

WHITE OXEN



Gable Napora, age 9, teasing June, his sister, age 5:
“I can read your mind.”

June: “Can you read your own mind?”

FUTURISM DECLINED

'ma questo è divertente
Mussolini re Cantos

'If you wuz to find me a nice
TEXT of Scotty the O'rishman
(index name Scotus ERIGENA,
nut Duncce kotus), I might get
through another FOUR canters
in six months.'
Pound to Eliot 1939

'The suave eyes, quiet, not
scornful, rain also is of the
process.'
Pound - Canto LXXIV

'Hang it all, there can be but one Sordello:
But say I want to, say I take your whole bag of tricks,
Let in your quirks and tweaks, and say the thing's an art form,
Your Sordello, and that the modern world
Needs such a rag-bag to stuff all its thought in.'
Pound - 'Three Cantos'

[but this is amusing]

**J: Hey Chris ! Riscossa.
Sweet wine?**

**J: "In 1958, the
[treason] indictment
was dismissed and
Pound returned to Italy.
When he walked off
the boat, in Naples, he
gave the Fascist salute."**

**That American Army
half black half white
Pull Down Pull Down**

C: Riscossa : Resistance

'We advance by discriminations.'
Pound 1912

'I am the last American living the
tragedy of Europe.'
Pound 1960

evocation of
the white
oxen -
rosa lux-
emburg's
buffalo
the bloody
secretion
in each
pivotal
wobble -
curizza
oversees
the axis of
his ménage
à trois as
ricossa !

J: Okay. Riscossa. Resistance. So yes.
Sweet Wine.

J: LUX, basic unit of
Illuminance

J: Sonyichka, the
hide of a buffalo is
proverbial for its
toughness and
thickness, but this
tough skin had been
broken. During the
unloading, all the
animals stood there,
quite still, exhausted,
and the one that was
bleeding kept staring
into the empty space
in front of him with
an expression on his
black face and in his
soft, black eyes like
an abused child.

'We both,' Rosa
added, 'stand here so
powerless and
spiritless and are
united only in pain, in
powerlessness and in
longing....'

The Letters of Rosa
Luxemburg

THEOGNIDEA

‘To all to whom there is pleasure
in song & to people yet unborn
You also will be a song,
while the earth & sun remain,
Yet I am treated by you
without even the least mark of respect
And, as if I were a child,
you have deceived me with words.’
Theognis

‘When it’s an autocrat,
who chews the people up,
bed him down how you like:
the gods don’t mind.’
Anon.

‘And which sort of men
are the biggest of pseuds
& the biggest of charlatans?
Seers!’
Aristoxenus

‘Poets say much that’s false.’
Solon

J: Theognis of
Megara:

a Greek lyric poet
active in the sixth
century bce. He
wrote, if his
actually existed,
gnomic poetry quite
typical of the time,
featurin advice
about how live one’s
life.

J: Aristoxenus of
Tarentum born
c. 375 bce was a
pupil of Aristotle.

J: Solon, 638–558
Greek statesman and
poet.

**J: Lalibela, Ethiopia, north,
churches from "living rock"**

levin of the
overflow
stitched up
in crosses
of his own
flux -
lalibela
of the great
white cloche
with his dick
caught in
a cruse as
if pissing
gold onto
cassotis -
tarantellas for
the shoobydoo

**J: tarantellas, folk dances, fast
upbeat, often with tambourines**

HOW GRILLO LOVED CIRCE

(doctrine of metempsychosis)

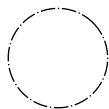
Death you a boar
& her wand struck his shoulder
so he blinked

tears ran down his bristly cheek
& she kissed him
moony while he wailed

& did not wash her lips
for fear of falling off
as they do in Egypt -

Odysseus was different -
he had a flower of garlic
that stood pig magic on its head

& struck a bargain
for his crew a screw to retrieve
them from her pagan charm



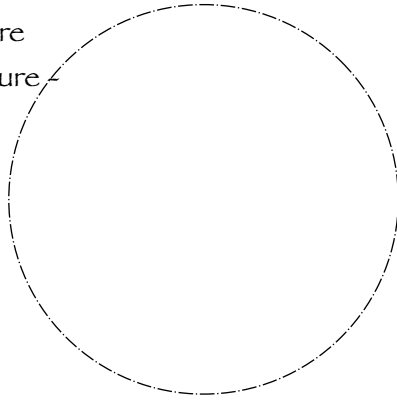
though Grillo dug his trotter in
refused to budge so for a while
Odysseus stopped with Circe -

Angry red fed up on cherries
watching her wrap the men up
one by one to top them

in a copse of willow for birds to eat
Time to go - he's thinking of some other
thread - calypso ad lib nausicaa -

& left - with Circe's bitter sweet
wind behind or before
he never was quite sure -

But Grillo stayed -
the pig



Circe's knowledge is "baneful," so Homer tells us; she is polypharmakon, skilled at many decoctions and philters, a fitting match for Ulysses, who is polymetis, Odysseus of the many devices.

