

THE ILIAD

Poem I

In every seat,
On every chair in the throng,
Tarry OTHER peoples' holidays.

The lost summer's
blades of grass rasping
the distant meadows
of my thoughts...

The netherworld – a view
with NUMEROUS dials,
reclining Hospital beds and
noisy air-conditioning contraptions

cutting strips of air from this
STERILE airport lounge,
Throwing them
into my faraway eyes...

Waiting to depart,
My scorched lips pant
TORMENTED utterances
in anticipation of those
blades of grass

GASHING the uniformed
Village IDIOT with
Prying eyes and
NEON retorts –

proudly manning his
electronic frontier while
incompletely disguised in his
Immigration Officer attire –

making him cough and
making him splutter...
while making me bleed with
Raucous laughter!

Yet, no flowers of mellow
to spice up the wait and
no GRASS from the valley's
allowed to slow down the rush –

EXCEPT for
what the mules carry
in their bellies, in their arses,
in their babies' dirty nappies –

and no BLADES either
were going to be allowed to
get through that electronic detector

SEPARATING

The rest of the world.

Poem II

Was looking for my bags
to check the return date
though I knew all too well
I had been sold a single.

I remembered
the pristine rubbish
Those travel agent priests
told me:

This is the
OFFER of your lifetime,
The very one
you simply can't refuse
When time is up!

Should I have read the
small print on the ticket,
this lottery of incarnations
Might yet have turned out
Oh, so differently...

Embarking on God's Airlines
for a shuttle trip
to the Fourth Heaven,
I felt that
I was being rushed a little...

Delaying the final checkout to
explore this seemingly exciting
and rather intriguing
New-found HELL around me
seemed such a good idea –

Despite the Duty-free being
as expensive as the High Street,
and the Amusements arcade
A far cry from Las Vegas'.

Poem III

Around the departure lounge
rubbed shoulders gutter bloods,
cocksure toffs and
 cliché-merchant middle classes –

all city dwellers pottering about
while trading places,

perfunctorily exchanging
their sterling pounds
for mere foreigner PREJUDICES
so they could trade
their old wife in
for a brand new local beauty
and two very large cigars
to puff away the extra
dirty dreaming...

Spin-doctoring the world
for just a couple of hours, the
chattering economy classes
together with the
Armany-suited, self-important
business classes –

who never stop from trading:
executive shares for
spectacular financial crashes,
Chinese silk for Indian spices or,
mere Freudian slips for
nothing but fictive identities –

were KILLING time
smooth talking nineteen to the dozen,
CONFABULATING quite
improbable dénouements
to every politician's
latest misdemeanour.

The 'heard that?'
omnipresent contretemps
Was gadding loudly
All around the lounge...

Poem IV

In the boring meantime,
I was having a quiet tête-à-tête
with my alter ego at the Bar
when, some flash Harry
of a gadfly
STORMS in and,
quite obtrusively,
starts ordering
CHAMPAGNE for
EVERYBODY in the room!

Serendipitously,
next to me,
single woman reading;

Perchance, we could
knit a natter together – the
“KY” of all social lubricants –
A bit of worthless Californian fad
In FIFTEEN-minute
Brimful of titillating
showbiz titbit intervals,
Chit-chat and gossip...!

I spy the glossy paperback –
Alas, no more than I expected! –
When she espies my pouting look
And glacial moments follow...

Clumsily, I try to hide
behind the ubiquitous
'All right?' starter question,
but only manage to
amplify the philippic...

Having been so stupid
to miss an easy chance
to let time fly into hot air,

I knew the horse that I
had been flogging was
all but dead and buried shallow
in the common grave where
all unfounded expectations lay...

Poem V

Suddenly, she was no longer
A fit flibbertigibbet
Colourfully populating a
waiting lounge of crazy expectations
as even the all time classic
opening gambit – the WEATHER –
was dry in sparkling water.

So I went for broke,
fertilising my opening gambit
with even more manure
than what a grazing herd of
Free-range cattle excretes on its
return to their midnight stables.

'By gad, my dear, you'll never know
how truly boring paradise is!

Been twice ere myself!
Found the eternal thereafter
By ACCIDENT,

while taking a jaunt
to my next incarnation; then,

LOST it in the indefatigable rise
ABOVE
the drab circumstances
To grab a more
Socially acceptable lifestyle.

