

Wes Civilz

On the True & Possible Forms of the Soul

That slipperiest gizmo once upon
A time known as the Soul:—knickknack; wee bird;
Sweet mouse; cloud; lily pad; flash in the pan;
Fish in the pan; mouthful of unsaid words;
Homunculus; mad pilot of the mecha
Trampling the landscape; fetus in the womb
Kicking at sunrise; friend; fiend; ego; echo;
Old artifact newfound inside a tomb;
Long snake coiled round tall ladder; nemesis
Of mom and dad becoming smattering
Of God; fluke; readymade; freak; specialist
Now in the habit of haphazardly
 Engraving silver symbols on the throne
 Of hypernormal gold; dead pet; lost poem.

Lazy Sweet Drones

Lazy sweet drones move overhead, they make
Us smile, they glide around and we feel happy,
Their smooth spheres warp the sunlight in their wake,
We smile, we stare. Perhaps they're trigger-happy.
Here is a bird, then it evaporates,
Lasered by them to vapor, and just seconds
Later we start to think our earthly fates
Should be the same, we start to wildly beckon
Now, all four hands in air, we're yelling, "Blast
The two of us—" We hope the gleaming white
Smooth spheres will circle back, and not fly past.
Although they come and hover like they might
Let loose, and sensors briefly whirl and whine,
They don't. They're moving on. It's not our time.

A Ceremony Honoring My Unrivaled Weakness

I am the Weakness. I'm a craven lump
Of feebleness and flaws. But it gets worse:
I've gotten catastrophically drunk
Before the ceremony. I'm the first
Man to be honored publicly for being
So vastly weak that it became of use
To science. The top researchers were seeing
In my brain scans a dark neuronal juice,
Unseen before, a slow and sludgy ooze,
A kind of liquid cowardice so thick
And clingy that they wondered how I was
Alive at all. So I'm drunk, and they sit
 There in the theatre. They sit still, there they are
 With the award, in bronze: a tiny shriveled heart.

A Diagram of the Interior Catastrophe

First, the naive neotenous heart-wish
Persisting from my childhood (A) is snipped
Away by scissors (B) that snick and swish
To show, behind the wish, a leather whip
(C) cracking on a lion's muzzle (D),
Then he jumps up and knocks the urn down (E),
From which a Ghost of Numbness (F) breaks free.
It blinks and looks around the room and sees
The beehive (G), and stretches out one hand,
Spectral but strong, and thumps the sleepy hive
So hard the bees fly out confused and land
In angry clumps along the hanging scythe
 (H), and proceed to rock it side to side
 Until it falls and cuts my head off (I).

The Yellow Rubber Glove

Beyond my finger lies eternity.
There it is, just a hair's breadth past the tip,
But this hair's breadth is, I see, funnily
Enough—impossibly—quite infinite.
The rubber barrier surrounds and bars
My finger, my whole hand, from contacting
Things such as you, the cat, the tree, the stars,
Things I might touch ... and yet prevents contracting
Diseases that might overrun my soul,
Boils, rashes, viruses from far afield,
Or closer, close as breakfast's oatmeal bowl.
And when the yellow rubber glove gets peeled
 Away, there goes a skin that isn't mine
 But which I'm wearing almost all the time.