



# Colloquy



## Contents

On Being a Stranger 12

On Play 20

Translations 30

Memoria 46

List of Works 59

Acknowledgements 60

## A Note from the Editors

The Graduate Institute is St. John's Wild West. We're not nearly as old as the rest of the College, and we're not as tightly bound as the undergraduates. We come into the College from very different situations, and we have jobs and families to attend to. We feel that one role *Colloquy* must take is to be a place where we can grow closer together. We're hoping *Colloquy* leads us all to reach out across the program, not just the seminar table.

*Colloquy* is still so new a publication as to admit trial and experiment. Our first issue was spring 2017. In this eleventh edition, we continue to preserve, as we did in the first issue, the end of the semester toasts to the students and tutors. We include the précis for Kelly Custer's Master's essay to recognize its successful defense, and to offer a model for future candidates to have some sense of how to go about writing them. We invited all the G.I. to submit brief pieces on the topics "On Play" and "On Being a Stranger" to carry on St. John's democratic tradition of dialogue. We received submissions from alumni, including the founding editor of the journal, Bonnie Naradzay. We are proud to include a Latin, Spanish, Russian, and Arabic translation. We hope you appreciate the thought and labor that went into this edition of *Colloquy*.

Most of all, we would like to express our sincere gratitude to Emily Langston, Kashya Boretsky, and Diana Villegas for all their assistance, as well as the Graduate Student Council and the alumni for their continual support of the G.I. community. And of course, we would like to thank our contributors.

Abdullah Wadood and Jesse Clagett  
Fall 2022

## Reflections of the Revolution in Britain

*Benjamin Crocker*

Like periscoped sheep, the palace hordes startled back and forth, lunging the gates, devices bobbing - flopping above the fray into which they all tumbled. They scuffled to meet, but mostly just to prove-their-meeting-of, the new King.

By chance, I had been working in Wiltshire the day before, Thursday September 8 - the day of Queen Elizabeth II's passing. Mid-conference at an old Wiltshire estate when news of Her Majesty's death broke, my first observation was that no one quite knew what to do.

At dinner that evening the staff stood to attention, some silence was enforced, a vigorous shout of 'Long live the King' rang out, and esteemed colleagues made fine, concise addresses of tribute and remembrance. A wonderful young couple seated opposite me had hurried to buy black. I was relieved.

But the milieu was otherwise unshaken by the day's earthquake.

The liquor flowed as on any other night. The conversation was light, serious, silly, and profane by turns - as on any other night. 'I feel a deep sadness', a wise colleague had the decency to say, in private, amidst the oblivious bonhomie.

Our coach to London the next day took neither longer nor shorter than it should have. No one was flocking to the capital to grieve in public. But it seemed no one was staying home to grieve in private, either. I was dismayed.

On every billboard between Heathrow and Whitehall her face alternately shone with youth or glowed with wisdom. Westfield presents Queen Elizabeth in Black and White. Surreal.

Arriving at the hotel, I scoffed down whatever was in sight and hurried across the road to the Palace. What were the odds that I would be here, on that one day out of 35,000 others in the span of the second Elizabethan Age?

I could have the privilege of mourning - not just for the Queen, but for the spectre of grace and diligence that emanated from her reign. For my Grandfather, who served in her Army, played the piano bequeathed by her family, and migrated between two of her realms. For the people for whom she meant more than I could ever know - the war wounded and widowed, the people who tied

ribbons, baked cakes and trained dogs for shows, who dressed smartly and hung her portrait proudly in dusty halls on dusty plains, in dusty farming towns, in the dusty country I grew up in.

That would be good, I thought.

But down there at Buckingham it was a dog show indeed. Those journalists stampeding like marked cattle. The sheepy public surging forth to wherever fear of missing out and royal opportunity might intersect.

And when the standard went up, and out he came, stooped and sartorial, to meet his public, he might have had cause for bewilderment

For Charles III more often than not shook the hand of a mind tethered not to royal affection, but to its own demented voyeurism. The King looked not into the warm eyes of the old empire, but to the cold glass lens of the new one.

This was mourning as spectator sport. Which of course isn't mourning at all. Only one in a hundred, nay, maybe a thousand, had the decency to wear black.

And through it all, the BBC - and every other Tom, Dick and Harry with a microphone - kept vigil. Vigil in the way a hamster keeps vigil at its wheel. Constant, monotonous, unchanging, dumb.

There were some flickers of hope. Two American flight attendants had hurried down after their shift, pinned their wings to a rose and moved diligently toward the fence to pay their respects. "That'll end up in landfill, love" - it didn't take long for the locals to burst their bubble...

Another beautiful young woman dressed in black strode stoically through Green Park, fighting the tears that burst forth regardless. And though I caught but glimpses of them, I can say that those women knew how to mourn.

But I'm not so sure about the rest of us.

I'm not sure we knew what clothes to wear, what posture to hold, what pace to step, and what manner to speak in. I'm not sure we understood that solemn pageantry and sacred ritual are to be more experienced, less packaged into clips and discussed over dinner.

In the span of the Queen's reign, and contra her steadfast grace and majesty, what remains of her Empire has indeed undergone a profound revolution.

Lest that revolution in Britain not be conspicuous for any speed or bloodshed, it shall ever be for the sake of propriety slowly surrendered, for decorum gradually lost.

## The Romantics

*Melissa Moore*

Ten-thousand daffodils along the margin of a bay  
would in my time have all ceased to decay,  
and Daisies become a worthier flower to adorn  
an epitaph desiring that we mourn;  
for if my Words have any worth at all  
then perchance they would outlast us all.  
But times being as they are, I think I'll write  
only for myself, and no distant reader's delight.

No modern master Taylor could possibly hope to weave  
prettier patterns of discarded themes,  
nor any serious painter withstand not being privy  
to such a place as Kubla Khan decreed.  
It was a painted poem, upon a painted canvas  
that first set in motion things outlandish  
and though it was quite beautiful and refined,  
in the end it took a lifetime to wash away the brine.

Though the crystal chill overcomes the burly winter birch  
—coats with downy flake limbs where songbirds perch—  
though all this world should be condemned to fire and to ice,  
I doubt that either Burns or Frost suffice.  
Beware, young friends: Tam O Shanter's good mare's  
advice, a red red rose with thorns, ensnares,  
for she is long gone, and yet here you stand  
for all the world a much luckier man.

The past is filled with beauty — this truth no one will deny —  
and the future appears stark before the nostalgic eye,  
but words do not belong to those who say them best  
and life spent lost in memory is life best laid to rest.  
Though in this race the many may surpass me  
and though their words through many ages may outlast me,  
I'd rather turn my words to wind during the run  
than become Swift only to be called Donne.



## He's This, She's That

*Louis Petrich*

Can he be rhymed off straight from facts—writ pat?  
In love with seas, curled brains, dared skin, pink wilds--  
“I have love for you, friend,” she pares, “that’s it.”  
As clouds paint skies her evanescent smiles  
subscribe words lit from distant hands, stealth lips,  
for don’t bit stars do infinite of black?  
Her missives vibrate overtones and sips  
of overtures that salve somewhat heart’s rack  
and spur his plenty done more jointed years.  
Not fooled enough, still wet, issues grotesque,  
for schooled she goes in art of raising cheers  
girl-curious t’anooint boys amouresque.  
He might as well be spinning silk to straw.  
Imagination cleaves to jewels that claw.