A flick of the mouse was
all it took to enter Heavens!

Among the portly saints
There stood Saint Peter
waiting by the gate...

He wore his porter's uniform,
all bearded up and dangling
a large key holder ring saying:

"We have singles, solitary and
confinements; no double beds,
no sauna and no massage parlours...

"a running knot for haloes,
therewith to hang them one by one"
I wished for such remote-controlling freaks –

Too late, my immaterial thought!
A talking shopping mall about
the Chiliasm's vainly feared bugs
was all you got –
oh, what a wasted metanoia!

For never have conjectures been
so trite... no Internet, no clubs,
no rest rooms to indulge in the
Amoral, transient yet,
highly pleasurable oral sex,
soft drugs and
heavy metal sessions;

No mischief tolerated
in this celestial IMF – only

air-conditioned-air-brushed
official celebrations,
higher taxes than in the
Scandinavian Peninsula and
mirthless promises of free
and fair-trading’.

And hear that:
‘They do use metric yet
pubs are bloody shut
no later than eleven;
the grass is always green
and Christmas
is a yearlong.

The alcohol aisle is
always shut
and they never have
any condoms for sale –

for naturally,
all good women must be
Shaving frigid to get UP there
with the bearded saints –

how lucky then,
one does not get there to have
fun and games with banana flavour!

Poem VI

Wicked thoughts and riotous mirth
are banished – only
unblemished abstinence
is duly rewarded with countless
promises of eternal happiness.

For only sanitary souls ever get
admitted in that parish of
“tight-sphinctered timidity”
where NOTHING goes unseen
by the most potent of brothers...

With an eye on sinful errantry,

The Grand Adjudicator condescends –

In loco parentis and
suspended disbelief –

with Beefeater-saints
in awe rarefied
much like
the local atmosphere:

a rather dim Kismet
sharing their plentiful eternity!

Otherwise, it is the perfect sinecure –
The horn of plenty on golden taps!
With so much sugar and
so many pints of milk, there's plenty of
Gerry Halliwell concerns such as,
How lucky angels can stay young
or else, aerodynamics
would be much harder to evade
with so much blubber!

Poem VII

Spurred on by her dropped jaw
and startled demeanour, and thankful
she didn't scream for the police, an
ambulance, the local ombudsman
or, simply call out: FIRE!
I persisted...

'For a very long time
I lived under colossal portals
where aquatic suns
tinged everything
CERULEAN GREEN.

No wonder then
I took the wrong turn at
the crossroads of choices!

'In antediluvian times, I was
a giant stalagmite, a

pillar standing tall –

Mother Nature's gesso,
with feet or, should I say,
with 'foot' of clay –

stuck firmer than
a mother tongue
to the jaw of the
mouth-like notch
in the Atlas mountain.'

'Cold and dark,
years of mind-torturing
drip-drip have passed,

strengthening my
calcium carbonate body
with the patience
of a silly iron rod.'

'Drip by drop,
there grew my gestalt
and I attained
the acme of patience –
an acne on the face of
ergo sum –

without the pressures of the
Eternal HERE and the eternal NOW
so I could *cogito* a tad
about the penury of choice
between *To have* and NOT *to be*.'

Poem VIII

'Another flight of fancy
through mere incarnations
was while embodied
as a ruddy duck'.

'Though comfortably adapted
to cold-war hazards,
I was slowly being

KILLED OFF
by being rooted to one place
instead of being let to fly away
to warmer climates when
TIME had reached its due.'

'While SCARECROWS
were busy qualifying
for the final steeplechase –

with holes of water and
barbed wire hurdles –

a stray Kalashnikov bullet
fired at an illegal immigrant
distilled the last air balloon
and sent me in a tail spin
towards a very real and
morose down under.'

'However cold,
a war was going on
which my very own
forgetful brain
thought safe ignoring
when nothing better than
a sitting duck can fan
the shooting flames
of patriotic huntsmen!'

'Had been hungry
that fatal morn'
and decided to stop
for a snack of corn
from the greenest of fields
when...'

Poem IX

They say
your whole life
flashes before
your very eyes
in that age long

last second.

Well,
it's not quite like that
poetic rubbish.

A loud bang,
the adrenaline flowing...
You don't even feel getting hit
and then you're gone –
no time for valedictions...

What followed was
a rude awakening into
A brave new world,
remembering nothing
from the one where
you just came from...