Marina Warner

Joe: Chris, the Polypharmakon / Polymetis connection. A twinning of sorts, especially in reference to the Ovid?

In Ovid, her victims include women, like the nymph Scylla, who is cursed with monstrous curs' heads sprouting from her waist.

Marina Warner

Odysseus offers to take Gryllus and his fellow-victims with him when he leaves the island, including, he adds magnanimously, even the non-Greeks among them. But Gryllus rejoins sharply: "Stop right there, Odysseus. Even you are not impressing any of us!" While Circe dubs him with this jocular, disparaging name, Gryllus himself takes the high ground to defend his choice, proclaiming, for example, that a beast's condition is superior in all the virtues - "justice, wisdom, courage and all the rest of them" - to that of a man.

Marina Warner, "The Enchantment of Circe"

...and they took the look of pigs, with the heads
and voice and bristles of pigs, but the minds
within they stayed as they had been before.

– The Odyssey

QUEEN
OF THE
ABATTOIR



That is the real tragedy.
They learned nothing.

Who?

The men. They never learn.

What?

Nothing.

Let's look in the barn.
My boots are stuck in the muck.
A mess.

See the circles. The sun reflected in the puddles.
Sun Circles.

Why do you think she did it?
I think it was her mouth.

What?

She only wanted someone to talk to.

Yeah, look at them. The yard is full of them.
Circles of the sun.

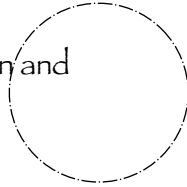
Those are circles for Circe.

What?

Reflections.

Let's go look in the barn.
Maybe there is something left of them.
Who?

Belle forced down the fences.
She had no feed for the calves.
William finally drove them out of his corn and
into his barn.



Belle demanded her cattle back.
William demanded she pay.
Belle pulled out a butcher knife, Damn you!
You get away from that door
or I'll cut you right there!

Dear Belle Guinness
It was with great pleasure I espied
your advertisement for a hard working
and honest man to be your husband.
I am hard and handsome and am anxious
to plow your field.

It was his cows that got out first.
Belle drove 'em into her barn and locked 'em up.

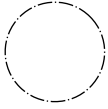
Took out a .45 revolver, said
Pay \$50 damages.

Then it was her cows that got out.

He took 'em in.
Told her. You hateful thing.
Pay \$50 damages.

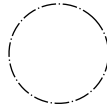
Dear Belle Guinness
I have been recently widowed and would like
to visit to see you and your farm.
Does the locomotive run to La Porte from Chicago?
Can you have a carriage meet me at the station?
And dear Miss Belle, does love spring forth
among the rows of young corn in La Porte, Indiana?

Does the Moon lie gentle on the prairie?
Can your beauty quench the blood's desire?



Her cow went over into grandpa's pasture, ya.
He put a big chain on the gate.
She would pay and got the gun.

He said,
Stop I'll let them free:

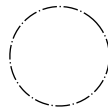


She got his cow then locked it up.
He paid for it.

\$50.

It might a been that his cow
went in there first.
And then it might a been
that her cow went over in his.

Or something like that.



It was pigs not cows.

And she said to me:

Come then put away your sword in the sheath.

It was a knife I grabbed I was so mad.

And let us two go
up into my bed
she said
so that we may
trust each other.

Or something like that.

Dear Belle Guinness,
This is a mail order madness.
I saw your ad again. For three years
you have been advertising for a husband.

Are you particular?
Are you peculiar?
Are you going to be mine?

On April 28, 1908 the Guinness farmhouse burned down.

The townspeople discovered
the bodies of the victims and also the body
of a decapitated woman.

The officials determined it to be Belle Guinness.
But which the townspeople thought
was only a decoy.

...poured quicklime over them,
put them in gunny sacks.

...buried them in her pigpen.

Well I tell you this woman
kept you away from her.

Me?

He did tell me he wished her hanging
from her apple tree.

Me?

It was seventy years ago and I was only a lad but I remember being completely covered with human meat. I bet there was twenty, twenty-five bodies in there.

