



DAVID WOLF

# Triptych at Year's End

I

References N/A:

How the current curriculum vitae of the world closes.

And what the landscape said

to me as I trained it north through the wasteland,  
up from Philly to NYC, rattling through the Jersey-piled scab  
of gutted warehouses, defunct plants and junk-rust thickening  
on the skin of the poor old sphere.

I closed my eyes and thought of chiffon, then of a chiffonier,  
then a haycock I leaned against once in a field  
no longer here.

Then a story about Draupadi, Krishna, a "limitless" sari flowing...  
a tale of humiliation defied, I believe.

[Look up story]

Slip-sliding now through the text-drunk city at the close of another year:  
Serendipity Tuscan Milk Bamboo Sushi Famiglia Pain Quotidienne FiGo Quick Park  
Don't Honk! \$350.00 Penalty...

"...and hushed we sat/As lovers to whom Time is whispering."

I equal my worst revisions,  
nourished in the dim glow, the old dimensional rub.

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No, my reversions equalize;  
the weak light of this third-dimensional rub prizes me,  
strewn dreamer passing once more through the streets of this taken isle.

II

To Do:

Give up a desire or two—  
for resolution (as always), completion,  
to please via dutiful response...

Impeach the mummified trip hammer of my nostalgia ringing (*Auld Lang Dong*) above  
the pulse beneath the perpetual thrust of traffic, pressed candor, exchange...

A few blocks away  
the big lit ball's poised to drop—  
“What channel's it on?”

III

Lone white-tiger pigeon pecking at the lip of a green cornice.  
Important that it's green. And once ornate, now soot-cracked, sagging.  
Sleet-slicked this morning. Green cornice.  
I'm done purporting.  
Much.  
*Plug Me into Something.*  
Some other city bird, unseen, chirps as the scuffed dawn asks me to return

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its hackneyed sheen.

True, the light tells me, *I'm* the raw seeker in need of resolving.

The skyscrapers feel absurd; the passing haze does not.

My easy notes of grief seep skyward,

drawn up by the moonish sun.

I lean away from another year's hotbed of commerce, disrobe, slip into the guest tub  
and let the spatter and grit of yesterday's film loosen, surface, settle again.

# The Objectivist in the Land of the Fauves

1.

I warned you against sleep in this hour's light  
and slept myself.

*a weathered green shutter swinging open to a violet glow*

2.

At the café across the street the chef arrives for work,  
kissing the waitress in camouflage  
hello.

Zinc-tainted wine's closing beam of day—  
cracked tile or  
spider?

Spider.

Another answer: the little girl on the beach this morning  
feeding pebbles to her doll.

Pigeons huddled in the wind, eyeing speech's damp sketch

3.

*right before the dawn...*

Once more the carriage is placed back of the horse, rousing some birds.  
And so the squeaking wheels in my dream turned out to be that tree  
full of birds, just before dawn.

4.

Let the tune from the unknown café, the glance of your passing, scurry along noon's lit railing,  
this brief sky my province.

From the balcony: a smattering of love below in the narrow streets.

Snatch  
of a cloud  
seems to steam from the tiled rooftops.

White gold of a commanding idea, blessedly you elude me, milliner to the air.

5.

Sly meadow deep in the confines of the mind blows to a firm glaze gone bust.

A broiled wave slips in, bans its own return, bubbles a summons to leap all habit.

Daft pine, the birds seem to love your beret.

Floodlit gnarly self unfit for the banquet,  
go, it's time.

Forget again...this evening...all's demise

6.

The little wind pushed open the broad door.

The door let in the little wind

And through the swung pane: *September's champagne light.*

7.

Knives, forks,

crosses clink behind me.

I turn to see the dead bloom of war  
and the seed's pitch romancing like black ice.

When you're just a polished, mottled shell  
longing for the air brushed by the fern...  
(sea wave in the dark, I forgot to say I heard you; lucky you, you can't care),  
oil and gold just stink of anger and doubt.

Beauty disavows the empire.

*Rose nuzzling*

*a green chili*

*in the parade's passing shadow.*

Hey, and there's Mars, that prick  
of red starlight  
deepening  
in a late summer's dusk.



# Solo

adrift again on a dead canal, you feel heir  
only to a low summons—

echo severed from your muted self-rule

or some gathering of life  
circling the bolt-hole of happiness—

charm's sediment hangs in the dark troughs,

pocked spire wavering—

*the reflections aren't here to assure*

stone's fleeting relief,

a chime's slant hymn and

all my missives are just  
evasive scrawl.

My inner snake tendrils from alley to alley just fine.

Up shoots a wisp of valor.  
I'm bent low as the days.

The crepe myrtles shiver; the mind laps

another cut gaze lingering too long at *hello*.

The sun proves elusive,  
immersed in its own light opera: incongruity, hung closure,  
same-breath tempos,

the crossing guard's whistle silenced by summer  
back home,

love and passwords come and gone—

I took the hand of the day  
and felt the arc of its pull  
away.

Here is the future:  
my sin aches, of course, and  
a little less of the old worship cooks off.

Pipe some more icing, maybe.

Forage for more cheer  
and give the lilies their due—

they need more day to glow,  
like the light at rest in the severed limbs loaded with pale apples  
at the foot of the steps  
in that painting you burned.

The circumnavigations of truth always brought out the fire-eater in me.

Why pull distress from the rise of it all?

The light withdraws homage  
from railings smoothed from centuries of grasps, slight brushes,  
fingers ringless and ringed,

yet to be stripped, plied—

What are we saying?

Lie back;

no need for the oars  
of mere years—

the tide will steer you clear of the false glare.

Avid star,

I, too, have plenty of all and nothing to flash.