

Louis Faber

## **God Has Come, Or Not**

It is the wet season  
when the rains wash the village  
carrying off the detritus of poverty.  
On the adobe wall  
of the ancient town hall  
some villagers say  
a face appeared one morning.  
To some it was  
the face of Christ  
to others that of an old man  
a former mayor, perhaps,  
to most of the tourists  
from the nearby resort  
no more than random discoloration  
of the aging plaster  
that clung to the beams  
by the force of will.  
They arrived by bus  
and rusting pick ups,  
bowed to the wall  
and reached out gingerly  
like children touching  
the flame of a candle.  
To the mason it was  
a job that would feed  
his family for another week.

## Future History

The history of modern literature,  
at least to those who purport to create  
it, is inextricably tied up with technology.

The quill and inkwell ceded only  
reluctantly to the fountain pen and ballpoint.  
Foolscap was affixed to corkboard

by countless pushpins, but one wasn't  
a teal writer until one stuck in the sole  
of your foot as you wandered in the dark

in search of a pen in the night while  
trying vainly to cling to a thought that only  
moments before had dragged you from sleep.

We have progressed far, the pen falling away  
beneath the great weight of the keyboard,  
paper now a wrapping for electronics

which now serve as both paper and book.  
many are no longer writers at all, dictating  
words which appear on the screen, the machine

at once editor and publisher and bookstore.  
And we know the day is approaching when  
voice and hand will cease to be tools, when

mere thought will be the poet's task, and reading  
will be a lost skill, something the ancients did  
when they still had poetry and literature.

## Into the Tide

The woman at the next table  
stares at her fork  
with eyes which appear  
bottomless pools of sorrow.  
She picks at the noodles,

raises and lowers  
the glass of wine  
without sipping.  
She is lost within herself  
and even the waiter  
approaches with trepidation  
for fear of falling in  
and drowning  
in her sadness.  
In her eyes  
are pools of cabernet  
spilled from glasses  
cast aside  
by retreating lovers,  
the blood of a mother  
who died in her birth,  
tears of a father  
hopelessly alone.  
You see him returning  
to the table  
and a smile of faint hope  
crosses her lips,  
lingers a moment  
and is drawn  
into her eyes.  
She watches him  
finish his wine  
and with a nod  
of his head, hers,  
and she sinks back  
deep within herself.

### **In a Prior Life I Was**

Reznikoff, casting words to paper  
after the last brief was filed,  
Aleichem, finding peace  
amidst the hordes,  
Red Deer Running, watching  
as the horse soldiers drew aim,

a child, never understanding  
    why the old ones only brought death,  
a poor Jew, hung on a hill  
    from the crossed beams, for believing,  
a ram, led from the thicket  
    to the altar, as the boy was freed,

alone in a hotel room  
fearing sleep.

## Obscurity

a winter night  
clouds digest the moon  
cars drive  
turning lights out  
disappearing  
neon signs  
stare  
beckoning  
vacancy  
open space  
super condensed matter  
she moans  
I love you  
to starched sheets  
shrouds  
wrap her loins  
a cat  
scampers  
into a bush  
dragging  
the sun  
melting  
the highway  
electrons  
run crashing  
into nothing  
quantum  
leaps

## On the Mesa

At night, in these mountains  
you see a million stars, but  
all you hear is the silence.  
It bothers you, this silence  
and you strain to hear, what?  
There is no one here but you  
and your breath is swallowed  
by the night sky. Be still  
for the wind will rise,  
and these mountains  
and these trees herd us  
into ever smaller spaces  
as we have been herded  
for generations, we  
will gather as we ride  
among the peaks and down  
into canyons, listen  
carefully, for inside  
the wind we dance around  
your ears, our songs faint.  
As the full moon rises  
slowly over the mountain  
listen carefully  
you will look for us  
but we cannot be seen.  
You will hear our song  
dancing across this mesa,  
one voice to another.  
You will imagine us  
coyote, you will feel a chill  
along your spine  
and we will fall silent.  
The stars will smile  
for they know our stories  
but to you we are  
simply, the songs of coyotes.  
Listen to our voices  
we will tell you of the land  
of the grasses once here  
where our herds grazed,  
now gone to endless sage.

As we lick at your face  
taste the tears  
which have watered  
this now arid soil.  
Look at the flowers  
pushing out of the sand  
and rock, see our faces  
in the stones about your feet.  
You may return to your homes  
and pull your comforters  
around your chins, hiding  
from the night's chill,  
but we shall remain  
among these peaks, in  
these canyons  
for another ten thousand moons.

## **Screw You, Aesop**

So Androcles,  
how did it feel  
when, in the pit,  
the lion sidled over.  
You saw his paw  
finally healed  
and no doubt  
remembered the thorn  
you had extracted.  
Did you rub his mane  
as his jaws snapped  
around your thigh  
his teeth tearing  
into your flesh.  
As you saw  
the blood spill out  
did you curse  
the fabulist  
for his detachment  
from reality?

## About the Poet

Louis Faber is a poet and retired attorney and college literature teacher. His work has previously appeared in Exquisite Corpse, Rattle, Cold Mountain Review, Eureka Literary Magazine, Borderlands: the Texas Poetry Review, Midnight Mind, Pearl, Midstream, European Judaism, Greens Magazine, The Amethyst Review, Afterthoughts, The South Carolina Review and Worcester Review, among many others, and has been nominated for a Pushcart Prize. A book of poetry, *The Right to Depart*, was published by Plain View Press.