

Sidney Goldfarb

BLUE TRANE

It was a warm
summer night in
 Cambridge
Massachusetts.
The fog brought
 the smell
of the sea into the streets.
 I was
walking off my
woes, stopped to get
 a cup
of coffee
when someone
 mentioned
that John
Coltrane
 was dead.
I went home
slowly,
 crawled
into my bed,
had words of
 final
parting with
my wife which
 left us
sobbing face to
face. You don't want
 to live
with me she
said and fell
 asleep.

My daughters
were snoring
 in one
embrace.
I lay
 awake.
John Coltrane
was dead, when
 someone
in a distant
room put Blue
 Trane
on the record
player, stuck
 with it
over and over
wafting me notes
 of a dark
compassion
through the fog.
 This song
is for grey boys,
this song,
 is for
spades, this song's
for John Coltrane
 in his
bitter grave.

The scene would be hidden
when the cup
was full.

Only deep drinking
would reveal it.

I do not much remember the color
of it or the shape,
but I am strong enough
to tear you limb from limb and leave the pieces
in an empty room.

There are
distinctions,
but only deep drinking
will reveal them.
Please accept this.

SOLO ENDED BY LESTER YOUNG

for Brit Hester

Nothing comes from a cup full of fingers
or the magic of writing. Nothing comes
through the window. Nothing is written
and spoken. Nothing is easily learned,
is twelve easy lessons. Meanwhile
we're here in the land of nothing plotting
more nonsense. Seven years we waited at
Dead Gulch married in the car. Nothing happened.
Northern California is empty and so
is Nevada. No one settles in Elko
and no one leaves. Nothing has come
from the Greater Elko Area. In
Chicago rock soup puts you on the edge
but not quite. If all the bums sleeping on
the sidewalks of New York in the middle
of winter were frozen and laid end to end
around the world they would reach Hackensack.
Nowhere. I have not yet decided on the pattern
of my plates. The thumb is the most intelligent
finger, pointing the direction, signifying
nothing. Why has everyone gone into
advertising solutions for boredom?
On the postcard there was a picture
of a place, but the man who sent it
was not there. The man who received it
did not bother to look at the picture.
Writing does nothing. Wish you were there.
Here there are forks and spoons but nothing
to eat. Just an *Atlantic* map of the West.
There were Indians in Ipswich, now there is
nothing, just a man repairing a barn, not
to live in, but to sell. You can't eat

words, but you can kill with them. This is
 the irony of nothing and an old
 story told by a man who forgot his
 language and was never there in the first place.
 Welcome to the Sidney Goldfarb Roadshow.
 First question of the evening, why do all
 the young white folks have such weak faces?
 No wonder the novel is wobbling. No one new
 under the moon, no rainbow in the punch
 bowl, no peaches on the table under
 misty Mount Monadnock. There was an
 aristocracy but it was limited to
 weekends. Now it's all weak, stupid and cruel
 and unable even to write decent prose.
 Women are lovely with their melting bellies
 and children under the age of fear. Nothing
 much beyond that except Chaucer and a few
 Chinese translations. Well what other way
 do you have of gaining the world if you
 don't want to beat someone else to death?
 Nothing comes in the window but the sun
 which isn't bad but which seems to go nowhere
 every night leaving us alone in bed.
 These are the best words in the language,
 alone in bed, arranged in any order, i.e.,
 bed in alone, in alone bed, no rose
 in the mouth and no teeth marks on the stairs.
 There is no such thing as a quiet
 Evening at home. Nothing can be done
 About it but destroy all the homes and lead
 Everyone back. Oddly enough this is
 happening under our very noses in
 the English language misused as never
 before, treated as nothing, which it is.
 For my first guess I would like to introduce
 Miss Salem, Massachusetts who has done
 Nothing and who has nothing on her mind.
 There will be those who think this is nothing

