

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.