Lost in the Archives

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Berger, Michael L.
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We want our lives recreated by what we love; what we love means having loved, even horror birth love; this hell on earth love, hell in body disease love; love the ghost tattoos us; and somewhere I read in a dirty story by Alice Jouanau how some tattoos the Queequeg’s tattoos... (Phenomenauts, hermanauts, cosmonauts, necronauts; we are plunging into contrasting states that look abysmal for their lack of illuminating information. This is not the Web. But another web. What remains clear is this empty room is coming into its own with only a single person).

A mark inscribes with a bite when the mark is true. The mark stings when it feels good. The good is painful when it is real, when it comes true. What is true is that we are inscribed.

We are stigmatized by a turning back, a furrowed hand that holds out a dried-out well camouflaging a real oasis. From here – my empty suite – the pain looks like a fort we sat in when candles guttered. The twilight time: our rationed play. We weren’t supposed to mess with candles in the house, especially under all that torn bedding. Playing in an asphyxiating room we wanted to leave traces of what passes as a crime scene. Going all the way to the Original crime scene, the family romance gone berserk, now regurgitated in these perverse gestures. Then we depart into and away from each other. But we reinvent crime as deference to nerves. We want...
Hi M.

In this time of coincidences, I felt I had to send you a line. My name is Emma and I am writing from Berlin.

This morning I went online looking for a quote by John Berger. In my search I ended up reading part from your blog dated Oct. 21th 2009.

There you write about how you found a beautiful edition of "To the wedding", in which you had found the Brassai card. The same card sits on the bulletin board over my desk and was given to me as a birthday card from my friend Klara.

A couple of days ago, on Oct. 21 to be exact, I visited Klara in Copenhagen and spent the night at her place. As I had brought nothing to read, she handed me "To the wedding" as a bedtime read. I was surprised and delighted that she handed me this very book, as I had been giving Bergers "Ways of Seeing" to my students in spatial composition at the Danish Theatre School the same afternoon.

I had first discovered "Ways of Seeing" as it was left behind in my apartment by another friend who stayed at my place when I was in San Francisco a couple of years ago. It now sits in my bookshelf, coincidentally surrounded by two novels by M. Oondatje, who you also write about, reflecting on Berger.

I thought that all of this was too remarkable not to notice and share.
When we found the other, we undressed to leave wavy hair beneath
docked limbs, laughing and spraying everywhere. Sometimes I was the
Other. Or you were Another.

Sunken orchard, you say, at the sight of nudes in the muck. The leaves are
seasonal like your funny words. Colors pop up in the most trampled
places. Just now a pink wisp in charcoal shrubbery. A lottery ticket stuck
to a feather.

We play for weeks in the grottos around the lake. Few go as far as
We do. Chasing each other with the rolling in the guts, prolonging
screams.

Use me like a rolling pin when a cloud watches. Hide and
pursue in alternating scales. Impossible so many grottos disclose
themselves at once, but they do, for us.

For each turn, I yell a different name for you, coined from
moods. The mood of maneuvering down ditches?
Or putting blankets in the oven until they’re crisp?
Writing backwards the things we can’t say yet.

Each word: radium, lucite-veined stone coming from the mouth.
Dreaming, words taste like sea-marbles, tactile melody, pearlescent
Communication is a problem of stones in transit

So in autumn I spoke slower, as if napping in cooling mud. A
shadowy dialect of a criminal-fisherman, but we only fished for colors,
how they jumped out of each other.

Characters came and went, as grottos
closed and reopened. The day dampened our cheeks even under cover
I've seen what they've done with our rituals, warped them into ghosts of the original spasms. Take these binder clips and rubber bands, and remember the keip orgies and vine fires of a life before offices and cities, when the sand erased distinctions. I raise the pen to my teeth, as they do. Like them I am strange only if I think about it.

We come, of course, from different precincts. Can't quite believe it, can you? How the two of us, with the ease of incest, mated under a darkling tree owned by the Government.

Funny to relive it here while I'm making a Kilimanjaro of photocopies to be destroyed in a distant shredder.

There were super malls and car wrecks. Boutique candy stalls misted in cherry smoke. Nothing like the boxed greyness of the present.

I tried to explain the Lake to the Boss today. But he was wondering aloud about the efficacy of having my desk facing the wall or the window. But the window is on the wall, I said. But suppose the wall is in the window? he joked. Downstairs, the men cook meat disastrously close to the extracted bulks.
... but you must understand it came from a past of loving someone "underground." It is a feeling that you can only understand if you have lived it. And I am not suggesting that you seek out such experiences, but I do want to share the reality that I have been through.

For those who are not familiar with these terms, "underground" refers to the network of resistance fighters that existed during the time of our emails. This network was created by the "we" who have been fighting for our rights and freedoms. It was a secret society that operated outside the law and was known only to those who were part of it.

I want you to understand that these experiences are not easy to come by, and they are not something that can be recreated. But I do want you to know that they exist, and they are a part of our history. They are a part of who we are, and they are a part of who we must continue to be.

In the end, it is not about the emails themselves, but about the message that they carry. It is about the struggle that we have been fighting for, and it is about the hope that we have for the future. It is about the strength of our commitment to our values, and it is about the courage that we must possess in the face of adversity.

I hope that you will take the time to reflect on these words, and that you will use them to guide you in your own life. And I hope that you will use the strength that you have found in these experiences to help others who may be fighting for their rights and freedoms as well.
Will we ever reach the City or

does it only ever graze us

ghostly thru

a fogged up Koreatown window or that faded blue hotel

oddly operational next to a long-abandoned train station;

sudden trail of painted stones

in an unfrequented sometimes sinister municipal park?

Are our entrances to the City but cryptic, brief embraces,

openings...but different

more like just mistaken backdoors that we quickly close,

or elevators we step

into, and then out of, confused about what floor we are going to

and what hotel we are supposed to meet

whoever it was in ? in the first place?

Do we, instead of entering our City and inhabiting it, only hover and loiter,

Or does the City forever

retreat, denying us, derailing us,

like some idea of a Beloved

beautiful corner with the shuttered market,

its gendly rusting windows,

ivy and circuits showing

misremember

as somewhere else,

city we've never been