I detest pigs. Hog barn the foulest smell in the world.

The philosophy around here is you want to get rid of your neighbors, you raise pigs.

And here's some of the meat they dug up.
Hamburger.

42 victims.

30 men.

10 bodies, including one woman.

15, even children.

Stated positively he disliked Belle's hamburger.
She bit in and found her husband's
ring in a hamburger.

When she left the cook said it was the ring
he wore in his nose.

She used lye.

I don't believe she killed them
and fed them to her hogs.
Well, partially that's true.
She did feed parts to the hogs.

Which parts?

The sausage market dropped.

Dear Belle,
I am coming on the first train.
Nothing you can say will stop me
from seeing you. I will make a first rate husband.
I will not change my mind.



She had a big tub or vat made out of a trunk of a tree.

She could wrestle with a man.

A big strong woman.

“Mrs. Cameron, 69, had been thought of as a kind, quiet, hard working woman who raised her three children alone through tough times after her husband disappeared, residents said. She went to church, was prominent in civic affairs, and worked as a Red Cross volunteer in the blood bank.”

“On Easter morning, Mrs. Perry saw her mother (Mrs. Cameron) in the kitchen and the sink was full of pots and pans of bloody water. Mrs. Perry then asked her mother where her father was and her mother said he had left. He was nude except for gauze wrapped around his hips and groin area.

“The next week while in the farm family’s privy she looked down the hole and saw her father’s face floating in the mire.

“Later Friday afternoon authorities found Mrs. Cameron’s body. She had driven into some woods and shot herself in the chest with a .32 caliber pistol.”
Raeford, N.C. (AP), December 25, 1979

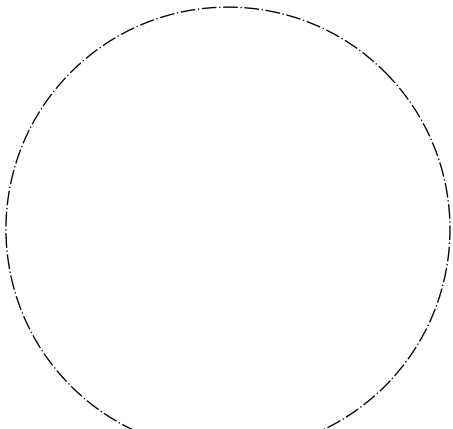
They are always bringing up that story about Guinness.
Because she's a woman!

The damn muck is seeping into my boots.

She looked out the window and said to my Dad,
Looks like a fire up at the old lady's.

And he said, Aw, c' mon to bed. She probably got the house
insured good and's going to burn it up now.

In those days, women just didn't murder people,
chop up people, and feed them to the hogs.

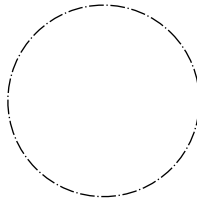


Well, it's like some mothers have a baby and throw it in the garbage can. We are animals, aren't we?



It's because she's a woman!

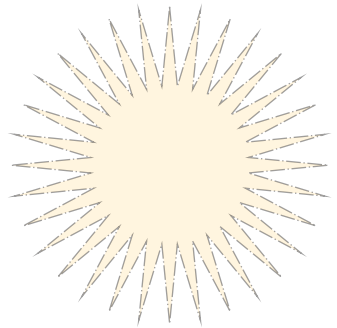
Hogwash.



When the fire started,
Mother, a light sleeper,
woke in the morning, getting daylight,
asked,

She asked,

“How come the sun is coming up this side of the house?”



Queen of the Abattoir was inspired by an article in Folklore Institute Journal, vol. 15, #2, 1978 by Janet Langlois called "Belle Guinness The Lady Bluebeard: community legend as metaphor." The quoted passages should be obvious.

The Homer quotes: Odyssey, Book X, translated by Richard Lattimore.

This tale was published in Glitch, Paul McDonough editor, many years ago. And where is he now?

And Barbara Mor, a Pagan to the end, who, knowing she was dying from cancer and that cholesterol was not her demon, started eating pork rinds. Her last writing, to her son Caleb, the best one word poem: OINK.

Combining my old story, written then [When? 1980?] to connect with my old friend Paul Metcalf, now connects me with this new friend, Christine Barron: a Gift, the poems and the reminder that for the Irish, Pigs are Sacred.

If writing can approach the intimacy of real presence, then it is worth something, something of value, even though we cannot take a measure of what that is, only of what it might be.

Joe Napora, a new book for the new year.

BullHead Books 2019.