

Travelling Henry

The decline of the human world began when a servant of Oxford University dropped the ball. A hungry soul took form. What was once thought of as a harmless experiment became a growing metamorphosis, a cloud of indignant parts: horse breast, peacock toe, cat tongue, a gory tortoise-pig back, withering scales, and human scorn. It was born fumbling, not gentle nor genius, without a functionary bit.

It escaped quickly and made the university its pantry and people its dinner.

Death was brief and felt like a gross kiss. It moved quickly, consuming soil and bricks at first; then a party, an all-ages theatre, the roomy house of an ambassador, a caitiff with a crown. Not daggers nor military could breach it. The tally of death became double, then double again.

Those locked into religion claimed it was ancient, magic, a righteous sign of the Gospels. Others called it the animation of greed and other modern institutions. Followers begged for amiability. The pile of proportions pardons no one. Conquest is its programme.

England falls. Spain falls. Rome falls. Then the rest of Europe, Africa, Asia.

It crosses the sea.

Americans call it Evil. Poets call it gorgeous, a magnificent ball of vulgar wrath. Elegant vocabulary does not breach it. The muse is dark. The individual can not be distinguished. It is Sydney and Arch, Mary and Johnson; lovers, marauders, cronies, philosophers; King and Queen, an unscrupulous pile of you and me. We are all servants; I do not question it.

A new world settles. Relaxed, quiet, certain, accomplished.

It is still growing, foolishly though, a massive cranium, a head of tense thought. Fears of Zen set in. Even with its accomplished power, it is sensitive, foreign to the world it made. It has prevailed—depressed, blind, eyeless, unable to cry.