**Sound and Sense**

**Chapter 5**

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The Guitarist Tunes Up

*Frances Cornford (1886-1960)*

With what attentive courtesy he bent

Over his instrument;

Not as a lordly conquerer who could

Command both wire and wood,

But as a man with a loved woman might,

Inquiring with delight

What slight essential things she had to say

Before they started, he and she, to play.

The Hound

*Robert Francis (1901-1987)*

Life the hound

Equivocal

Comes at a bound

Either to rend me

Or to befriend me.

I cannot tell

The hound’s intent

Till he has sprung

At my bare hand

With teeth or tongue.

Meanwhile I stand

And wait the event.

Bereft

*Robert Frost (1874-1963)*

Where had I heard this wind before

Change like this to a deeper roar?

What would it take my standing there for,

Holding open a restive door,

Looking down hill to a frothy shore?

Summer was past and the day was past.

Sombre clouds in the west were massed.

Out on the porch's sagging floor,

Leaves got up in a coil and hissed,

Blindly struck at my knee and missed.

Something sinister in the tone

Told me my secret must be known:

Word I was in the house alone

Somehow must have gotten abroad,

Word I was in my life alone,

Word I had no one left but God.

It sifts from Leaden Sieves

*Emily Dickinson (1830-1886)*

It sifts from Leaden Sieves -

It powders all the Wood.

It fills with Alabaster Wool

The Wrinkles of the Road -

It makes an even Face

Of Mountain, and of Plain -

Unbroken Forehead from the East

Unto the East again -

It reaches to the Fence -

It wraps it Rail by Rail

Till it is lost in Fleeces -

It deals Celestial Vail

To Stump, and Stack - and Stem -

A Summer’s empty Room -

Acres of Joints, where Harvests were,

Recordless, but for them -

It Ruffles Wrists of Posts

As Ankles of a Queen -

Then stills it’s Artisans - like Ghosts -

Denying they have been –

The Subalterns

*Thomas Hardy (1840-1928)*

“Poor wanderer," said the leaden sky,

 “I fain would lighten thee,

But there are laws in force on high

 Which say it must not be.”

“I would not freeze thee, shorn one," cried

 The North, “knew I but how

To warm my breath, to slack my stride;

 But I am ruled as thou.”

“To-morrow I attack thee, wight,"

 Said Sickness. “Yet I swear

I bear thy little ark no spite,

 But am bid enter there.”

“Come hither, Son," I heard Death say;

 “I did not will a grave

Should end thy pilgrimage to-day,

 But I, too, am a slave!”

We smiled upon each other then,

 And life to me had less

Of that fell look it wore ere when

 They owned their passiveness.

Bright Star

*John Keats (1795-1821)*

*Bright star, would I were stedfast as thou art—*

*Not in lone splendour hung aloft the night*

*And watching, with eternal lids apart,*

*Like nature's patient, sleepless Eremite,*

*The moving waters at their priestlike task*

*Of pure ablution round earth's human shores,*

*Or gazing on the new soft-fallen mask*

*Of snow upon the mountains and the moors—*

*No—yet still stedfast, still unchangeable,*

*Pillow'd upon my fair love's ripening breast,*

*To feel for ever its soft fall and swell,*

*Awake for ever in a sweet unrest,*

*Still, still to hear her tender-taken breath,*

*And so live ever—or else swoon to death.*

Bright star, would I were stedfast as thou art—

 Not in lone splendour hung aloft the night

And watching, with eternal lids apart,

 Like nature's patient, sleepless Eremite,

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Still, still to hear her tender-taken breath,

And so live ever—or else swoon to death.

Mind

*Richard Wilbur (b. 1921)*

Mind in its purest play is like some bat

 That beats about in caverns all alone,

 Contriving by a kind of senseless wit

 Not to conclude against a wall of stone.

It has no need to falter or explore;

 Darkly it knows what obstacles are there,

 And so may weave and flitter, dip and soar

 In perfect courses through the blackest air.

And has this simile a like perfection?

 The mind is like a bat. Precisely. Save

 That in the very happiest of intellection

 A graceful error may correct the cave

I taste a liquor never brewed

*Emily Dickinson (1830-1886)*

I taste a liquor never brewed –

From Tankards scooped in Pearl –

Not all the Frankfort Berries

Yield such an Alcohol!

Inebriate of air – am I –

And Debauchee of Dew –

Reeling – thro’ endless summer days –

From inns of molten Blue –

When “Landlords” turn the drunken Bee

Out of the Foxglove’s door –

When Butterflies – renounce their “drams” –

I shall but drink the more!

Till Seraphs swing their snowy Hats –

And Saints – to windows run –

To see the little Tippler

Leaning against the – Sun!

Metaphors

*Sylia Plath (1932-1963)*

I'm a riddle in nine syllables,

An elephant, a ponderous house,

A melon strolling on two tendrils.

O red fruit, ivory, fine timbers!

This loaf's big with its yeasty rising.

Money's new-minted in this fat purse.

I'm a means, a stage, a cow in calf.

I've eaten a bag of green apples,

Boarded the train there's no getting off.

Pink Dog

*Elizabeth Bishop (1911-1979)*

The sun is blazing and the sky is blue.

Umbrellas clothe the beach in every hue.

Naked, you trot across the avenue.

Oh, never have I seen a dog so bare!

Naked and pink, without a single hair...

Startled, the passersby draw back and stare.

Of course they're mortally afraid of rabies.

You are not mad; you have a case of scabies

but look intelligent. Where are your babies?

(A nursing mother, by those hanging teats.)

In what slum have you hidden them, poor bitch,

while you go begging, living by your wits?

Didn't you know? It's been in all the papers,

to solve this problem, how they deal with beggars?

