

## Irène

It was empty, her meaning, and in that the grip of death. Her pages blank, her ink dry. Absent a spark of appreciation.

Her name is Irène. She's been dead longer than my mother has been alive. But tonight she is my lover. Somehow, in the reaches of experience, her absence is mine. It is not mine, it is like mine, and in this interplay is the subtlety of love making.

Unlike her, I populate her blank pages with the wildlife that escapes the enemy of humanity. I don't need to call that a deity. It is all around me, in me, the breath of life. But like her, I honor it with an element of smoke that fouls my body and the air but occupies the crack in space that leaves me separate from the life that fills my heart.

Another number advances my page, my fingers, my lips and my arms. My eyes water under her. My arms and hands feel light with her weight. Irène. I feel her blank pages and lost books, friends unknown to a heart at sea under the pitch of it, sitting in the comforts of my sheltered life. A cigarette rolled with tabacco found on the side walks of this modest, heart felt town carved in stone out of mountains lost in time. To me they are lost in time because I am lost to time. My age advances with the soil and toil under a celestial heaven known within but to whom other? A question mark known to me, but to whom other. A paragraph kept in place for time held too dearly that breath, each, might be appreciated.

With all the daring available I pick up her book, turn its pages in review. Losing nothing that I might have read, if possible. Holding her as a knave holds a word. Too closely. Too tightly. My grip unable to loosen, locked. I am scared. Terrified. Terrified to be lost to loss. To senselessness without intent of purpose, commitment of love.

Sleep is a sound cure. In sleep I find peace where my body escapes time. I levitate above the din of it, in love and spirit held dear. My font within. The source of pleasure and this morning's inevitable pen.

Somewhere within the masculine, under the fear, apart and separate from the need to defend the self, is the divorce of the sex writ on the body as the freedom from the sex. The body. The penile thing between the legs that gives cause, that is disposed of as cause of the pain of time and place and role and purpose and intent and meaning. From here, this spiritual abstraction that divorces the life and the world with it, he wonders if she does the same. The feminine. Woman. Any woman he might be able to imagine, perhaps to meet. To speak to. To divorce and free and to live with. To find peace in the world. As he finds peace under and outside the world, in that bed where he sleeps. Without sex. With love that has no sex. The love from within where dreams have no care.

A bird sings in the morning of this spilled ink. I am under the bird in my incomplete wakefulness with Irène beside me, in pages in a book.

I can feel her, like I can feel the cursor slipping and spotting the letters under my fingers on the miracle of technology in my hands. My mechanical pen. The one that connects to the waking world of sight and insight where context would place me as a book on a shelf in a library.

Irène remembers her experiences from the unknowable distance to the place she has become. Desolate, losing, not yet lost. Finding, as one breathes, another word.

On her sixteenth page she picks us up, both of us. I have little right to lie in her bed with her, the way I do. She is far more beautiful than I, and I am far too sensitive to her value to me to ignore any quality of hers. She is dead, and I am alive. To begin with. But there, on that page, my love, have you spelled us both. And a great many others, all the same, ideally. Those in places like these, especially.

The keyboard clacks under my fingers, it can pick but not swipe. Picking and putting works half as well under my arms than a real keyboard, but swiping its cursor to move, remove and replace a mispent or absent glyph more a tragedy than the comedy that is my skill with typing.

My love, stop crying. It is I. You know this place, this heart human too well. It is true. You have found me out. I think of death, I wonder if I might have the purpose to end this existence before they do. To deny the corpse that passage.

As you know, already, I have not made that choice. And you, my love, understand why.

The air in here, so well sealed from the elements, grows stale with the hour. The sacrificial incense colors rays that wake it.

I have misplaced a digit where once I would not have let half a second see it. This is my third page, this morning, not my fourth.

I've cracked open a door as the clear sky and air not cold enough threaten my habit. It will become too hot to stay here, with no shade. They have taken the

shade.

I've been very selfish. That is what I saw last night. The sea had hollowed out the shells of an expanse of great mansions. The remains of an exploit. A beautiful hike I was telling you about. It led to a beach through a grove of tall, thin, sky topped pines. First a great old stage remained apparent on a crest of land that rose above the sand, abandoned by the tide. Then another beach, and a great old house of concrete block I should not wonder. Ornate enough. Even handsome, once. Alone, a sight. Sitting on sand, intact save the habits of barnacles and their friends. The horizons visible through the wreck, dramatic. Another beach, another house. And then a string, a turn, laid out as if on an avenue and a pier. Standing where the sea would return, again and again.

