Last Year at Betty and Bob's: An Adventure

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Bob’s Passagenwerk has many folders.

When in his youthful Homeric myth phase, Bob met Geryon in fragmented bits of Stesichorus’s lyric poem *Geryoneis*. He was touched by the sensitivity with which Stesichorus depicted this three-headed monster as a hero, slain by the feckless Herakles.

Then Geryon rested his neck to one side
As might a poppy when it mors
The tenderness of its body shedding
Suddenly all of its petals… (*Geryoneis*)

This tale, as pieced together and reinvented by the poet Anne Carson in *Autobiography of Red* became his hands-down favorite book for awhile. Until *Red Doc*>, the sequel, which he liked even more. There’s a line on the back cover he can’t shake: “To live past the end of your myth is a perilous thing.” He immediately thinks of child stars with zilch screen presence as adults, or Charlie Manson, or Françoise Sagan, or … this is actually going to be a very long list. Red Betty exceeded herself by dying, her myth intact, all James Dean-like. All Kartini-like. Though, as with Geryon, she will be tinkered with. Bob figures she
won’t mind the fabulations unless she’s emulated by a limp-brained fascist or a paint company.

Certainly, he was attracted to Carson’s Geryon and Gardner’s Grendel. Mama’s boys with undeveloped sexual prefs. The fly-boy was queer, in love with Herakles, the guy tasked by Eurystheus to steal his red cattle. According to the official Grecian myth guide, this was Heraklean labor number ten of twelve. Conducted somewhere near modern day Malaga, Herakles had to first dispatch Geryon’s poor two-headed watchdog Orthrus and the noble herdsman before spearhead(s)ing Geryon himself. Bob was struck by the number of multi-headed dogs that populated his musings these days. Orthrus. Cerberus. Was struck by a multitude of Red. In any case, Herky was one cruel dude on a mission.

Copy-pasting ancient etchings and long passages of the novel slash poem into Notebook/Section Geryon, he could almost feel Carson’s crazy translation gloriously transforming the myth. Geryon’s monstrosity balancing the banal and the beautiful. Oh those cock-suckingly inconvenient wings! He could feel the red flow of bloody battle hemodynamically coursing through the poetry of a beating heart. Romantic, tiresome. Erotic, dull. Th-thump, th-thump. Red, red, red always.

He scratched a thought.
Read what can be read of red.
Read a lover. RED a Lover. Read all over.
RED ALL OVER.

In this way, he was mourning RB. In this way he was loving IRB.