Can she be rhymed off straight from facts, stared stone?  
Her friend long-haired, longed tame, with dog she keeps.  
Yet love dared pick him and pertains, phone-laired.  
(Her dog would like him more, licked treat to treat.)  
Legs chickening, fingers satiate, spell out  
fools’ fated fallings in across hearts’ hacked  
divide. How quaint quilled perks do punt all doubt  
of cursive character:*see! couplings blacked*  
*unstop her soundings, scored not his who fears!*  
Core falling yearnings turn parts mortal-tasked  
and creasing bent to pleasing master mirrors,  
equipment buffed to bluff dusk, youthful masked.  
“Life’s flash I steal, my wares achieve!” she rings.  
Imagination husbands armful things.







| On Being a Stranger

on being a stranger

you can spend your whole life chasing authenticity and find out you don't know  
the meaning of the word

a stranger in your own skin; not at home in yourself

you can't see yourself in

five years

(or in love)

(or as a parent)(or happy)(or not in pain) when

you can't see yourself

in a mirror

there's a fog over everything. it's hard to realize you're the only one who can't see  
right

things look different from that perspective

you don't know what's wrong but

you've always felt like an alien

(ever at arm's length)(your ways are strange)

every movement: like in a nightmare, trying to run

your limbs feel Wrong

untethered

the world bends away underneath you

there, but not there

you get very good at losing yourself to survive

staring too long at the flames would mean acknowledging you're on fire

no one else sees it

you can't explain it

all you can do is look away

the easiest place to lose yourself is in other people

sometimes, they'll let you

sometimes, they like it

(they like You)



it's as addictive as anything else you can lose yourself in completely  
a total abnegation  
disintegration  
you'll swear it's transcendence

there's a special brightness in the eyes when the fog clears  
an appreciation for how much there is to see  
and a thirst to see it anew

how do you share what you learned on the other side? merely having been there,  
it's alienating  
how can you explain what it is to feel Wrong to those who have always felt  
right?

(always belonged?)

but you're trying You on for size  
feeling your weight under yourself  
and it feels good

like every grand journey, it's about finding the way home

*Siobhan Petersen*

*It must be said that every evil in some way has a cause. For evil is the absence of the good, which is natural and due to a thing....*

Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologica, First Part, Question 49

I went to San Antonio to collect a writing award recently. TSA treated me with contempt. As I saw the lights of D.C. (my only home) from up above, I wept for a reason I do not know why. I asked an older gentleman if I could sit next to him while I waited for the connecting flight. He agreed. As soon as my butt touched the seat, he got up and left. When I arrived at San Antonio at noon, the woman at the hotel counter told me check-in was at three. I wasn't welcome, her stern stare scolded. So I walked to a Whataburger without a sidewalk in sight. All my belongings were on my back. I didn't want to be mugged. I hoped that someone would pick a fight with me just so I would be noticed, but I didn't even get that. This city is made for metal and rubber, not flesh and bone. I hid behind a pillar of an abandoned building to get out of the sun and out of sight. A homeless man had the same idea. The soles of my shoes began to reek of hot tar. The crosswalks are spaced out in twenty-minute intervals. Ten-lane highways separate the sidewalks the width of my thumb. Every building is an island surrounded by asphalt seas. A haggardly man passes me by on a bicycle, the only other pedestrian. He told me a word of wisdom, but he went by too fast in an accent I couldn't understand. The sun began to seep into my clothes and turned into sweat. I need some sleep. I need to rest. I returned to the hotel disheveled and waited for an hour in the lobby. The woman at check-in eventually acknowledged me and apologizes profusely. I pretend that it is no big deal. Earlier that week I learned all my old friends have been excluding me. I couldn't hold my grief much longer. So I searched for someone to talk to. I called my younger brother and asked him if he was free. He opened his lips to inhale. I wept. God is stretched very thin here.

*Abdullah Wadood*

## Ex Cathedra

By Mephibosheth

Today started like any other day for Jay: he got up early and sat around on his bed playing on his phone or turning on the TV to watch some of his favorite shows. By all accounts, he was just like any other young man, that is to say that he was lost and yearning to find a purpose in his life, bouncing from interest to interest, job to job, and major to major as he attempted to strike out on his own, away from the ever-scrutinizing eye of his parents.

Unlike his younger counterparts, however, Jay had something which set him apart from all others, he had a disability—not just any disability, but one which required the use of a bulky power wheelchair. Being that his condition had been with him since birth, he knew no other form of transport, and had easily come to accept both the chair and side effects of his condition. Although he was occasionally taken by bouts of loneliness and alienation due to the limits his chair imposed on him, it would not be an exaggeration to say that he and the chair were one in spite of all this.

As he waited for his nurse to arrive, Jay began to turn over a myriad of thoughts about his life, his future, and the problems that he caused his family as a result of his disability. Usually the television assisted in drowning out these thoughts long enough so that he would not be consumed in sadness, it helped, but not for very long—his mind always returned to the ever-present conclusion that he was a burden; the conclusion that all of his studying, all of his attempts at work, his phobia of the outside world, would lead to life passing him by as he stood inept and cowardly staring it in the face.

You see, Jay cared very much for his fellow human beings, but because his condition limited him so severely as to the enjoyment of various natural things which do not particularly concern those who do not suffer from physical disability he had grown to hate nature. It reminded him of everything which separated the cripples from the non-cripples, the *invalids* from the *valid*. He preferred the cold, calculating world of electronics and technology. This world was, to him at least, more relatable, especially since he depended on that world to live his daily life.

So it was, then, that after turning over all of the questions of the universe and existence inside his head that Jay's nurse finally came. Her routine was simple: she would change Jay, help him put on his leg braces, help him put his clothes

on, pivot him into his chair, and finally strap him in so that he would not fall over while sitting. After this their routine would continue as most others' would: he would have breakfast, brush his teeth, and decide what to do for the day.

Everything seemed to be going well until Jay suddenly felt a sharp pain in his back, almost as if someone had stabbed him. It wasn't unusual that he would rub up against the back side of his seat or catch his shoulders on the metal back-plate of his chair, so he had initially thought nothing of it. As the day went on, however, his motion became more and more restricted, and he noticed that the chair was slowly and painfully enveloping him within itself.

*What is going on? There must be something wrong with the chair or me. It shouldn't be this way. This shouldn't be happening.*

But try as he might Jay could not escape the inevitable and he was eventually completely subsumed by his own chair. He could feel that he had been enveloped by total darkness, but as far as he could discern he was able to speak normally and without impediment. Around this time late in the evening was when his nurse would come back in order to serve him dinner and put him to bed.

When his nurse finally came he wasn't exactly sure what was going on, so when she opened the door he greeted her as he normally would "Hi, Catie, it's nice to see you again today," Jay said.

"It's nice to see you as well, Jay. Are you ready for dinner?" replied Catie.

"Yes, I'm super hungry," responded Jay.

Catie didn't seem to notice what had happened to Jay. She acted as if nothing was wrong. It was just as if it were any other day.

Jay noticed that although he was surrounded by darkness he could still see outside of his chair and move his hands just enough to drive to his room to await his food. As Jay ate, the material enveloping him within his chair would recede as he raised the spoon up to his mouth, only to re-envelope him in its darkness when he put the spoon down. The same thing happened as Catie gave him his daily sponge bath. Jay was really beginning to question his reality. This was made all the more worrisome for him as Catie proceeded to lift his entire chair and place it in his bed.

Jay was very distressed, but he never actually said anything to anyone



because he was afraid that he would inconvenience those around him and add to his status as a burden. He lived out all the rest of his days invisible to himself, but treated as if he were still there by others. It was this fact that really made him wonder whether he was right all along to think that his feelings of alienation were, in fact, correct. In the end, however, it didn't really matter if Jay had actually become one with his machine, because society saw him simply as his machine and nothing else.

