

Three Poems

by [Lawrence Cottrell](#) (June 2022)



Man Entering A Room, Niklavs Strunke, 1927

Confession

Ten years back I thought to go, went so far as to rent a
place,
Where I stood one noon in its empty rooms, supposing
of my life thenceforth,
How the moon would phase and I, who had no friend but
she,
Should be just one within the cold, feel time's lash across
my heart ...
so tarry still beside her fire.

But now she's frail, preparing for farewell, and I find
Myself again supposing of my life thenceforth, when no
one cares for me but memories pirouetting ...
ah then ...

Arctic winds will bitter Capricorn, hard the softest sigh,
joys suckled on by shadows,
This grown eager e'en for Azrael, dark angel's taking of
the instance of my being,
Else I bear alone a winter's sting, the gray-grim scattering
of each day,
no light of revelation on a road to Damascene ...
no pilgrim's inn along the way—

Queer Musics

I'm pretty sure. Day will come. In fifteen minutes or so ...
In the middle of a word, say, filling an *O* like a tidal pool,
Flung upon a *T* like tempest sea 'gainst Ptolemy's Pharos,
gown some dowager *Q* on a crowded page ...

there (!) ...

'twixt slats of blinds ...

Night's gave way to angular grotesques and soft recursive
humors of a May.

And it's alright, I guess, this world I mean, its almost
seamless circuit of a sun,

Its gypsy terminator which might or mightn't prick'to
jubilee

The tongues of chancleers and doves, but which excites
Always onto Allegheny staves the tonic gifts of men who
would be song,

who bow nativities of light

on violoncellos of their hearts—

The Son

I taught him how to tie his shoes, ride a bike, feel the
sacredness of Gettysburg,

not much else.

He had no father from an early age, like a line read once
I half forgot,

underscored by a pen for memory's sake.

I was oft' distracted by midnight purls of sea on a
Mississippi strand,

threads of sky caressing chimes,

a nickel found in a washed pocket.

This recall is all that is, there being no grief o'er having
Missed his childhood, no longing for second chances ...
'Cause I'm still the wight I was, a lover of bends in rivers,
roads, horizons,
melancholies even ...

Remember notes of whippoorwills, monotonies of rains
on roofs,
The barrenness of nights on ways a thousand miles from
home ...
not my son's first word.

I was a haunting of the haunting by the jingle-jangle gods
of men,
Climbed the creeping certitudes of souls on this trellis of a
world ...
but through the curio of his life
ha' ne'er been—

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Lawrence Cottrell has lived in West Virginia, mostly, preferring to dwell among good people, in a place where change is an unloved orphan. He has a BA from West Virginia State University and attended several graduate schools, leaving each finally to walk mist-hewn hollers and prowl wind-blasted ridges, to be where valleys can be spanned by two arms and a broom handle, and noons aren't quite sure of themselves. His poems have appeared in *The Lyric*, *Appalachian Heritage*, *Good Foot* and *Grab-a-Nickel*, among others. His work is in the celebrated anthology *Wild Sweet Notes: Fifty Years of West Virginia Poetry 1950-1999*. He blooms presently at a bend of

Elk River's meander.

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