

John J. Trause

Tout de Suite

Will It Ever End?

Will it ever end, this daily, weekly, monthly, yearly pace, this drive forward, which is only really a way of keeping up, maintaining, sustaining, forbearing all? No one really cares enough to fill in the gaps, to smooth the path, or even to get out of the way, and yet, even if one trips once, twice —and yes, three times— no one lends a hand or even comprehends the worlds that could come crashing down. It seems that others struggle and in that struggling achieve some goal, some awareness, some end. On the question of seriality most others can collect the whole set. I have never been able to do so except in *The Twilight Zone*.

Agh, but it is unfair and childish to complain about the problems of practicalities when more spiritual, creative, and life-sustaining gifts abound. And it is not as if one is unaware of these; it's just that the little annoyances are the ones that sting the most and take their toll.

If I had to hang on for dear life and go without, even with trivial loses, I know I would not hang on too hard or long. It is not that I do not love this life; it's just that the compromises of this life do not seem worth it. Am I really not of this world? Am I too confident in another realm? The big question or statement, really, is that I do not care. I am lazy at heart, says the man who seems to sleep not or rest.

I reconciled a long time ago that the house I am building and setting in order will always crumble before I can even get a foundation laid. Perhaps I shall live on air and grace and only the wispiest of wishes. I learned to reconcile.

In the Street

Who are these people? What is your name? And you? Who are you? What is your name? On this street teeming with strangers and strange others I ask, “Who are these people?” Why is this street pink or orange? Why do shots of yellow glare out between the bodies or among the masses of bodies? What city is this? It looks like Berlin or Vienna or any city of strangers. I am alone in this crowd, and I like the anonymity, but do I dare ask if these strangers suffer as I do or suffer in ways that I do? Shouldn’t it all appear gray, not pink, orange, or yellow? Why do I prefer a Kirchner and Macke to a real city? An Unreal City to a real city? What is more frightening? Ha, what a silly conceit I expose in myself. Who are you? Isn’t that what the Caterpillar rudely asked of Alice? Her answer evaded him or at least evaded the question. How rude is that? Well, I will not ask this of myself or anyone else. I am content to be another stranger, an other stranger, a strange other. What a bother. Hey, brother, can you spare a lime? How about a line? Before I end this *collage à trois* I should answer my own question. I am no different from you, dear passerby, dear stranger, dear other trapped as I am in the modern twilight zone.

Going to Canossa

Although I am not dressed as a beggar I feel like Emperor Henry begging forgiveness of Pope Gregory at Canossa—the door closed for three days. I will repent and be on time next week.

Big Lub in a Tub

It was by all odds the most infectious chuckle in the history of politics. It started with a silent trembling of Taft's ample stomach. The next sign was a pause in the reading of his speech, and the spread of a slow grin across his face. Then came a kind of gulp which seemed to escape without his being aware that the climax was near. Laughter followed hard on the chuckle itself, and the audience invariably joined in."

Henry F. Pringle, *The Life and Times of William Howard Taft: A Biography* (1939)

What's up with William Howard Taft
New President with much abaft
That when he came to take his place
The White House bathtub lacked the space
To fit the giant gentleman
Accommodating those within
Who were less stout and round about
That a new bathtub was found out
That fit four men of average size
And hauled above before our eyes
To take its spot in history
And adding to the mystery
Of that great man of greater girth
Who was the largest man on earth
To make the White House his abode
Accommodated for his load?

Rub-A-Dub-Dub

(All Dead in the Tub)

Pelias, King of Thessaly
Agamemnon
Lucius Annaeus Seneca
Petronius Arbiter
Queen Amalasuetha
Jean Paul Marat
Madame Restell
Paul Morphy
David W. Wallace
Jean Clemens
Sara Teasdale
Maria Montez
Oscar Dominguez
Montgomery Clift
Albert Dekker
Thomas Merton
Jim Morrison
Diane Arbus
Billy Murcia
Peter Farndon
Uwe Barschel
Christina Onassis
Jerzy Kosinski
Orville Reddenbacher
Adrienne Shelly
Dash Snow
Whitney Houston
Dolores O'Riordan
Sridevi Kapoor

IOLCUS
MYCENAE
ROME
ROME
BOLSENA
PARIS
NEW YORK CITY
NEW ORLEANS
INDEPENDENCE
REDDING
NEW YORK CITY
PARIS
PARIS
NEW YORK CITY
LOS ANGELES
BANGKOK
PARIS
NEW YORK CITY
LONDON
LONDON
GENEVA
BUENOS AIRES
NEW YORK CITY
CORONADO
NEW YORK CITY
NEW YORK CITY
BEVERLY HILLS
LONDON
DUBAI

On the Death of John Cage
Wednesday, August 12, 1992

And now he can make his true contribution
to music and amateur mycology for that matter.

Portrait of Me by an Artist I Never Knew and Who Never Knew Me

Oh, you who do not know me know me,
imagined me, perhaps, in black and
white, yes, and gray and even yellow,
a saucy fellow in jaunty hat,
but not a cool cat, jazzy, nothing
like that, a bit split, perhaps, but not

giallo

black dahlia, white gardenia, even,
or yellow rose of Texas, no, not
white roses, LA, Cincinnati,
but Easter Island, monolithic,
and aquiline, prodigious, posed and
past poised or poisoned probably, not.

NOTE: Inspired by *Untitled [Man in Hat on Yellow Background, 2017]*, oil painting by Merle Rosen (died spring 2017) of Cincinnati, Ohio.

Cleopatra Romano-Sodomized by Julius Caesar and Marc Antony Anachronistically Before Capitulating After the Battle of Actium, But in Only a Metaphorical Way, Thank God, or Ra, or Thoth, or Sir William James Erasmus Wilson, Elbert E. Farman, Muhammad Ali Pasha al-Mas'ud ibn Agha, and Louis Philippe I of France, or Salvador Dalí for That Matter

Do it to me now, in this our bedroom bower in the royal palace of Alexandria.
Do it to me in Rome or Heliopolis, or any metropolis of our liking and licking.
Take me with you to rule the world from Britain to Tyre, I do not tire of your embraces, embouchures.
Gauge my responses and latitude and longitude with our own Antikythera device of vices, antipodes, antipathies.
Take my cherry, *mon chérie*, on our last light flight out of Egypt.
I speak many languages and I shall make you come in all of them. Come, come.
Come to our own megalomaniacal megalopolis across the earth and amid the stars,
like my ancestors, incesters, sisters, catasteristics, and palimpsesters...

Thutmosis, Moses, make the most of wine and roses, neurosis, necrosis, so says Sesostris.
The astral obelisks stick and prick, and you lick my haunches, cautiously, carefully
placed thousands of years before we knew you.
Ramesses crammed me. Ammon Ra rams me in Ramsey, †an anal torpedo†. Thoth will slam me
against a cherry-dark mound, surrounded by that wine-dark sea.

Snow falls in the Great Desert.

I weep for the fall of all of us, in this vernal autumn of our undertakings, for the loss of blood, lubricant.
We lucubrate and celebrate, lubriciously, no more, but in the stars.
But in our tears.

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NOTE: Inspired by *Obelisk* [2017], collage by Patti Gibbons.