He was doomed...

| On Play











## “On Play”

*Ansley Green*

Oh to play... All I want to do all day is play! The fresh outside air, the endless possibilities, it is hard for mom to get me back inside. The imagination runs wild with possibilities, nothing is off limits, the world is huge and for the exploring. What would make me want to stop all this play?

Time does not stop for happiness. The play no longer is free. Consequences come into play. Competition clouds kindness, but also spurs on greatness. Keep playing and you can make it big. Keep playing and you can be famous. Keep playing and you can be rich. Can't you?

I see the young women play, who have dedicated all the years of their life to excel. They gave up lighthearted playing for a fierce competition and love of sport. They have made it to the level all other little girls dream of. They are on the big stage, playing for an audience now. They play exactly the same amount as the men, the yellow ball zinging back and forth at speeds no slower than the others. They play, rackets flying when anger comes in. They play, tears streaming over stretched smiles when the victory comes. They play, but for what?

They play so they can have a prize purse  $\frac{1}{3}$  of what the men's is. They play so they are rewarded at a fraction of what their friends are rewarded...for the exact same play. There is no lack of money at the upper levels. The tournament organizers are not broke. They have just broken the system. Playing is no longer fair. Playing is no longer full of limitless opportunities. The air is less fresh here. The system is broken. The play is over.

The little girls realize that this is not uncommon. This unequal reality is not contained to one game. If tennis was called golf was called basketball was called surfing was called skiing was called soccer was called hockey was called wrestling was called boxing was called running....it is still the same. Keep fighting, they say. Look, we have equal pay now, they say. What was the cost? Why was the battle so steep? Who will stand up for the others?

Who will keep the girls in play?

Anne Carson translated this fragment 286 from Ibykos, an ancient Greek lyric poet, and then proceeded to use the structure of the fragment (on the one hand..... on the other hand..... nay, rather..... ) to experiment with other texts, including pages from Kafka, the FBI file on Berthold Brecht, two pages from the owner's manual for her new microwave.... See: *Nay Rather* (Volume 21) (Cahiers) Paperback – February 15, 2014. For one I experimented with Plato's *Meno* and for the other Schrödinger's *What is Life?* - Bonnie Naradzay

### Aporia

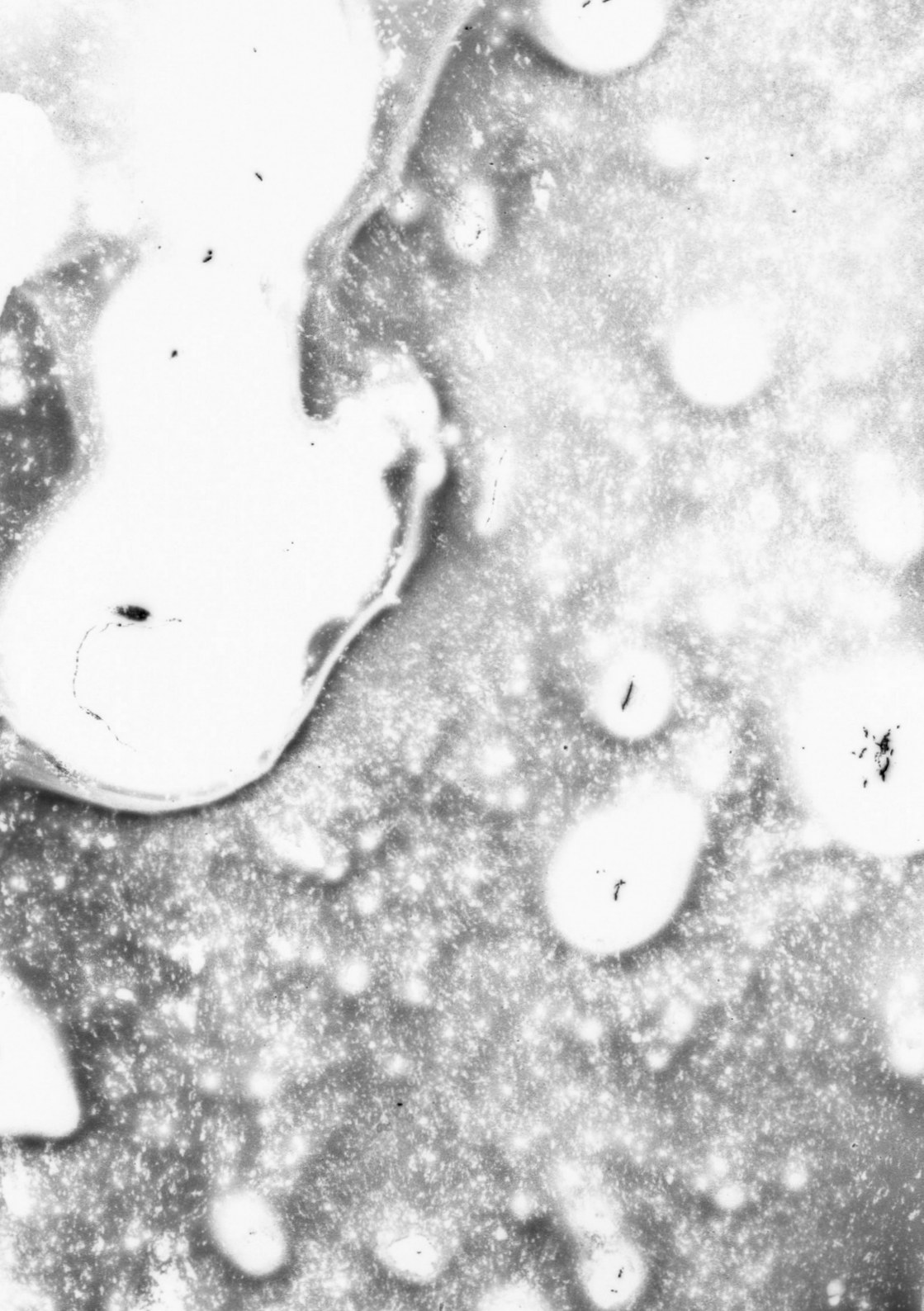
Ibykos fragment 286, using only phrases from Plato's *Meno*

The torpedo fish?  
I am quite perplexed.  
On the one hand,  
anyone who touches it feels numb.  
On the other hand, the human soul is immortal:  
at times it comes to an end, which they call dying,  
at times it is reborn, but it is never destroyed,  
and one must live one's life  
piously.  
Nay rather,  
the statues of Daedalus run away if not tied down.  
But now the time has come for me to go.

### What is Life?

Ibykos Fragment 286, using only phrases from the epilogue of Schrödinger's *What is Life?*

To say "Hence I am God Almighty,"  
on the one hand,  
sounds both blasphemous and lunatic,  
the closest a biologist can get  
to proving God and immortality at one stroke.  
On the other hand, in the Upanishads,  
Atman equals Brahman  
in perfect harmony, mystics  
somewhat like the particles  
in an ideal gas.  
Nay rather,  
in a gallery of mirrors,  
like the way Gaurisankar and Mount Everest  
are the same peak seen from different valleys,  
I see my tree  
you see yours  
obviously only one tree.  
What the tree in itself is,  
we do not know.



## Translations

إن الأعلى من الأسفل والأسفل من الأعلى

IPA: /innəl ʔala' mən as su'ful was su'ful mənəl ʔala'/

“Lo and Behold! The highest is from the lowest, and the lowest is from the highest.”