I opened another door with the second piece of wood. That I might save some time, captured in the mind as a moment does. Coherent in spirit, known within and without. Sensible to touch more than sight, ear more than mind.

This strange, temporary existence plays – preys – on my heart. My eyes open to the sights around me. In front of me a high way. And behind me a few small houses planted nicely along a structure bedded with lawnery. An image of comfort contrasts to an image hostile to my body, and hostile to my mind, my knowing and being and seeming. How could it be that I am here, like this. Tenuously established temporarily. The heart quickens with the incertanty of it. The ulti-

macy of this, among the colors of the air. To be, or not. And if not, then not. I am aware of no fate. And this causes me no small stress in my little chest. My sense of my own future lost to it.

It is not ground. It is no place in particular. And yet, there is an existence, of a kind, that is mine to have and to hold. Like this, better than that held by Irène. Its similarities held remotely, somewhere else. Known remotely. Assumed remotely. Ideally. Perhaps uncertainly. There remains, today, some whisp of a binding to that former uncertainty.

And, unlike Irène, I can sleep. I can pull a cover over my little sky light and pull a cover over my arms, close my eyes and raise my head.

Irène is clairvoyant. I am a brick head who rejects the sight of most things. She has a woman's talent for the acceptance of people, for love unencumbered by the mysteries society piles onto its males. A woman is left with her natural wealth, while a male is beat upon and out cast as if criminal, guilty of nothing until innocent of everything. Conversely, it is the male and the intelligence of genetic success that tortures the female, robbing her of that wealth. His true nature is rather asymmetric and slight. He would hold her in preservation, share her burdens and glories as partner. As a half of one. Like two halves of an avocado, one holds the pit and the other the space the pit occupies – under the analysis of the avocado.

What am I afraid of, losing her? She is lost, according to that record and my own intellect. She is won according to my soul, the one she wrote into the palm of my hand. Her letters betray me. It cannot stand. She is on her back. I am not. Her plays too – dark, disingenuous, dangerous, worldly, other than anything I would want to know as intimately as the steps I want can allow. Therefore, they are not my steps to take. They are hers. It is the actor who stands before the audience holding the writer's pen, wearing the art. The sights beheld in this invisible theater of the implication of the reflections on the visible much worse to my mind than Irène's casual billet making with her temporal destruction at the hands of the Nazis.

She writes, in that mist.

As you know, dearest husband, I've raised up your



world of heaven and hell over my head that they might turn to stone with my step to you.

The terror of my existence, the world she has immersed me into, is how long will it take to satisfy her requirements.

The children call out, into the air that I can hear, “your ass is so fat”. I can only imagine an allusion to the wealth that fills their eyes. The world of communications saturated with reflections direct and indirect, light and dark, the successes and failures of millions of lives – billions of lives – played out by greed of seconds.

To my mind it never ends, never concludes. She is lost to it, to art, to the world. To people who gasp at air like fish drowning out of water, entirely unaware of themselves and even less concerned with our fate in this play.

I am to understand quite the opposite, however. That it is my own allusions, my own terror at the fickle whimsy of our present economic nature, that is mistaken. That sight does not require more than the lifting of eyelids, easily done. Which is what I meant by gasping at greed. The world is won.

Then why am I here. Because she is no matter to it, and every matter to it. And I am neither here, nor not here, alive not dead.

How do you show a person their eyes filled with the world that exists as a series of successes and failures, millions per second? There is no requirement beyond that compassion and dignity we might call a sense of humanity. Whether a success or failure fills the air we

breathe is not important. The implication for the next minute, hour, day, and year, however, is.

So few, it seems, have the ability to lift a head up to such a height.

In this existence, in this world, money is virtually as immersive or ubiquitous as air. One's dependence on money is virtually as certain as one's dependence on air. In order to see this, one must be able to step away from the psycho-emotional planes of existence and take the issue in hand, into a frame of thought or analysis that is independent from the mind-body identity. Otherwise one is slave to it.

It takes multiple decades of life time to achieve the complexity of mind necessary for this subtlety. Otherwise, one is immature, juvenile, a babe in the woods, immersed in a reality which one only suspects but does not grasp. Has no handles on. One is naked under the ocean of the subject and its critical issues.

What is moral good? What is moral wrong? In the case of money, and its links into politics and government, many fail these tests daily.

