

I

I am Isaac Makepeace Watt—
the lamb
of light.

Believe you me.

In the lees

of October I'm sinking like Venice, like a lob, lolling

a beanbag odalisque

in my attic rental, masturbating
to my favorite comic book—

\$@#*&%=!!!—

when my landlords' roofcow crashes

the ceiling, dropping

to my rose-flesh Persian. That scrying

carpet is my single possession

with recherché réchaffé.

Cow's name is Yazoo.

She strikes

a perfect four-hoof landing

like some estrogen-deprived Romanian, like

Icarus with a back-up chute. After

her chutz-

pah

I can't manage to oompah

the money shot. I pull in my little satyr

and hitch up my drawers

and maybe sigh. Probably sigh.

Yes, I heave a sigh!

It's not every day that a cow kow-
tows

your orgasm. Is this a sign?

Is this the golden calf come home to roost?
Her brown eyes are *con dolorosa*

like

a Russian winter in one of those Czechered
novellas, those movies
turned film by tatting a soul

directly onto a negative.

Her orbs are honest brokers and as blue-
collar as jellied consommé

and they are judging me.

Am I blameworthy?

Am I on the wrong side of the cosmic

irony laws?

I have strayed
from the seven food groups.

Or are there five?

I do float in a cloud of general elysia.

Is this a crime? Am I trafficking malfeasias?

Yes—I am afraid of helpful insects—

ladybugs are spies, butterflies act
like they invented the wheel. And worms?

Well, parasites

are always *quoting* Sophocles—
and I don't cycle or bicycle or recycle
and do not tithe but I did filch

our neighbor's *People*. And once I set
an orphanage on fire just to hear them babies
scream.

Kidding! Egging you? Egging you on—?
Is it that I never vote in elections yet I vociferously object
to the elected?

I do suffer from *autumnambulism*—

an acute strain of the doubting Tommies.
I am the man who loses his faith in the home
team the inning before

the great comeback.
What's worse
is that I adore the inning before

more
than victory. I am a pitfall of chary.
I dig the doom.

I'm like some vandal teen
needing the Mahler Division
in his black room. But it isn't just me.

These are dark days for our town.
A virulent stain of self-schaden-
freud-

e

is replicating, spreading the boos.

Not to mention the tangible poxes and plagues—
rust festers our buds,

the winds have turned our apples tutti-frutti,

the herds are skunked, our soaps
are debunked, children are dead at birth,

or worse and our vaccines

are defunct.

The word curse

is bandied about; word & verse are candies

for the devout.

Athena

has put away her negligee.

Our king, Oedipus,

sent his brother-in-law to Delphi
to consult our oracle, Pythia.

These grim days have turned our citz back

to that ol' time relijun.

When clouds sift black

we shift our eyes to those that soliloquize.

Late last night I went to a bar

to watch the oracle's variety show on HBO.

She spoke in a voice between coo and woo:

*A rival will exploit a king's romance
with a lobbyist.*

*Scientists will find dancing aliens
in a Mexican village.*

*Outlaw dolphins will meet in Texas
and swim to Disneyland.
A combat pilot will tell her husband
about her pay load.
A psychiatrist will help his ex
resurrect Neanderthal DNA.
A Chinese warlord will adopt
five English orphans.
Sexy rookie cops will search
for a serial killer on a porno set.*

All the noddles at my groggery bobbed
to Pythia's non qua signs.
Any port in a storm, I guess.

Any storm in a port?

On the walk home I saw a stoning,
a book burning, an orgy,
and two and a half animal sacrifices
—BOW-OW-Ow-w.

Maybe Yazoo's nose-dive
into my hovel is a signal for me
to pause the calypso?

I can tell by the way her jaws tuffet my carpet
that she's an ungulate
with a plan. Once I had once been
ambitious.

In grade school I wanted to be
an astronaut slash
ballplayer. In high school I believed

rock god hash shop proprietor would be
swell.

In college I wore an orange Mohawk,

read post-neo-surrealist verse
and dreamed
of visiting Europe

on that trip-
of-your-youth. Yeah,
and with a sexy girlfriend who stayed

fresh and shaved even as we moto-biked
over the Appian Way.
Seventeen years later

I tire just reading the names
of the new nations on the whey-
colored atlas pages hiding the cracks

that hold up my walls. I am dim in places
I can no longer see
without EKGs.

My work?

My vocation?

My craft?

My career?

I'm a professional queuer.

That's right— is *that* clear?—I stand
in lines. I wade

in time. I am the Duke
of Earl in the state
of wait. I worked for a major queuing concern.

I was assigned banks,
pizza shops, and drug stores—
prized clientele.

I studied lines and penciled reports
that led to proposals on how to cut
or gel hang-time according to their yen-
zymes.

But our depression has made me obsolete—
gulpable!
Businesses are sucking Scyllapus ink.

Only the welfare line is pink.
I read comics. I drink stink.
I rent a creep in this row house
in the Heckett, a spunkless district
in sweet East Thebes, a hood
of triple-deckers, worker cottages, cobras,
caverns, junkyards, derelict zoos, and dozens of taverns
echo-located with the interdejection: O'.

We are the maw
in mawkish. The kish, too.
The abandoned research lab
down my block left a working flock
of spider-sheep—they can mow your lawn
and mend your sweater without one peop. Yes
I'm haunted by charms.

I moved in after
moving my father
into the hospital. Rent was cheap. No

declension in the architecture
of faces facing last days long-
side me. This Thebes has the aura of after-
math—

after the parade, the demonstration,
the calculus, the rapture—always post
phoneme, spit and pyro.

What is so hypnotic
about suspended animation?
This is the Thebes that doesn't pretext.

When the shitake hit the fandango
we had already had our noses stuffed
with toga rags—ah—

As a singular hello—accept our soughs.
Only a diamond can cut
a diamond.

When you hear the black boots it's too late
for the palm reader.
Only a ghost can cut a ghost

2

As Yaz grazes my heap of funnies
I consider what not to do.
A few are favorite pulps but I don't utter
word one.