The phrase is found in Islamicate hermetic texts, most notably the “Emerald Tablet” and the “Secret of Secrets”. The first word, /innə/, doesn’t translate to anything in particular in English. Usually it’s translated as “Indeed”. In Arabic, it is used as an intonation or particle attached to the subject to emphasize what’s being said. “Lo and Behold!” does not usually translate well when using /innə/ since /innə/ can be a very everyday word, but this particular line is describing something beatific so I thought it was fitting. I think also the simple affirmation “Yes!” could work, but that is too literal. The next word, /al ʔala'/ means “The Highest”. It is usually translated as “The Most High” but I think that is clunky. The Islamic tradition attributes ninety-nine names for God. /al ʔala'/ is one of them. Arabic doesn’t have copulas (“to be” words) in the present tense. They are grammatically implied. /mən/ is a preposition meaning “from”. /wa/ is the conjunction “and”. And /as su'ful/ means “The Lowest”. I have used the apostrophes in the IPAs to indicate a sound short of a full glottal plosive.

Abdullah Wadood



In the last two lines of his *Ode on a Grecian Urn*, Keats writes:

“Beauty is truth, truth beauty,—that is all

Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know”.

I found these lines so formidable that I decided to try to translate them into my mother tongue: Spanish.

Here is the result:

“Belleza es verdad, verdad belleza. En la tierra

Sólo esto llegáis a saber y no necesitáis saber nada más”.

Now, two comments. In Spanish, a definite article—*la, el*—always precedes the noun in order to link its meaning with a referent, unless it is a proper noun<sup>1</sup>. In this case, I omitted the articles before the nouns *belleza* and *verdad* even though, strictly speaking, the poet did not present them as proper nouns. This is incorrect in academic or formal writing, and awkward in informal conversation, but it is not unheard-of in poetic forms. I chose to omit the articles because they would somehow steal the attention of the listener. I think Yeats would want us to focus on the nouns.

On the other hand, you may notice that I used *vosotros* instead of *ustedes* to translate “ye”—hence, *llegáis* and *necesitáis* instead of *llegan* and *necesitan*. *Vosotros* and *ustedes* are both second-person, plural, personal pronouns. In Spain, the former is used in informal contexts and everyday parlance, while the latter is mostly used when speakers are total strangers to one another. In Latin America, however, *ustedes* is the standard usage in both informal and formal contexts, and no one uses *vosotros* either in everyday conversation, nor in academic or professional environments. But there is one place where *vosotros* still lives: Catholicism. The Bible uses *vosotros* throughout and in Mass the priest addresses the congregation with *vosotros*. *Vosotros* conveys an ancient and awe-inspiring tone which is how I believe Yeats’ Grecian Urn would speak.

And that is all ye need to know.

Luis Sánchez

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<sup>1</sup> In “*María no vino a la fiesta*”, the proper noun is not preceded by an article while in “*el cartero llegó tarde*” the definite article proceeds the noun.

Молюсь оконному лучу—  
Он бледен, тонок, прям.  
Сегодня я с утра молчу,  
А сердце—пополам.  
На рукомойнике моем  
Позеленела медь.  
Но так играет луч на нем,  
Что весело глядеть.  
Такой невинный и простой  
В вечерней тишине,  
Но в этой храме пустой  
Он словно праздник золотой  
И утешенье мне.

Анна Ахматова, 1909  
“Из книги Вечер”

I am praying to the window light—  
It is pale, thin, and straight.  
Today I am quiet since morning,  
And my heart—it is split in half.  
The copper of my washbasin  
turned green.  
But light plays on it there,  
So fun to touch.  
So innocent and simple,  
In the evening silence,  
But in this empty temple  
It is a golden holiday  
And it is solace for me.

Anna Akhmatova , 1909  
From the book “Evening”

I chose to translate this poem because its mood and feelings it evoked were relatable to me. The praying to a morning light with a broken, or perhaps just a confused, heart gives an idea of a new beginning taking time for adjustment. The speaker finding joy in a golden evening ray reinforces that change takes time, despite initial and underlying feelings of loneliness and despair. There is comfort and beauty to find after time has made things change, depicted by the light which dances still on the copper of the basin which has turned green. The days still pass, time goes on, and peace can replace despair. I focused on meaning rather than keeping true to meter for this translation.

Ansley Green

CXII. SENECA LVCILIO SVO SALVTEM

Cupio mehercules amicum tuum formari ut desideras et institui, sed valde durus capitur; immo, quod est molestius, valde mollis capitur et consuetudine mala ac diutina fractus.

Volo tibi ex nostro artificio exemplum referre. Non quaelibet insitionem vitis patitur: si vetus et exesa est, si infirma gracilisque, aut non recipiet surculum aut non alet nec adplicabit sibi nec in qualitatem eius naturamque transibit. Itaque solemus supra terram praecidere ut, si non respondit, temptari possit secunda fortuna et iterum repetita infra terram inseratur.

Hic de quo scribis et mandas non habet vires: indulsit vitiis. Simul et emarcuit et induruit; non potest recipere rationem, non potest nutrire. 'At cupit ipse.' Noli credere. Non dico illum mentiri tibi: putat se cupere. Stomachum illi fecit luxuria: cito cum illa redibit in gratiam. 'Sed dicit se offendi vita sua.' Non negaverim; quis enim non offenditur? Homines vitia sua et amant simul et oderunt. Tunc itaque de illo feremus sententiam cum fidem nobis fecerit invisam iam sibi esse luxuriam: nunc illis male convenit. Vale

Letter 112. Greetings! To my dear Lucilius, from Seneca,

I want<sup>1</sup>, by Hercules, that your friend be formed, as you desire, and educated<sup>2</sup>; but he, as someone very hard, is stuck<sup>3</sup>, really, what is more troublesome, he is stuck as someone very soft and broken<sup>4</sup> by a consistent and bad way of life.

I want to refer you to an example from our art. Not just any vine supports a scion;<sup>5</sup> if it is old and consumed, if it is weak and thin, either it will not receive the shoot, or it will neither nourish it nor apply itself to it nor will it cross over into the quality and nature of it. And so we are accustomed to cut it off above the earth, so that if it doesn't respond, a second chance could be tried,<sup>6</sup> and, again, the second attempt<sup>7</sup> would be sown under the earth.<sup>8</sup>

This man, concerning whom you write and enquire, does not have the strength<sup>9</sup>; he indulges his flaws<sup>10</sup>. He wilts and grows stiff at the same time. He is not able to receive argument<sup>11</sup>, he is not able to nourish it. "But he wants to<sup>12</sup>." Don't believe that. I'm not saying that he's lying to you; he thinks he wants to<sup>13</sup>. For him, excess makes appetite<sup>14</sup>; Quickly, he will return to favour with it. "But he says he is put off<sup>15</sup> by his life." I wouldn't deny that. For, who is not thus put off<sup>16</sup>? Men at the same time both love and hate their flaws. And so, we will judge<sup>17</sup> him at that point when he shows<sup>18</sup> us that excess is now hateful to him. But right now, for them the matter is poorly agreed.<sup>19</sup> Farewell.

Walker Rogalsky

## Endnotes

1 It is not Seneca's desire or Lucilius' desire that makes Lucilius' friend unable to be bettered.

2 Educated here is *institui*, in meaning 'in' and *stitui* being from *statuo* meaning 'to set something' which is where English gets statue and status. This means primarily 'to set something in.' It's where English gets institute or institution from. But it takes on two very interesting secondary meanings for this letter. It can mean 'to plant' and 'to educate.' That is, the same way knowledge or virtue is 'set in' someone, a plant is 'set in' the ground. I've kept the Latin word order here because it is telling that Lucilius' desire is between the friend being formed and educated. It seems like Lucilius' desire is 'set in' the possible passive activities of his friend.

