

# Two Poems

by [Jeffrey Burghauer](#) (October 2020)



*Tröstung (Consolation)*, Georg Ehrlich, 1920

## Solace

If, on 9/11, some young gent  
And a lass, vicariously grieved,  
Sought some solace in indifferent  
Venery, the child thus conceived,  
Right now, as the darkness is unknit  
Into summer sun across the yard,  
Is becoming the legitimate,  
Lawful subject of libidinous regard.

What's the point—that so much time has passed?  
That I am the sort of bum whose grin  
Pulses with the easy, battened-fast,  
Half-ironic rage of thwarted sin?  
My desires make a habitat.  
Everything is wantable. The plate  
Flourishes its sweets, announcing that  
I have come into the Older Man's estate.

In the Middle English, "solace" not  
Only meant what now it means, indeed,  
But denoted coitus. "The lot  
Of the Everyman is guaranteed  
To be pulsing with such pain," implies  
All the shrugging lexicography,  
"That carnal touch identifies

Shelter in the thick of some contingent We.”

What they call a “Day” (a liquid When)  
Is the only thing you *cannot* seize.  
What’s a cataclysm other than  
Something like a normal century’s  
Worth of dying & bewilderment  
Dragged & wedged & wrung into a red,  
Monumental instant. I repent.  
Save me like a thing your loving mother said.

Thus come visit me, and be my love,  
Naiad; we will all the pleasures prove  
Whilst the towers fracture from above  
Narrow lanes where scented minions move.  
We will sweetly sport upon the rocks  
As the squinting shepherds fleece their flocks,  
And each dancing piece of Babel falls,  
Slicing all the evening air to madrigals.

### A Sleeper’s Progress

Till the age of twenty, he would plead  
Impotently in his gnarled sleep,  
Whimpering as if for leave to reap  
Absolution for some wicked deed.

Till the age of forty, he would roar  
Through the dusty, threadbare veils of sleep  
At his persecutors, showing steep  
Eagerness to call a whore a Whore.

Till the age of sixty, he would break  
Ampoules of Extinction in his sleep,  
Giggling that he had caused to weep  
Blameless men inhúmanly awake.

Near the age of eighty, things grew grim:  
Soon it was the *sleep* that slept in *him*.

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