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Alexander Nemser

Psalms

Where art thou, O Lord, with my defenders splayed on the sidelines?
City liars slander me round-robin,
And rope my loping animals. My remnants
Scrape among the weeds and future tombstones.
O, I drain to an irregular river.

Ready your windows,
Hustle inducers:
I am spinning a message-wrapped brick through.

I siphon off the lapses at the fountain,
With an enormous mouth for loud and quiet;
I cull in the plastic by the pier for my world-picture.
So much for the senses:
Each slippery thing-in-itself is another hurdle.

The substrate is revealed raw—all the horror is on paper.
My fleet of flames sleeps in the Dark Ages,
And the promised locomotion is in some kind of
Oasis daze. Yet in the grips, I watched
My wild orchestra sun the courtyard,
Until I slammed my lip blessing.

Lord, I am on all fours, but I don't know which grass is good;
I was elated in the beam, the pools of light—I raised the stakes.

But O, how broken is the sweet name now:
When I said Eternity, I meant the corner of the old zones
Where I once spun with my suspect interior,
Where someone divined Truths with a tooth, and I loved it—

O, I wanted the wild purchase power in temptation and machines:
From the opera box, You created a world,
And I lied straight out of the early earth.

The human telescope is a laugh-a-minute: Numbers is a blur.
In short, I pawned my supply for a word,
Now only electric in the rarest justice; only accelerating on
The return of the robbery, dissemination, ash sandwiches—

O, summer: I say, Demolition; you say, Forgiveness in the turn;
I hear it in the cold.

Fake thousands, Lord, full-nelson my enthusiasts,
And tow them out to sea
Each time they reach the coast.

I stand to address the challengers and golden arrows
Assembled for the Crazy Last Supper.
Beneath the eyes of operators,
I played out my syncopated hand-offs.
Long have I signed at deception; long have I buzzed off-base,
And elbowed in to hear the Ultimate.

O, hear an unaffiliated cat, fringed by the dog days.
Make my song an upturned stone, the marker of a made series—
Detour it to the incommunicados, United Nations drop-outs,
The hijacked mind, unrecognizable;
Forward it to the goalie in a lull,
Dreaming of an infinite defense.

My singers mouth in every corner.
Release me from my mania for knowledge:
I want to hear the gorgeous chord
All the way in the underworld.

Lord, how I once plucked the apple and omega of the orchard:
On the roof of my house of lasers, my neighbors sat with me.
Blue music surrounded us: twenty columns of sound.
My love was in my direction.

But O, time rotateth: the serpent style slipped us
The fruit, and who could say we are pleased by the taste?

The wise son replies:
In da beginning vas da void--
And God created the heavens and the new lineup,
The ideas between things, and the ultimate socket.
What is the pulp at the source?

The wicked son replies:
Today I am an agent of change, a double-agent of my desires,
An agent-provocateur in the shadow of an impostor Death,
My elections are fully democratic, and I *always* throw out the result.

The simple son replies:
I set sail for the shimmering shore, and popped a wheelie on the way.

But to the one who does not know how to respond, say:
O, do not judge too harshly--I am only the initials,
Trying to be the bird winner, to rotate in love,
To operate at the lowest level of brutality--
Well, maybe not the lowest--
To course down the Avenue of My End,
Synthesizing preludes out of God.

Lord, my finger is on the visualization.

I traced the origins of proliferating space,
And held in my palm a radiating intersection, a vivid course—
The negation was dynamite.

Now, crimewaves are stacked on my windowsill,
And I can't tell my left hand from them:
This ripped balance is so apart from my initial cipher—
O, my true botany is on the other bank.

The waterfall of my obstacles
Is the real cosmic fraud.

Lord of Waves: wrench my fate's red x through the portal it suggests,
Or x-out the x to a new indecipherable.

Author Info

Alexander Nemser lives in Boston. His writing has been published in *The Atlantic Monthly*, *The New York Times*, and *The New Republic*. One of his poems is read aloud by a future CIA agent in Robert DeNiro's film *The Good Shepherd*. Nemser is spending this year in the underworld.

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