If you're the agoraphobic type –
like I was – then, all I could
look forward to was the
Afterlife-Technicolor-Dream
that looked like
Dante's terrifying visions.

This is why
I've been searching my bags
to exchange my
"One-way Ticket...
to the Moo-oo-on"
for a return.

Poem X

An eternity is a rather long time and,
With the false wisdom of
20/20 hindsight,
ALL I can say about
life as a stone is that
it wasn't even half the fun
I got out of being
A ruddy duck:

No jet-setting,
Too much structure and
definitely, not enough living –
in short,
small fry at
Mendeleyev's table!

Poem XI

What ducks and bones, you ask?
Of course, the stone's bones,
the bees' knees, and
the water on my back –
What else?

In other words,
the meaningless conversation
you'd rather have about the
Women's Institute jam recipes,
your latest DIY successes,
your little nephew's
latest misdemeanour or,
better still, your
DEAD husband's rheumatism.

I haven't even told you about
the time when I was down to four,
waiting to be interviewed
to Captain the Titanic.

The other three were:
Nemo, Ahab, and Iona...

Instead, they chose a sleepy Englishman
who thought of stopping over
in Atlantis.

Well, suits them fine!
Tough luck for some,
rich pickings for a lot of others,

in short,
A lot of blah-blahs and
Soapy Hollywood etceteras!

Poem XII

For a moment only,
She seemed a little fractious
Before deciding to have
a crack at me...

Her smug reply lashed back
as she begun to explain tartly:

You flatter yourself too much!
You know, I only fly to London
and, what's more,
I'm hopeless at psychoanalysis!

If I could put into words my feelings
after what you've just told me,
I'd probably refrain from writing.

IMAGINE I had to write my memoirs
and, at some point
in the thirteenth chapter,
for lack of something better to say,
I had to mention this meeting of ours...

Of course, the first few chapters
would be about the people
that I never met... Then,
about the rest of men
who never really came into my life –

just in their pants and dirty hands
with dreams to match...

But not to worry, dear!
I'm absolutely sure
I could fit in, at least a footnote
About this very long and
Empty day...

The only thing I'd like to add
Is that I'm not yet married, and
I don't even have a nephew...
but otherwise, please,

Don't let me interrupt you!

It's been most entertaining
listening to you;
I really had a monster of a time
Despite my obvious attention deficit
being heaped on
such a pile of rubbish...

Oh, and one last thing before I go:
Incidentally, I do share the
Titanic owner's judgement about
Captain Ahab –

In case you wonder why,
maybe another day,
I'll tell you about my life as
big and smelly Moby Dick!

A far too lengthy diet of
Miss American Pie
had been responsible for
far too many handsome people
waiving me "bye-bye" ...

Before it was too late,
I became indebted to
Click Online or, maybe
Slim Line-ER doctors
who managed to
squeeze me through
my dire straits conundrum,
as you appear to have noticed...

Hedonistic imperatives
had made me wonder
AIMLESSLY, in search of
a rather different architecture
to the one I was born with,

one that could make
my breasts bigger and my
jeans fitter, immune from
pain, malaise and all manner of

unpleasant experiences,
cooped up
somewhere between
urban benign and pastoral bliss –
all at the same forgotten time –

where sublime contentment isn't
mandatory, wasted or distributed
according to individual IQ.

Of course, living in those States
United by McDonalds
Impinges on your figure...

Yet, here I am
in what is now
my latest incarnation – a body
with a very real language
that can't be read but
only softly spoken...

My name is Circe!

TANTALUS

Tantalus: n. a. stand in which decanters of spirits are locked up but visible [from Tantalus, mythical king punished in Hades by sight of unattainable water and fruit].

THE ODYSSEY

Poem XIII

I had been on the point of leaving
Before this absolute shower
made me take a SECOND look...

A lipstick of words was
Redding her coat-hanger figure
with figures that didn't add up:

The longest pair of 11s
you've seen, a pert ?
Weaving provocatively
on the other side of the
Virtual, yet not so virtuous 1
and a stars adoring 3
behind the screen of a flimsy TOP
was the reason for all that
Twisted arithmetic whispering:
Did you see the size of those...?

How numbingly comfortable
a damsel she must have been
in the midst of all that
"Frohlische Wissenschaft"
she didn't understand

until her wants for another beach
where she could be washed, combed,
Sunned and scoured the earth for
grew larger and moister inside...

