

Two Sonnets



Vanitas Still Life by Pieter Claesz, 1625

by [Jeffrey Burghauer](#) (March 2022)

I

Salad Days

I hated Ezra, and I loved him, too.

And there was mesmerizing Liza, who

I loved, and never hated. Ezra, though,

Decided she was ponderous & slow.

(Those worldlier than I would have the sense

To see what's suspect in such vehemence.)

The consternation that I suffered on
Discerning something of the cinnamon
Distributed amongst the folds of his
Relationship with Liza was—and *is*...
A specter strides across the years to swing
Ammonia censers—never trifling.

For she permitted him to cry in her
Well-practiced arms. A Paradise, they were.

II

A Prayer on His Forty-First Birthday

O help me to be somewhat less of a jerk,
And less of a feast for Anarchical Need.
O reconcile me to the shape of the knout
Mortality twists from Original Life.
O Lord, may I read fewer books. May my wife
Learn more from my face & inflection about
My essence's systems & moods, than, indeed,

From learned reviews of my recondite work.

Since exiles aren't all equal (to wit,
Love's artist, sweet Ovid, was famously hurled
Definitively to the Edge of the World;
Josephus was sent to the center of it),

Preserve me from visions I cannot afford,
And give me a death I can live with, my Lord.

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