but the raving of a lunatic in love
with the sound of his own voice, but they will not
be allowed to participate in the
panel discussion and soon their numbers
will diminish. I cry, you cry, he cries,
but what good does it do us to diagram
sentences? I am directly the object
of nothing and the subject of nothing.
There has not been much clear thinking in
recent years and nothing has developed.
We'll see what comes up, see what we can steal
From our brothers, see who we can bomb into
Submission, pretend like is a conjunction,
Then we'll get high, say we're hip and go home.
Why do all the young white Americans have such
weak faces? That's the bonus question
for this evening, Mr. Fashion, stay tuned in
for the grand prize of a month with nothing
to do in Hot Coffee, Mississippi.
It's the weakness of these faces who think
they've left mom behind as they discuss
hamburger or where it's really at,
the great empty hole full of nothing.
This is not an automatic poem or nothing but.
This is simply an invitation from
our firm to get your ass moving or
get out. Remember our motto: get
your ass moving or get out, ad astra
per aspera, or any other
rhythmic symmetrical excrescences
of recent college graduates in the field of
multidimensional total environment.
This is bullshit, but what am I referring
to? That is the question. Is this the road
to Russel, Colorado in springtime
is another question we better ask
while the town's still there. If we arrive at once,
of course, it will be pointless, nothing better,

all agreed, all the ayes say no, all the
noes say nay, see you in September,
I'm going down to Louisiana, but me
a Fried Chicken Shack to go and put it
on my back with the mattress my
brother lent me. My brother never
lent me nothing but was a prime witness
to the breakdown of the family and
the rise of monopoly capital which
replaced it with a bowling team. These are old
reflections but you weren't born yesterday
or the day before, so hold on, we're in
for an extermination that may produce
nothing before it gets any better. Right now,
let's have a sip of that fine White House Coffee
while we listen to the President, Lester Young.

AND WOMEN IN CHAIR BY WINDOWS

many extraordinary
poems will be written
many extraordinary
poems. will be
written. but.
they will not tell.
the truth.
they will not
tell the truth.
they will be
extraordinary but
they will not
tell the truth.
beautiful.
whatever that
is but say
what you will
about them
they will not
tell the truth.
invent a language
to describe them
it will not
tell the truth
what is said
about the language
which describes them
will be even less
the truth.
it may be
extraordinary.
even beautiful.
but it will lie
about a lie

about a lie.
only the cunt
is lovely.
put your face
into it
and listen.
only the cunt
is lovely
and the love
of other men.
only the cunt.
put your face
into it
and listen.
is lovely.
as the love
of other men.
and women in chairs by windows.

AND OTHER MORE ISOLATE PLACES

It has taken me three days to read twenty pages of *Absalom, Absalom*. I fell in love with a girl with black hair while she was sitting on a friend's bed. Then the friend went to Thailand. I didn't know where the girl went. One guy did. A Greek. In the morning I walked to his hotel. A Dutch cat was going cold turkey in his room and said the Greek had split for Canada but maybe wouldn't come back that night. I went out into the bright air feeling sad pleased and healthy. Later that same day I returned to the hotel looking for another girl when I found the girl with black hair sitting accidentally in the lobby. She was wearing a Kelly green coat and a smile like a fie-lane illuminated detour sign near Gothenburg, Nebraska. I said I've been looking for you. After a certain number of tangential explanations we went to have tea with two Venezuelans. A few pauses a few days and many hesitations later, I watched her making yellow and red crepe paper flowers and a violet crepe paper lampshade for her room. I was in training to read *Absalom, Absalom*. The days were getting longer now, and the nights were getting even longer than the days. The girl with black hair was still with her old man, but wavering like the orange crepe paper lampshade now covering the only lightbulb in my room. Covering it completely I should say because it became even more difficult to understand Southern Time Sequences in the glow of that flickering pumpkin what with the smoke and the immaculate sink full of yellow and green lettuce (for her, the girl with black hair, and for all of us, Odd, the Swedish photographer, and Bob, the English photographer, and myself) it was amazing to see such things, not that we were not in love, we were, I think, at least I think so now that the other girl (with whom I lived for eight months on 12th Street, 15th Street and other more isolate places) is about to leave for Prague with a friend of mine from Trinidad. You can't have everything,

but you can think of reasonable sequences: a world worth participating in, a girl with black hair coming at 8:00, 8:15 and 8:35, an endless procession of friends in all of their particularity, and light enough to see Absalom, Absalom, and time, all of the time in all of the world.