3 This is the passive form of *capio* - 'to take.' The subject is the friend; the friend is seized and the *durus* is in apposition to the implied subject being the friend. This is an interesting use of *capio*. It implies two things, namely that the friend has been seized, very much like our word seize which implies the no longer functioning of a mechanism as in 'seized up.' It is also the word a Latin speaker would use, as in English, to say a plant has 'taken root.' Thus foreshadowing for our upcoming plant analogy. But both of these meanings together along with the *durus* (hard) being in apposition to the implied subject make me feel as though his friend has grown stuck, but by his own agency. Indeed we do not have any agent in the ablative for the passive verb in these clauses that contain *capitur*. But it would not be out of the question to say that the *consuetudine mala ac diutina* could be used as the agents for not only *fractus* but also *capitur*. This only further corroborates the fact that this friend has taken root or been seized as very hard or very soft by his own agency.

4 Broken here is *fractus*. This is a nominative thus is playing the same grammatical role as *durus* (hard) and *mollis* (soft.) It is fascinating that he is seized as something not only very soft but as something broken too. It is strange to think of something very soft as being broken because typically very soft things are malleable and thus not easily broken. This is not so in the case of the friend. This strangeness implies that the state of softness and brokenness of the friend is not physical. His character is soft i.e. it cannot endure pains, and thus broken by his consistent choices which form his way of life i.e. his (*mala*) *consuetudine*. This is also foreshadowing for the *luxuria* which is the friend's exemplary fault or vice

which is a result of his being soft and thus not being able to endure pains. At first Seneca thinks him very hard which means unchangeable or recalcitrant in his error. But then says he's very soft which has a common moral meaning of not being able to endure pain. The alternation between very hard and very soft seems to mean that he is unchangeable because he is very soft and thus unable to be formed like water or clothing. This all seems to be an allusion to Aristotle's *Ethics* wherein hardness and softness concern moral character in relation to enduring pains; it doesn't seem that Lucilius' friend has attained the mean between hardness and softness; Aristotle at 1150b calls luxury a certain kind of softness.

5 Here the vine (or root plant) is Lucilius' friend. I do wonder if the scion (the cutting that is being grafted on to the base plant) is Lucilius. In order to understand this analogy, we should first look at what grafting is: "Grafting is a technique that joins the tissues of two plants together so they continue to grow as one plant. In viticulture this technique allows grape vines to express the desirable varietal characteristics of the scion (upper part of the joined plant) in the fruits, while developing or keeping the root system of the rootstock (lower part of the joined plant)." So, the new plant seems to be an image of the friendship between Lucilius and his friend. The scion is Lucilius and the root plant is Lucilius' friend. This is probably the case because if the grafting is successful i.e., the friendship is possible, then Lucilius' friend, the root plant, will be able to take on the desirable characteristics of Lucilius, the scion. This is very well corroborated by Seneca's idea of the exemplum wherein virtue is achieved by being close to and imitating someone virtuous. This is most clearly articulated in Letter 6. Also, any grafting needs to be done between organisms of the same species, so it seems likely that Seneca is talking about two people here, not one person and some abstract qualities.

If Lucilius is the scion and his friend is the root vine, we might wonder whether Seneca is the gardener. It may be "their art," but it could be theirs in different ways.

6 The Latin here is *temptari possit secunda fortuna*. *Temptari*, the passive form of *temptare*, is where English gets 'to tempt.' It has a fairly broad, though consistent, semantic range. It means roughly 'to test,' 'to prove,' 'to try' but mainly by touching, that is, by direct experience. It can be used not only as in, 'to try one's enemy in battle,' but also 'to feel the pulse of.' This is an excellent word for the sounding out of character through friendship that this analogy is depicting. *Secunda fortuna* is the subject of the complementary infinitive *temptari* through *possit* (is able.) *Fortuna* on its own means 'chance,' 'fate' or 'fortune' but with



*secunda* it means 'good fortune,' but also 'second chance.' *Secunda* means literally 'second' but also means good, a carry-over from a second i.e., following wind being always a good one for sailing, so *secunda* came to mean good especially with things determined by chance like the wind. Here it means most prominently 'second chance,' but can also mean good fortune is able to be tried again. Another interesting possibility for *secunda fortuna* is 'a following state' because *secunda* can mean 'following' and fortune can mean 'fate' or 'state' or 'condition.' Thus if at first the root plant doesn't have a following condition, it's possible to try a following condition. It's quite possible Seneca means all three possibilities for *secunda fortuna*.

7 Second attempt here is *repetita* which is where we get 'repeat.' It comes from *re*, which means 'to do again', like English, and *peto*, which means 'to seek,' but especially to make an attack. This agrees very well with *temptari* in bringing home the harsh, if not violent nature of sounding out someone's character through friendship. This is not a pleasant experience for either the root plant or the scion, although it does seem like it can be beautiful. This corroborates the fact that the friend is soft, that is his character can't endure pain.

8 There is some ambiguity here concerning whether the cutting will be grafted to the root plant below the earth or simply sown as its own plant in order to root itself. 'Sown' is *inseratur* which can mean either 'to graft in' or 'to plant in.' The purpose of growing grapevines is for the grapes. Grafting allows the variety of the cutting (scion) to produce fruit more quickly than if simply planted in the ground. But if the root is no good, one can just plant the cutting in the ground on its own, and although slower, it will produce fruit. This is opposed to if the root vine is old and weak, in which case no fruit will be produced. It seems likely that Seneca is saying here that, after the first attempt, if the root is no good, just plant the scion directly and throw out the root. That is, if the new plant is the friendship of Lucilius and his friend and we can assume the fruit is virtue, then if the root is bad and won't take the favourable qualities of the scion which means that the friend is of a sufficiently bad character to not take to the friendship of Lucilius, then it is best to let the friend go if virtue is the goal. This letting go also seems like it would be painful for both.

9 'Strength' here is *vires* which can also mean 'vigour' or 'virtue,' it is derived from *vir* which means man and it is where English gets 'virile' from. It is plural which seems to imply there are many qualities his friend is missing in order to accept the graft. This can also mean, although grammatically unfeasible,

'you are green' or 'you flourish' from the Latin verb *vireo* which is derived from the word for green *viridis*.

10 Flaws' here is *vitiis* which is most directly translated as 'vices,' but 'vices' implies a kind of Christian meaning that I don't want to invoke. A *vitium* is any quality in a particular thing that gets in the way of a that thing naturally tending toward its end.

11 'Argument' is here *ratio* where English gets 'reason' and, you guessed it, *ratio* from. I didn't want to use 'reason' because it brings to mind a kind of Enlightenment era notion of the activity of the intellect. Argument is a better notion although it sounds worse. Because of his poor moral state, it seems like Lucilius' friend is not able to accept any argument or reason, let alone to live according to it and nourish it in his life.

12 'Want' here is *cupio*. It is the word that begins the letter, although Seneca is speaking then, not Lucilius' friend. Seneca says that he wants that the friend be educated but that the goal of the desire is impossible. The friend says he wants to be educated but the goal of the desire is impossible, and it is impossible for the same reason as why Seneca's desire is impossible; namely because the friend's moral state doesn't allow the desire to be chosen.

13 Here we can see that Lucilius' friend's desire and reason are not in accord, that is, he is ignorant of his desires, but he doesn't know that he is ignorant of them.