They take and throw them in the tidal rivers.

Yes, idiots, paralytics, parasites

go bobbing int the ebbing sewage, nights

out in the suburbs, where there are no lights.

If they do this to anyone who begs,

drugged, drunk, or sober, with or without legs,

what would they do to sick, four-legged dogs?

In the cafés and on the sidewalk corners

the joke is going round that all the beggars

who can afford them now wear life preservers.

In your condition you would not be able

even to float, much less to dog-paddle.

Now look, the practical, the sensible

solution is to wear a fantasía.

Tonight you simply can't afford to be a-

n eyesore... But no one will ever see a

dog in máscara this time of year.

Ash Wednesday'll come but Carnival is here.

What sambas can you dance? What will you wear?

They say that Carnival's degenerating

— radios, Americans, or something,

have ruined it completely. They're just talking.

Carnival is always wonderful!

A depilated dog would not look well.

Dress up! Dress up and dance at Carnival!

Toads

*Philip Larkin (1922-1985)*

Why should I let the toad work

 Squat on my life?

Can't I use my wit as a pitchfork

 And drive the brute off?

Six days of the week it soils

 With its sickening poison -

Just for paying a few bills!

 That's out of proportion.

Lots of folk live on their wits:

 Lecturers, lispers,

Losels, loblolly-men, louts-

 They don't end as paupers;

Lots of folk live up lanes

 With fires in a bucket,

Eat windfalls and tinned sardines-

 they seem to like it.

Their nippers have got bare feet,

 Their unspeakable wives

Are skinny as whippets - and yet

 No one actually starves.

Ah, were I courageous enough

 To shout Stuff your pension!

But I know, all too well, that's the stuff

 That dreams are made on:

For something sufficiently toad-like

 Squats in me, too;

Its hunkers are heavy as hard luck,

 And cold as snow,

And will never allow me to blarney

 My way of getting

The fame and the girl and the money

 All at one sitting.

I don't say, one bodies the other

 One's spiritual truth;

But I do say it's hard to lose either,

 When you have both.

A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning

*John Donne (1572-1631)*

AS virtuous men pass mildly away,

 And whisper to their souls to go,

Whilst some of their sad friends do say,

 "Now his breath goes," and some say, "No."

So let us melt, and make no noise,

 No tear-floods, nor sigh-tempests move ;

'Twere profanation of our joys

 To tell the laity our love.

Moving of th' earth brings harms and fears ;

 Men reckon what it did, and meant ;

But trepidation of the spheres,

 Though greater far, is innocent.

Dull sublunary lovers' love

 —Whose soul is sense—cannot admit

Of absence, 'cause it doth remove

 The thing which elemented it.

But we by a love so much refined,

 That ourselves know not what it is,

Inter-assurèd of the mind,

 Care less, eyes, lips and hands to miss.

Our two souls therefore, which are one,

 Though I must go, endure not yet

A breach, but an expansion,

 Like gold to aery thinness beat.

If they be two, they are two so

 As stiff twin compasses are two ;

Thy soul, the fix'd foot, makes no show

 To move, but doth, if th' other do.

And though it in the centre sit,

 Yet, when the other far doth roam,

It leans, and hearkens after it,

 And grows erect, as that comes home.

Such wilt thou be to me, who must,

 Like th' other foot, obliquely run ;

Thy firmness makes my circle just,

 And makes me end where I begun.

To His Coy Mistress

*Andrew Marvell (1621-1678)*

Had we but world enough, and time,

This coyness, lady, were no crime.

We would sit down and think which way

To walk, and pass our long love's day;

Thou by the Indian Ganges' side

Shouldst rubies find; I by the tide

Of Humber would complain. I would

Love you ten years before the Flood;

And you should, if you please, refuse

Till the conversion of the Jews.

My vegetable love should grow

Vaster than empires, and more slow.

An hundred years should go to praise

Thine eyes, and on thy forehead gaze;

Two hundred to adore each breast,

But thirty thousand to the rest;

An age at least to every part,

And the last age should show your heart.

For, lady, you deserve this state,

Nor would I love at lower rate.

But at my back I always hear

Time's winged chariot hurrying near;

And yonder all before us lie

Deserts of vast eternity.

Thy beauty shall no more be found,

Nor, in thy marble vault, shall sound

My echoing song; then worms shall try

That long preserv'd virginity,

And your quaint honour turn to dust,

And into ashes all my lust.

The grave's a fine and private place,

But none I think do there embrace.

Now therefore, while the youthful hue

Sits on thy skin like morning dew,

And while thy willing soul transpires

At every pore with instant fires,

Now let us sport us while we may;

And now, like am'rous birds of prey,

Rather at once our time devour,

Than languish in his slow-chapp'd power.

Let us roll all our strength, and all

Our sweetness, up into one ball;

And tear our pleasures with rough strife

Thorough the iron gates of life.

Thus, though we cannot make our sun

Stand still, yet we will make him run.

Suum Cuique

*Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882)*

Wilt thou seal up the avenues of ill?

Pay every debt, as if God wrote the bill.

Dream Deferred

*Langston Hughes (1902-1967)*

What happens to a dream deferred?

Does it dry up

like a raisin in the sun?

Or fester like a sore--

And then run?

Does it stink like rotten meat?

Or crust and sugar over--

like a syrupy sweet?

Maybe it just sags

like a heavy load.

Or does it explode?

Bright star, would I were stedfast as thou art—

Not in lone splendour hung aloft the night

And watching, with eternal lids apart,

Like nature's patient, sleepless Eremite,

The moving waters at their priestlike task

Of pure ablution round earth's human shores,

Or gazing on the new soft-fallen mask

Of snow upon the mountains and the moors—

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