The single whole, that
solid circle of domestic bliss
fissured long before those
startling urges cropped up...

The fingertips of her fancy
Soothed no longer in furtive

Joy of SOLITARY titillation,
After the realization that her
deceased other half –

who had happily measured trees
at the end of a tight leash –

Didn't offer anything other than
what she had always known.

New scaffoldings
had been erected
and a statue of liberation
was given to her
as a fair-well present,

during the funeral Sundays
Spent watching miniatures
of freedom traversing –

Kabuki puppets hibernating
In the adumbration
of the summer horizons
of her retinas...

Poem XIV

'Twas red the ship her
Odysseus commandeered –
a dream-like vessel with
instant gear changes and
impeccable handling on rough seas
and most troubled waters.

At the time this nautical
Trojan Horse set sail,
NOBODY realised that
all the safety nets had been
split wide open by an inexperienced
Mermaid-come-enchantress
of travelling men named Circe

(... or something
quite close to that – a

Morgan Le Fay full of
mischievous wickedness)!

All day long, this
enchantress did nothing
but sewed labels on flowers,
sang in fog, fished in
troubled waters and,
changed travelling men into pigs...

The travails of growing up
CHANGED her into
an impatient hitchhiker
on the sunny motorways
of her greatest discOdysees.

Poem XV

'Twas why she lured the
Sole remaining boat from
the entire fleet that left Ithaca –

Down the road from the
beautiful island of Kefallonia –

To the uncharted Island of Aeaea,
Intending to conquer those sails
With the centripetal mast of
Her egoistic intentions.

Under a fair mask,
Circe's come-hither words
Resembled those of
Oedipus, Prometheus and
Guy Fawkes – all in one,
only with wonderful tits this time...

The thinly disguised attempt
to rationalise earlier, pagan flames
Had been but the usual instructions
of a pre-cooked meal for two.

Place LOVE on a tray,
Insert it into a pre-heated oven

(at FULL GAS MARKS for roasting)
and leave it there for a day or two,
Until it boils over
With much anticipation...

When finished playing games,
It is ready to serve.

Poem XVI

Ergo, LOVE
Can be born in three ways:

At term,
PREMATURELY and
Still – when
“Baby-love, my Baby-love...”
Is dead as DISCO!

Unlike babies though, their
LOVE didn't have
Much chance of being born
In an airport terminal,
Cloned at teatime, or
Brewed in the incubators
of the midnight party-time.

As for consumption,
CONTRARY to popular beliefs
Pervasive at the time,
rather than during
the old-fashioned candlelit dinner,

The best time for that truly
EXCITING type of
Recreational activity was still
In the morning, at teatime or
At any other time when the SUN
happened to be fully ERECT.

LOVE on toast was best
Yet, with time and inches
being of such essence,
it was charged premium rates,

Like the 0898 numbers,
Zeus' weather forecasts, or like
God knows but never says what.

Poem XVII

Not long the waiting...
Taking aim – for about a week
of tiptoed stalking –
A willing deer, he was right!

The youthful prey said,
'Never, Never, Never!'
Before she offered herself
"from the neck down."

And a FAIR offer it was –
For the one from whom
that very offer had been withdrawn,
Had been turned into a silly ASS,
long before the die was cast,
The river Styx was crossed and
the waters of frightful passions
were UNLEASHED from inside her
Pandora's Box of
FURRY PASSIONS – mostly
hidden behind
tiny strings and delicate laces...

Poem XVIII

The DEAD one kept calling
the MERCILESS other
from across the river,

apologising to her
Upwardly mobile middle finger
Lolling on the bottom
of a pint...

One 'last drink' spent
Begging, swearing that
He'll correct himself,

Wait forever,
be her eunuch friend,
Maybe even get a job...

He could carry the can, and
She could live happily ever after...
Eventually,
she took pity on him and said
'Don't worry, you'll be all right!'

With no one to pardon, the
counterfeit tears of sorrow
Drowning her orb
shamelessly abated.

She made a simple gesture of
good riddance to other truths
just as another donkey became
NOTHING but the freshest casualty
of her oldest war,

thrown into the merciless pit
filled with her
gladiatorial appendages.

