

The Afterwake: Anaïs Horn & Pedro Zylbersztajn

Anaïs Horn, *Longing Ghosts in Deep Blue Paranoia*

English

Princess-Cut Diamonds

I don't want to live – I want to love first, and live ... incidentally.
Zelda Fitzgerald

It's a short step for me to imagine a life of uneasiness, where hopes of love and touch are perpetually and honestly dashed, a Nietzschean Dracula with fangs of lost pride and lost power, acknowledged or otherwise. Only death truly frees us from ourselves, from one another, from ideas of jaded emptiness and the ghosts of inexistence. I must free myself from the ruse that uneasiness is compelling, that our comprehension of it needs to be complete, exacting, labor of pure, breathy interminability. I say this without the least trace of suspicion or irony but rather an unselfconscious complaint of my own complaints. There is an illusion that we must strive for attachment to reality, to the fraudulent joy of materiality and its bitter discontents. Intensity which has us believe that defeat is as ineluctable as the tides of blue moonlit oceans, a force that cannot slacken, will never slacken. This is probably true. But what if I met the uneasiness with absolute denial, a refutation born of its own bitter resentment and fainting dissolution. It's here that there can be, perhaps, a semblance of control over my childless existence, a betrayal of the false distractions that do my bidding without consent. So far, the life I have led is sewn together with Days of the Dead, hair of the dog, lifeless womb, lovelessness, abandonment, and multiple affairs with comets the size of a small house. Asteroids with dust tails that wound, lacerate, forgive nothing, then collapse into constellations of unaffection, cloven-hoofed creatures, and gemstone ash.

To add gravitas: I've existed only as myself. Too clever and too alone.

Those who speak fondly of the human condition are those least living in its oppressions, those lacking the monstrous repentance required of a life chartered by stability and affection. Sails of sanity blow toward conquest, the northern seas of cauterization – self or otherwise. I'm perpetually on the *qui vive* for its jagged course, hypervigilant, expecting the frailty of a disembodied spirit, floating the notion that I must fold in on myself. Book-pressed flowers, paranoid paranormal, aching womb, castles, touch eclipsed, doubled over. At the point of my weakest resistance, arm in cloth sling, I mime the serenity of forgetful goldfish, nine-foot archangel, or green-bearded Cuckoo. It's here, in an adroit sequence, that a little piece of unassailability tiptoes in.

Around the corner, under a serious moon, a completely untrustworthy low tide is forming, a *mise-en-scène* of unbearable daydreams with all their potential. While still in a state of clever uncreation, I close my eyes, move toward low tide with a largeness of hope, or in the very least, a largeness of openness to hope. This is really decadent.

Now I'm in a Mexican fishing village with a love for the unfamiliar, still in a state of uncreation, watching orange roughy fish on clotheslines, their sororal companions chasing their own fading hope in casting nets below. A little sour tequila later, I join a secluded lake where men fish for cod and carps from untethered Pangas, seven winds blowing in their hair. Maximilian strolls past in the distance, toes bare and deep in sand, whistling to himself, the scent of betrayal, ocean mist, salted poison, and le bonheur. He accepts himself and all his dusty spectres, the magnetic seaweed that pulls him down, very fine and very bright, but not so bright that it traps him in its serfdom. It's a daydream, after all.

Clothed in traditional Belgium dress, I stroll to the shore to join him, dynasties of ostrich plumes trail behind me, very fine and very bright. Folds of sulfide melancholy capitulate to exquisite beauty, sleeves of royal red and gold, the sea parts. At low tide, where it's completely untrustworthy, I daydream for better. Hope is not a consolation; it's an attempt to fill the void, to tame packs of wolves and leopards with dilated pupils – one risky zone to enter. To have a sane life at all, one must make themselves surrealistically busy with half-sleeps on the train, open-armed twirls in sun showers, mists of daydreams that are interminably unrealistic, rejoicing in your own self-contempt of the world.

A sour tequila later, I'm lured back to the clothesline carps above the sea, and think about all the ones that got away.

To have a life at all, we must remind one another that we are seven million unique facets inside of us, swinging from one dissolving curtain drape to another.

Estelle Hoy