



Fragrantly Here All Day

Chris Wallace-Crabbe

Generations have trod, have trod, have trod

Gerard Manley Hopkins

And then, that must be space. Because we call it space,
or landscape, or terrain. Or at the weedy worst
a plain potential for development:
right-angles on an undulant soft ground.

But if we stand back a bit from it all
for a clear while? Not captured in between
like Andrew Marvell's mower, who deplored
our language made physical in gardens,
yet wasn't wild in branchy, scraping nature.

I gave my love a cherry
without so much as a stone.

At times, we murmur 'nature' and feel good.
Can value be inherent, after all?
Democracy calls for progress, at the polls,
whatever on earth that concept's going to mean
under and above
the fatness of my purse.

Some processes just happen, willy-nilly.
Hungry millions come trudging into cities
faster than any tiled urbs can understand:
civilization had a little stay, I'd murmur,
bespeaking balance and the middle way.
Optimism had a lucky break
for a while there.

No, those millions are not ours but 'theirs',
that's what suburbs tell the oceans.
'I quite concur', add the vertical cities,
rendering unto Caesar.

Blue sciences energetically march on,
eyes glued to surfaces of glass, their labour
lending their numbers to the growth of numbers,
pill-resondant, hyperbolic. Muddy gangs
reckon they are going to rule the cities:
such is the opposite of all we want.

Not a jot of room at the inn.

But what if we stand back from it awhile,
was the move I asked before, given
lucidity entailing prophecy somehow;
this calls for Plato's bald philosopher kings
who'd have to make it all enforceable

and have to have the guns to make it happen
and stealth attacks
or, at the very least, those drones.
The drones are drinking brandy in their clubs.

In short, surely we've got a more
 than little problem for that world-wide brain
 which was developed for precisely this
 and all the other games which we dub moral:

get people to vote against their selves
 and the shiny budget of their cheque books?

Get real.

But that stuff is just exactly what
 all of us are going to have to do,
 keeping dense green leaves
 astir against the sky.



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