Someone must bring Linda some in the cellar.
Finally I do with food stuck down my dress by someone's
brother. On the way (to my cellar) I met two children
who are beautiful. I never get to the cellar. Later we
see how the 2 brown children were born & put in an
incubator which is a pot of boiling water. There are
many fetuses & they are grayish-white, being spun
around by the water. Their head & backs are marked
with squares with designs in them.

American Lamb Council

Scorpions when threatened by fire commit suicide