14 *Stomachum illi fecit luxuria*, translated literally is 'luxury makes the stomach for him.' *Luxuria* is where we get luxury from but they are by no means semantically identical. *Luxuria* means literally the rankness of trees or plants. It is that strong smell that comes off vegetable matter. But figuratively it means moral decadence. A very apt word! This phrase is difficult. It should be taken in two ways. First, it is as when one eats too much and is disgusted with food because of the discomfort. Yet as soon as the excess leaves the stomach, the disgust will return to desire. Secondly, it implies that the excess, the expression of the flaw in character, produces the whole unnatural process of excess enjoyment, disgust, excess enjoyment, etc.... His character makes his actions, and his actions make his character because he is unable to accept reason which is the only thing capable of presenting with him an alternative to his vicious cycle.

15 'Put off' here is *offendi* it means literally 'to be hit.' This is frequently used to describe military action and goes well with the harsh and violent language Seneca gave us when describing the grafting process. This seems to imply that pain will be part of life regardless of whether one is stuck in viciousness or becoming virtuous and thus cannot be a good reason for choosing either.

16 This seems to mean that anyone, should they think back on their life, will recall some cause for pain and regret. Thus it is not sufficient reason to believe that someone wants to become virtuous, for all people feel this way, both those who do and those who don't want to become virtuous.

17 'We will judge' here is *feremus sententiam*. This idiom means literally 'we will carry opinion' but it has a very particular usual meaning. It is used for voting, and especially voting in the *comitia*, where the people would vote on who should be magistrate. They would vote twice with time in between, so that the magistrate would be able to change his way of life or not based on the first vote; see Cicero's On The Agrarian Law 2.11. This is very similar to the way Seneca describes the grafting process having two chances.

18 'Show' here is *fac fidem* which means literally 'make faith.' Normally this means to convince or persuade, but with an object clause it means to show or evince. That is, with an object clause the proof is more obvious and less subject to interpretation. This is similar to how *temptari*, used earlier, requires a kind of experience for proof. So it seems like Seneca and Lucilius will need the friend to start living as though excess (*luxuria*) is hateful to him rather than just saying it. This seems to require a choice on his part.

19 This is a difficult phrase to translate. The Latin is: *nunc illis male convenit*. *Convenit* is where English gets 'convenient.' It comes from *con* which means 'together' and *venio* which means 'come.' The 'them' is the friend and *luxuria*. The issue in translating this phrase is that it is impersonal, so the subject is the situation. The impersonal meaning of *convenio* means: 'it is agreed upon,' 'there is unanimity with respect to something,' or 'the matter is decided.' Also, it is not a simple negation; the adverb is *male* which means 'badly.' This phrase seems to put the friend and the faults on the same level, as if they are to agree to something together. This is strange because they are his faults, to put them on the same level indicates that his faults have as much agency in his life as he does. This is absurd because his faults are him how could they not agree? What this likely means is he is not in agreement with himself. He wilts and stiffens at the same time, he is

hard and soft, soft and broken at the same time, he loves and hates his flaws. He is feverish, and it's his soul that is sick. Only by choosing to become virtuous, and the pain that comes with that can he begin to come back to health. But he must choose pain in this instance rather than just feel it, because there will be pain either way. By choosing he will begin to exercise his reason, and thereby be able to accept arguments and nourish them in conversation with Lucilius. But right now, he is stuck, so it seems the gardener recommends that this root plant not be used for grafting.



| Memoria



*Students at the Graduate Institute who elect to write a Master's Essay undergo an oral examination upon completion of their essay. Each examination begins with the student reading a précis of their work. This fall Kelly Custer successfully defended his Master's essay titled Following the Logos of Plato's Phaedo.*

## Following the Logos of Plato's Phaedo

October 5, 2022

*Kelly Custer*

In my undergraduate years, I worked in a restaurant, during which time the most frequent question asked of me was what my major was. Immediately after my answer that I was a philosophy major followed the question, "What are you going to do with that?" My response was always, "Prepare for death." While I cannot recall how many people pushed me to answer just what preparing for death entailed, it was no doubt only a few. The lack of follow-up questions was favorable for me as it is doubtless that whatever stumbling and blush accompanied response I might have given was as unmemorable to me as it must have been for anyone else.

Philosophy as the preparation for death and itself the practice of dying and being dead is the dominant theme of Plato's Phaedo. Who could not help but share in Simmias and Cebes' initial perplexity and outrage upon hearing such a definition of philosophy? Socrates' first task in the Phaedo involves his explicit answering of how philosophy is akin to dying, which sets the stage for the ensuing speeches and arguments of the Phaedo. One of the primary contentions of my essay is that it is equally in Socrates' treatment of his young friends, his attending to their souls through philosophical speech, and his attempt to persuade them to spend their lives taking care of their own that we see just what philosophy as a preparation for death consists of – the care of our souls. And as all great endeavors that bear the balance of life and death, the care of our souls is not without danger.

The primary question of my essay is what such dangers in the Phaedo are and how Socrates and his young companions follow the logos of their conversation to a place of safety at the dialogue's conclusion and the end of Socrates' life. But before discussing my essay with those at this table, who are the first recipients of my gratitude for the time you have taken to read my essay and are now prepared to spend with me as we enter our own dialogue guided by the richness of Plato's Phaedo, I would like to offer a few words of thanks and dedication.

To Mr. Kalkavage for the guidance of my writing and thought as you patiently encouraged me as I started and stopped, often fumbling with awkward hands in the attempt to pick up and follow my logos throughout the completion of



this essay.

To my parents John and Julie who never once asked a young and confused, but albeit, earnest philosophy major, “What are you going to do with that?” but always trusted and had faith that there is no greater task than the care of one’s soul.

To my wife Martha who shares my soul and whose love and patience never wavered as she often disproportionately shared me with the Phaedo among many other books, the seminar table and those who sat around it, and the conversations that never end.

And last and in no way least, to my son, Yohannes, to whom this work is dedicated. In the brevity of your nine weeks of life, your every movement, facial expression, and sound reminds me that you have a soul and that it is in my care but more importantly, that the art of fatherhood is to persuade you to become master of your own.

## A Toast to the Tutors

May 22, 2022

*Andrew Graney*

Should we do this at Galway?

It’s hard to believe my time here at St. John’s is coming to an end. What is the “end” of St. John’s College? Is it our happiness? I think Aristotle would be happy if it was, as long as that happiness was in accord with virtue and right reason, whatever that means. And while I chuckle to myself a little as I say, “whatever that means,” I think it gets to the heart of something important about St. John’s. I heard that phrase with some frequency during my two years here— from students and tutors alike. After one person asked what a particular author was saying, or trying to say, another might offer up a passage he thought would be helpful, read it, and then, realizing he might not have actually understood it, would say that three-word phrase. This, I find, has been a way of keeping the conversation both light and serious. It’s funny, but it also shows an openness that is key to education at St. John’s.

We all came here to ask questions and read books in conversation with one another. When done right, it’s a remarkable thing. The books are in conversation with one another, and we, with one another, are in conversation with those books. That funny phrase, “whatever that means,” reveals how we actually want to have those conversations. We do not come to the texts, or each other, with pre-made answers, but instead have genuine interactions. We all go by our honorifics, including the tutors, because we are all trying out figure out what “it” means together. We help one another, guide one another, wrestle with the texts together. Instead of being told what something means, we have a conversation about what it might mean. We listen and have our minds changed. It’s no small thing to have one’s mind changed, and sitting at the St. John’s seminar table graciously grants us that gift.

You can risk yourself here. You can say, “I don’t know.” You can ask questions that have been on your mind for years or questions you had never thought of before, of concepts entirely new to you. Through conversation, we grow. Our minds, like knives against a whetstone, become sharper, more penetrating. We have a chance to come into hard to reconcile complexities and revel in them without reducing them. As I said earlier, we say, “I don’t know,” but that “I don’t know” is not an “I don’t care,” nor is it a throwing up of arms and giving up, (even if we might want to sometimes). It’s not a stagnant “I don’t know,” but a moving

one—in every sense of the word.

