

Michael Collins

Confession

I didn't *really* want to murder lots of people
back when I drove around, windows up, doors locked,
Tupac counseling me on how to cope

when I ran out of endo and my mind
couldn't take the stress – and how to die
straight thuggin' even in dark times

when I could no longer trust my homies –
In point of fact, I had no homies
in my head that had done passed away,

was not, in reality, a G,
for whom getting high was a way to be free,
and my interactions with actual gangsters

had rather dissuaded me from that career path.
Thinking of how ridiculous I was
makes me want to be smarter than the memories

to which I'm returning, a ghost to the scene.
Remind you that songs about sex and power
and money and killing are just

another mirror of our culture.
That accepting death is the last freedom
for those our society has silenced.

But that is just using the truth to lie.
It wasn't my *mind* who saw something holy
in Pac and his music, some soulusion

that rapped me into a desperado
hiding out from fantasized crimes
instead of the victim literal ones,

conflated me with the gangbangers
who found it funny to put a guns to my head
in the hallway at school for their friends' amusement.

He soldiered me on in the confusion.
One way or another, he promised an end
to a world where my soul refused to live,

his language replacing her silence,
its righteous nihilomantic violence
already schooling me to her own ruthlessness,

that she had no sympathy for my mortality,
even less if I stooped to live without music.
So, I sang along and praised him as if –

No. My life depended on it.

Good Friday

Today's truth cries not from the mothercalm quiet
of the cave, nor the springust bird-

of ascent but in nails and splinters of souleyed pain,
song

ribs splitting in slowicked
increments,
the tickle of blood trickling down the brow,
and vinegar, yes, it tastes better

than this metallic abandonment, yes,
vinegar vinegar, all that will ever
be left – the death of a god
is known

inside you, shorn of those loved
with whom he mortaled, a voice that knows
the wages of being
rendered –

Yet earth and rock are still my home.
As I hear the anguish of the murdered
son,
back into the corpseworld, my own soul asks

how long she must hang
unseen here in my shadows,
how long before I will sing her back
into a creation that child and holds me,

back into the birds and trees and caves and tyrants,
and what to the terrified eye
to be indifferent hills appear
of stone?

Portrait of my Soul in Trees

Outside the apartment

trees stormed with the twister
as rainclaws mauled bricks and squalls assaulted glasswalls,
branchlimbs reveling together in one ocean

leafeet keeping meter, time becoming allgreen,
onesouled in the knowing that everflow alwaysed,
spirit glimpsed in wind, portrait
danced into figure;

a family of old trees

who someone had Rockwelled
down by the harbor to shade the paths and benches
where blissful picnicks picturesqued, kids childed.

Meanwhile ripped from their

earth by the same wild spirals.
Now lay in a row like execution victims.
Roots still clench stones like teddy bears neweyes quicksight

into inspi-

ration. Holes gaping below them –
The image my soul's graveway from brushing pictures
of herself through eyes of this corpseworld she adores

to lonely whol-

laging of fragments in death'sight,
unsplintering all contræmotions back to circle.
Accepting all life. Living only by witness.

Unseen. Eternity mourns no mort-

life. Envies.