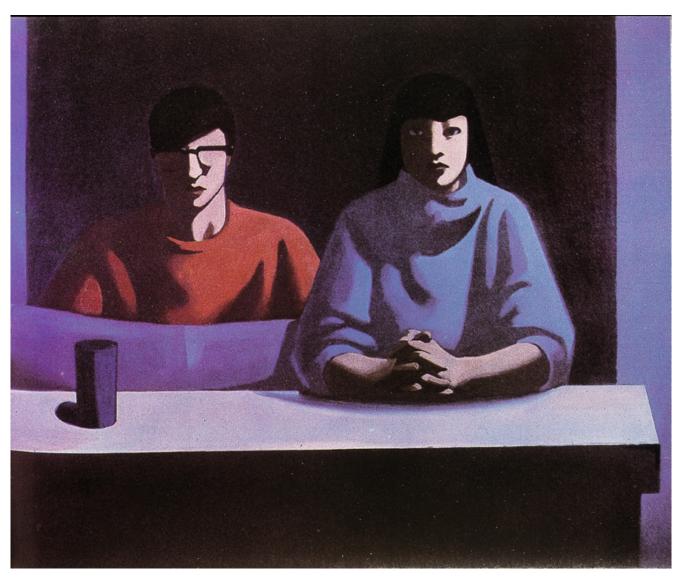
Two Poems

by <u>Michael Williams</u> (December 2020)



Two People Under a Light, Geng Jianyi, 1985

Single Life Blues

Formless lover, realize!-

Satisfy my pining eyes And be that concrete ecstasy For arms now clutching vacancy. All the transport and elation I harvest in imagination (Call it fancy, call it lust) Is a diet but of dust. I need substantial meals to feed My hungry soul, my heart-sick need. Take shape, my love, that you may be Exiled from my fantasy, Springing foreigner into This kingdom of the real and true, And my devotion naturalize As citizen, my dream and prize. You in the flesh, my longing quelled, We shall in youthful raptures meld.

A warm and damp reality, Struggling sensuality; A private Eden we'd create, Our twain appetites to sate. Relaxed, perpetual embrace, Eyes tethered to adoring face (Wherefore into the soul to peer), Whispers caress the tender ear And breath upon the tingling neck, As intrepid fingers trek About the peaks and valleys of The body of the one I love. The chattering of wind-blown leaves Filter, as they slip the eaves, Through windows, beacons of the night: Pearly lunar, stellar light. And by this muted brilliance blessed We'd drift into contented rest; Our heartbeats synchronized in sleep While angels silent vigils keep.

But for my pining, I can't find You manifesting from my mind; For all my aching passions roused, My hermit-bed remains half-housed. Half a soul inhabits meA gentle type of misery.

Chronic

for Lucy Fudge

Pain has an empire over me And spans my many members; And as I live, there's fuel to feed The conquest's burning embers.

Expansive is the agony Whose reign is 'round me girt, With multitudes of tribes- diverse

Imperium of hurt.

Tyrannical of my existence,

Enslaving concentration;

My very personality

Is but its vassal nation:

The deluge of experience

And life's capacity

Is dammed into a tiny stream

Of sore mundanity.

I have naught else; this misery Informs my every breath.

A pregnancy perpetual,

Delivered but by death.

And yet, more galling than my plight Are hearts of stone and ears Of steel, when indeliberate swells

A looming tide of tears.

The slam of pity's door to mute My song of suffering— No likewise melody could vent The pungence of this sting;

The litany of judgment aired In stupid, cruel emissions As if the callous fools I love Were suddenly physicians; Their strange, indifferent flippancy Gives me no space for peace, Nor do their torrent of demands And expectations cease;

I writhe in agony in bed, Into a ball I'm curled— But am expected, Atlas-like, That I should bear their world.

Clinicians, practicing their art In treatment of my ill, Regard me as a lump of ore That passes through a mill.

As bloodless as a statue's bronze; Routine as a file clerk; Cold as a glacier to my woe: The doctor at her work.

Cycling sickness to a salve

(The latter fails again);

My symptoms chase their remedy And I remain in pain.

Self-piteous? Indeed, I am— But judge me not too strict: Were this distress and succor's dearth Your own self to afflict

You'd understand adversity And even might be crushed Beneath that understanding's weight, And judgment would be hushed.

My only recourse is to faith

So, when of tears I tire,

I place my trust in God and pray

A rosary of fire.

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Michael Williams is a Catholic convert, a crude man of letters, a bleeding heart and a goofball. He-like St. Francis-is wedded to poverty, but with moderate success. His interests (apart from writing) include smoking cigarettes, drinking beer and whiskey, reading history books, playing chess, and entertaining his friends. He lives in Anchorage, Alaska with his faithful kitty, Olivia. He has been published in the *St. Austin Review* and the *Catholic Anchor*.

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