Poem XIX

Meanwhile, conveniently enough,
Odysseus didn't dare find out any
more about LOVE than Circe did –

That tilted gorge near
the precipice of a sunken heart,
Being breathed about a
DOZEN times every
SINGLE minute;

Being sowed with feelings,
Ideas and, potentially,
HUGE trees in every
SEED of evolutionist Creation!

Like the steely pistons of
a steam train, their fecund loins

in pools of thud,
Deep in each one,
giving one the other...

Bitter and sweet,
smooth and even,
She entered one breath,
wholly...

Poem XX

While she pinned her hopes
on incubators,
he believed
LOVE was *sui generis*
and hence,
Perpetually born premature.

Like with every other
unwritten language,
Even if no Rosetta stone
was left unturned
in search of the truest meaning
of anything either dared say,

Between so much huffing and puffing
at various times of the day
as well as the night, nobody
but Zeus himself could've read
anything into it.

Tongues gazing,
eyes conversing,
Hands holding visible things –
a 'hence' invoking
images of him doing so
while every other god
Questioned the need
for a preceptor.

None, possibly:
an answer key was all
'twas needed;

though redder painted than
Ithaca in spring to cover
Penelope's blushes!

Poem XXI

And all because Odysseus hadn't
turned his head the other way
when he should have, rather than
wait the starters' orders
in the departure hall.

Utterly selfishly, he blamed it
on the fact that TIME stood still
and carried on living
in tranquil lush,

smoking the black lotus grass,
while unwisely discarding
the possibility of an incurable reunion
between TWO people
sleeping in the same bed,
Sharing the same dream,
at a time of complex and
Interchangeable tenses –

Without any PAST
that could count
as history, with
the present perfect, and
the future pluperfect!

Poem XXII

Odysseus thought their frequent
LOVE making sessions would raise
The Curie temperature enough
to let him get away when all that

MOISTY lust would have
dried down a bit and
A return to NORMALITY
would become IMPERATIVE.

Yet, since Circe seized all oars
and turned the ships' all hands
into faithless pigs,

Penelope had to wait
for this shameless enchantress
to be equally turned into
the same grass widow of sorts
that she had been turned into.

No men left to man the ship away
from those incurable shores
to end the waiting –
only naked slaves
and no-good traitors.

Poem XXIII

Meanwhile, entire days were spent
Recalling the flavour
of those early morns

When plucking ivory shells
from the sunny beaches of that
Tax Free coast of spoilt gliteratis
Was the only meaningful activity
Aftering tireing from so much
Wondering the coconut streets
of that Mediterranean retreat...

Gently sipping away
the olive oily sun
Basking in one too many glasses
of good Italian wine – indeed,

Weaving the yarn
of every flying carpet
that covered the road ahead,
Paved with little thought and
Much giddiness...

Without anything either considered
to be a precedent, Love's name

was called in vain, answering but
VEHEMENT ideological differences
and baited traps for the
Inevitable blindfolds of frivolity.

Yet, the bright gloominess
of the stolen heat
Had to be returned to
its rightful owner –

that stolen property,
Several shades above yellow,
still, sundry hues in the red...!

Poem XXIV

For lost in details,
The hearth for the fire
that was never properly lit
Lay broken like
Prometheus' wasted liver.

It was only then that the great
SEEDS of DOUBT
started creeping in, from one
terminal to another, from
no thought to second thoughts,
from promising to
broken promises...

The litterbag where the
Boarding pass stub
had been discarded
had written on it
Odysseus' exact words,
His feelings, precisely.

The Caucasus' echo carried
the weather report dripping with
Prometheus' mopes, moist with
Polyphemus' cries of warning
Circe that "No One"
could stop him leave...

Scattered were the smokescreens
Used to try to let her know
How one bristle of glass
had snapped off into his eye
so deeply that

No matter how many yards of cloth
were used and how many legends
were left untold,
the blood wasn't going to stop
and the hurt wouldn't either.

At long last, Odysseus
Managed to shrug her off,
Turned away,
Never looked back, and
Sailed away
no longer stoned.

'You think too much,
Circe brayed
with wrathful laughter,
pale complexion,
white teeth and
distant smile
the colour of
Mediterranean rooftops.

Before long,
it became
Long before and
A short sharp knife
OPENED and
turned his heart
inside out,
on his sleeve,
for everybody to see that
could never be allowed
to happen again.

- END -