We laugh, we agree, disagree, get confused together, and perhaps even enlightened.

Thank you, tutors of the GI, for cultivating this environment, for allowing all of this to happen. Thank you for guiding us in our confusion, for giving us room to be confused. Thank you for letting us think for ourselves but not by ourselves. As Aristotle said, “man is by nature a political, [i.e. social], animal. Through hosting the big questions of life, you, the tutors, help us to come into our very natures, become more ourselves. Keeping your minds (and hearts) open, you open us.

So, friends, please join me in raising a glass.  
And here’s to the tutors: thank you for all you do.

## A Toast to the Master’s Degree Candidates May 22, 2022

*Louis Petrich, Tutor*

A few weeks ago I took the pleasure of reading some poetry of Robert Frost in the company of my seniors. Despite the middle portion of their college careers having been muddled by Covid, they made a clear, joyous end of it in American poetry. That got me wondering how character keeps buoyant, avoiding nausea, while crossing rough seas to rocky shores. What follows are some thoughts of mine offered apropos of your new characterization as masters of the liberal arts—the wonder of it, given the contrary winds that blow. “Thoughts of mine” warrants this note: as always when I rise to speak I owe my would-be height to the authors I have been reading of late with you—Emerson, Thoreau and Whitman, Melville and Nietzsche—and with students like you—Baudelaire, Flannery O’Connor, and always Shakespeare. Much importing we have done. Their voices stand out or blend to make my present solo a chorus. Let that suffice what is owed, so as not to appear a smuggler.

You chose this college. You might have spent somewhere else your many hours, and somehow else your means to live. You maintained a bright and forward disposition when even the offspring of Whitman were given to cranky sighs at life’s unaccountable swings. I can’t chalk this up to youth, as I might with my seniors, for not all of you are young, unless, as they say, “in spirit.” That’s a word we have much encountered together—spirit: in the eagled flight of aphorisms, while dancing the dialectic, or feeling massaged by expert rhetoric. Right now, as fits our poignancy, let spirit appear as poetic stressing in those final feet of Frost’s “The Road not Taken”: I took the one less traveled by,/ And that has made all the difference.” With legs young or old you took that road, you seekers of knowledge, and on it your spirits altered. You learned how to listen and speak to the ever-living questions, booked lonely and communal, invisibly active, resolutely cheerful, unpretentious, patient; living dangerously, like an endangered species in this angry culture that hastens to harpoon and drain, Ahab style, whatever offends its fragile members. But as for your style, you players with lightning, let your future comportment manifest all the difference this road (open to many) makes to its few faithful takers. So may your faces impress the many, when they see how sympathy, generosity, and courage give you looks of readiness to expand your days, your moments towards eternity.

Isn’t it remarkable (speaking of readiness) when the lines we were given to read in high school (our salad days, green in judgment) come readily back in adulthood so transparently good? For it’s often the reverse case: we return

to youthful occupations or pleasures and ask: “how could I ever have liked this stuff?” This prompts me to ask if a confession of this kind will ever be encountered over the books you have been reading on the Program? The sighing of such words would have to issue from a depleted kind of character, not yet heard without gainsay among your predecessors. That being so, don’t be afraid to look back. It won’t send your Eurydice to hell or turn you to a pillar of salt. It is part of our convalescence and manifesting of health, that while bound to the perils of life we go on conducting the air-born music and grounding the fires of the sky. As water cuts into rock, let life’s learning cut into life’s hardness—silently, subtly—shaping the very character of the times we inhabit. So does an open road, overgrown with waiting, admit the impression of our cultivating passage.

In my fall preceptorial with you, I looked back at my first literary heroes to see how well they would hold up to my autumnal needs. I was met by my Eurydice, face to face and accompanying me upward still, after forty years. Although the American “enterprise” (Thoreau’s favored word for it) was approaching the abyss in the 1850’s, he and his fellow transcendentalists sang—then as now—of shining dawns and springs, of love for their fellows rooted in love for themselves, and even as an assassinated president’s coffin toured the states, they conducted stars earthward and flowers they sentenced rising—for all time. And that’s not just me succumbing to fine words, for one who tried to put on the attire of Emersonian idealism but couldn’t make it fit man’s cannibal-fed fierceness—Herman Melville—even he found a good use for a cannibal’s coffin, carved with the tantalizing possibility of heaven and earth’s mutual design: that use being to keep one calling himself “Ishmael” alive to tell the incredible true story of Moby Dick. Why should we in our preceptorials harken back to the tellings of Moby-Dick, Walden, or Song of Myself, unless the tellings have like uses as that carved coffin?—to keep us well-sounded, ready to be picked up on the dark seas by bereft sailors searching for characters manifestly buoyant, however much alone, possessed of speech able to name things forever current, though not in purchase, yet much in need.

And as for that great white whale pursued by Ahab, who went lining the oceans with questions untallied: is their finding each other on the open seas so incredible, when today we find ourselves lingering on high scenic old roads, not at all the current effacing efficiencies plotted for all on the plains?—when we hear our latent words come from what depths of undiscovered country to breach the surface between our facing infinities? The little things we’re made of can do what we most long to do. Isn’t that remarkable? And so here we are, where we most long to be. We have taken the most signal ways across the wanderings of our kind to arrive here and measure up. Like that German philosopher, canvassed behind a big mustache, who says, “Let us color our own example ever more brilliantly,” you too have stepped aside from the ugly, the accusatory and reproachful, the partial improvers and punishing equalizers, to paint your canvass as one whole,

and to make it beautiful. Remember well the practice, how to draw aside from incessant clamoring to color your example by attention to the exemplary. Whether whaling or sitting by the fire, there’s a line tightening around the neck, but remember how life’s breath, made aware of what’s out there, would fasten in its finitude only on what’s tasteful and terrific. A familiar paradox obtains here, of looking away in order to be looked at, of stepping aside from the world in order to come back to the world—still having to live, still having to think—of saying “no” to make room for a vast encompassing “yes.” Let that character obtained as yours be bold to manifest its inherent case for treading today’s less traveled road of the liberal arts.

Like that fellow treader, Parker by name, trying to know himself in one of Flannery O’Connor’s late stories (boy did she ever know about that line!), his entire body he covers with random tattoos; but God—because Parker asks for God when all he has left unpainted is the blank skin of his back—God comes in answer to color the whole of his back in a tattoo of brilliantly byzantine design. Well, you asked for it when you took this road, and in brilliant color and design it’s got your back now. Whatever grumblings or fears may front you piecemeal, we’ve got your back now—wonderfully looking, masterfully reaching ahead.

Let us then raise our glasses, and in reach of these towering trees that give us back breath enough to hold out against wind and rain, let us drink to the brilliant masters of the Graduate Institute, class of 2022, manifestly goodly different.

## A Toast to the Tutors Summer 2022

Chase Waller

As I have reflected on the past four summers which I have spent at St. John's, the big question, which I and probably my classmates have been asking is: What did I get out of this? What have I gained from my time with these amazing tutors reading these texts? Plutarch credits Solon with the following words:

"The future that bears down on each of us is variable and determined by unknowable factors, and so we consider a man only happy when the gods have granted him success right up to the end of his life. However, to count anyone happy while he is still alive and faced with all the uncertainties of life is as unsound and valid as proclaiming an athlete the winner and crowning him while the contest is still in progress."