In these moments of history characterized by systems of self government, it is these issues that have delivered the great monuments of history.

The world is physical, or metaphysical. The subjective being, person, may be trained to either. The untrained person is subjective, living immersed in a metaphysical universe. The technology delivered by our human ambition populates this universe with the alloys of lead, gold, copper, tin, mercury, silver, aluminum, lithium, every element known and many unknown. Some have power. Some, voice. All, breath.

Each person, another world. Each expression, another language. Our babies cry in confusion. Some adults cry in confusion. Sometimes a crying out is necessary. Most times, it is a question unknown that none can answer.

When it is healthy, most are content and happy. When it is unhealthy, there may be war. The habit of war is a slavery, as is the habit of the tolerance of a poverty of education.

Irène's windows lit the sky. The light that filled my eyes was that sense of contrast that I derived from her sense of sight. Her transparency, clairvoyance.

A rainy day, cherries or plums just popping. Clouds full of billowed textures of grey. Strings of grapes laid on the ground as lifeless branches. The windows I sat before looming over head, monuments to chairs. Large rectangles of glass panes that could, in theory, easily pass the largest motorcycle or the smallest car.

Obviously the impact of Irène's pages derived from the foreknowledge of the writer's personal and historical context. That she could write any such thing, a miracle. While others were chewing fingernails, she composed a refuge with pen and ink that formed a shelter of justice. Her ink in the state of those fingernails, torn from her, and in that indictment, justice.

The crows and jackals of her time so similar to those of my own. Unlike Irène, I have cut their flesh into bite sized chunks and fed them to the fishes. The illness of the hyper-rational denial of metaphysical fact.

Obviously this moment is far more subtle than that of Europe during World War Two, or the South of France in 1941. The psychological structures are the same, but the American fascist malaise of the insecure who band together to squelch the sense of their illness has not manifested as badly. The hyper-rational denial of self combines, here, with the materialization of identity in contrast to the European actualization of identity. In our case, the self error is more contrasted. The ill know, and the error manifests outwardly through a

society that has not entirely faced the immersive qualities of intellect.

The crutches are words. The guilty parties include, most notoriously, “reality”, “money”, and “competition”. The collective unconscious is stressed by the experience of novel population and technology effects. In all fairness, it is a proper case of intellectual immersion – in the sense that self awareness on the social and cultural scale have not yet confided in a perspective or independence of intellect, independence of expression from conception, and the separation of faith from naïveté.

In other words, we have forgotten how to speak in our generations that have experienced a world dominated by its sensitivity to time. Ironically, it is a mature perceptual frame that is partly responsible for the dissolution of the juvenile and immature frames of understanding. An immature or insecure sense of maturity that confides in the skill to manage time with the intimacy of a second, while subject to an increasing sense of expiration.

It is precisely these metaphysics that we need to institutionalize, to culture and develop, teach, discuss, open, maintain, and preserve. We know the value of the independence of thought and objective, the fairness that preserves opportunity or occasion. We need to develop a far better sense of our personal metaphysics, and the metaphysical world they produce.

First, interpersonal interaction. We indulge love and affection and combat for audiences addicted to an

unknown immersion, rather than develop a conscious reflection on the immersions we are producing, and – personally and collectively – have produced.

Second, information handling. We indulge interpretation for audiences in need of condensations and reflections with far too small a sense of propriety, of independence of subjective and objective and self and other. The method of alternatives has demonstrated the value of fairness of occasion for millennia, while the application of the derived discipline remains a quality of scarce appearance. That is, scientific discipline and its derivatives including journalistic and judicial integrity.

Until we recognize the metaphysical skills necessary to a healthy metaphysical world, we will not have a healthy metaphysical world. Likewise, until we recognize the responsibility for a healthy metaphysical world, we will not have a healthy metaphysical world. And, following, until we recognize that the health of the metaphysical world is proportional to this metaphysical wealth, we will continue in the vanity of an intractable metaphysics.

Briefly, most concisely, we are afraid of our own evolution. Like any immature adult, we cling to naïveté waiting on the evidence of the experience of others. The point of conception, realization and actualization is individual. It requires faith in the independence of the mind-body identity from material objectivity, knowledge of the human condition as first subjective, and knowledge of the distinction of subjective and objective as emotional and intellectual, or spiritual and rational.

With these facts we understand the necessity of self balance to the pursuit of opportunity or occasion. And, further to the point, the importance of self awareness.