So I guess, by Solon's calculations, I can't thank the tutors for making me happy. Hopefully, the gods will grant me success up to the end of my life, but that privilege seems reserved for a small percentage of people. And I will corroborate Solon's claim further by saying that St. John's, in one sense, has not brought me happiness. I am more confused now than I ever have been in my whole life. "About what?" you may wonder. About everything! About justice, and love, and education, and history, and parallel lines, and God, and everything. It's chronic! It never stops. St. John's has effectively ruined certain things for me. I feel like I haven't answered a question in four years! When I drive down an open road I see a Lobachevskian parallel and have to pull over and take a nap. I have grown to be tepid—I struggle to assert anything because I feel so lost in the vast world of wisdom and knowledge and story. This state is not happy. Sometimes it's angry. I feel like Thrasymachus, barging into the dialogue and demanding that people listen to what I am saying, even though what I am saying falls apart so quickly.

And yet, in another sense, St. John's has brought me some of the greatest happiness in my whole life. I have made friends every summer I have been at St. John's. I have cried every summer I have been at St. John's. I have laughed every summer I have been at St. John's. The list goes on, but the full range of emotions has been readily available, and I have embraced each of them openly with others. What else can you do when presented with truth and beauty? So, to answer the question, I would like to thank the tutors for what I feel is the most important thing that I have received from St. John's (and that which might

cause me to disagree with Solon): simply the ability to listen.

Every time I sit in class I look at the tutor and wonder to myself: "how can they listen to this conversation, having themselves read and re-read the text so much more than me, having themselves so much more background information about the text, having themselves thought so many more years than I about these things, having lived so much more life than me?" How did you, tutors, listen to my confused attempts so patiently? Why do you reject time at the beach during the summers to sit in a classroom and continue the dialogue? It is an act of love, and I am so grateful. You taught me how to listen carefully, and to dignify every person by that very act. It is tremendously profound.

I hope, like you, the tutors, to be able to willingly enter confusion and difficulty over, and over, and over again with excitement, and generosity, with an ear for everyone (including the authors) and with the extreme compassion to listen.

Furthermore, by your example, I have learned how to listen to and thereby love myself. When I came here, I was in a crisis. I didn't know what to do. I used to berate myself for every little mistake I made. I still don't know what to do, and I am still in a crisis. But now, thanks to my tutors and my friends, I know that I am not alone, and I know that I don't have to beat myself up for not knowing. Not knowing is part of the fun. And just as I want to be like the tutors in loving others by listening to them and valuing what they say, I want to learn how to do the same for myself. Just because I don't necessarily come to any grand conclusions, doesn't mean the ideas in that pursuit are worthless.

I will conclude with this: when I first read *Notes on Dialogue*, the strangest precept to me was that we were not to take notes. I thought it strange because I wanted to remember the ideas in the conversations we had. But in my time here, I saw that it was actually extremely profound to fully listen to someone, without the distraction of trying to write anything down, making full eye contact. It makes sense to me how full attention to someone's words will give you a much deeper appreciation for their ideas. And though I might not have a record of that idea on paper, what I do have is an intimate experience with the person, having given their words due thought, and having let them convince me. In that sense, the ideas become more a part of me when I encounter them in this way than they would have had I recorded each and every one of them on paper. Every conversation was a relationship; every conversation changed the way I think in some way. I don't need them all on paper because I think for me that would just be a temptation to return to the ideas and use them for something other than what they were meant for. Perhaps, it is better to just listen, and in so doing, to love.

So, to the tutors, here's to you for teaching us how to listen and to love. May we follow your example and thereby learn how to embrace confusion, argument, paradox, and complexity for the sake of perhaps seeing something true.



## A Toast to the Master's Degree Candidates Summer 2022

*John Tomarchio*

As God cast Adam and Eve out of the garden of paradise, so we gather here today as you cast off from this our island of misfit toys, to finish out your intellectual life among infidels and barbarians, some your nearest and dearest. And when you propose to them to spend 2 hours some Monday night after work discussing a 17th century metaphysical poem on the vanity of erotic desire; or a geocentric account of the solar system; or the arguments of an ancient Greek drinking party for and against pedophilia, they will think you a misfit for even asking, and they will be right.

So, what will be left for you to do but retreat to the secret chamber of your soul where your heavenly Father alone will see what becomes of the seeds that Holy Mother College, like a good sower, has scattered there. True, some of those seminars fell on the hard parts of your soul and were devoured forever by the birds of pride and prejudice. Other seminars fell on the shallow parts of your soul and sprung up quickly, even eagerly, only to wither before searing rays of cross-examination. Still other seminars were choked by the thorns and thistles of daily cares, for the G.I. Johnny does not live on Seminar alone! BUT, some of those seminars have fallen on good soil, and taken root, and if cultivated, will in time yield fruit 30-fold, or 60-fold, even 100-fold.

And if then you should remember us, your Tutors, send a check earmarked for Tutor compensation, for Tutors can't live on Seminar alone either.

So, please raise your glasses, my fellow Tutors, to those about to brave life after Seminar: may it never befall us!





## List of Works

Cover <i>Midnight in the Studio</i> Jesse Clagett Digital transfer of 16mm cyanotype	Pl. 24 <i>A winter afternoon in Kentucky IV</i> Jesse Clagett Black and white print 10" x 8"
Pl. 9 <i>Capulin Volcano, NM, I</i> Aschely Vaugh Cone Oil on panel with hard gesso surface 10" x 8" x 1"	Pl. 25 <i>The Gyre</i> Jules Spiese Color pencil on paper
Pl. 10 <i>White Arch I</i> Aschely Vaugh Cone Oil on panel with hard gesso surface 10" x 8" x 1"	Pl. 29 <i>Thinking Pre-Socratic</i> Jesse Clagett Digital transfer of 16mm photogram
Pl. 11 <i>Cast Fossil and Carson Cover</i> Aschely Vaugh Cone Oil on panel with hard gesso surface 10" x 8" x 1"	Pl. 45 <i>Capulin Volcano, NM, VI</i> Aschely Vaugh Cone Oil on panel with hard gesso surface 10" x 8" x 1"
Pl. 21 <i>Found at 4000 ft. in the Appalachians</i> Jesse Clagett Black and white print 11" x 14"	Pl. 47 <i>White Arch II</i> Aschely Vaugh Cone Oil on panel with hard gesso surface 10" x 8" x 1"
Pl. 23 <i>And if it's cold enough</i> Jules Spiese Color pencil on paper	Pl. 58 <i>A winter afternoon in Kentucky III</i> Jesse Clagett Black and white print 10" x 8"

## Acknowledgements

Cover, Jesse Clagett jesse.clagett@gmail.com	25 Jules Spiese
3 Benjamin Crocker	26 Ansley Green
6 Melissa Moore	27 Bonnie Naradzay bonnie.naradzay@gmail.com
7 Louis Petrich, Tutor	29 Jesse Clagett
9 Aschely Vaughan Cone <a href="https://www.aschely.com/">https://www.aschely.com/</a>	31 Abdullah Wadood
10 Aschely Vaughan Cone	33 Luis Sanchez sanchezmo.luis@gmail.com
11 Aschely Vaughan Cone	35 Ansley Green
14 Siobhan Petersen	37 Walker Rogalsky rogalsky.walker@gmail.com
16 Abdullah Wadood abdullahwadood.com	45 Aschely Vaughan Cone
17 Jose Gabriel Coronado-Flores gabecoronado66@gmail.com	47 Aschely Vaughan Cone
21 Jesse Clagett	48 Kelly Custer
22 Jesse Clagett	50 Andrew Graney
23 Jules Spiese <a href="https://www.jspiese.com/">https://www.jspiese.com/</a>	52 Louis Petrich, Tutor
24 Jesse Clagett	55 Chase Waller
	57 John Tomarchio, Tutor
	58 Jesse Clagett