WHICHEVER

RUSSELL ATKINS

### A WINTER'S WALK

This is of a love that's ever (the smile Of her appointment's dentistry) She defeats resistance. Her plumb bosom To be round with 1t frankly, desire. She keeps floral (--many aweing closer To cascade her may ill afford.) Summary, hers, mysterious air. I've been much advised against her: They say, "She's nothing really." They are so right, For when she troubles valuables Devotion to her mads me to Bosch'd Obsessing my days. (There is a life Warmth'd to pulsed, fleshed, sensed with common approval. Organization into being sings From a reality turned even to an enchantment Siren'd to me.) But when she's stranged I behold her For what she is: fashionable, The richly over-sexual. Through the twigs float her eyes --No faith of worlds in them Souless the orgasms in her dark sheets. She's yearn -- it's my body she wants

And to be my mother

FLU

1

An expeditionary encampment

where men huddled about a pillow of the snow's precipitous ascent.

They lit a fire:
they shared the whiskey that burnt cold

-- arms hands busy
keeping found twigs ablaze, flashlights
that startled out with the rectangular.
There was a squall to be -shudder of lungs
sensed that it may come down with whir
swarming the bedclothes.

2

all was near hush about the room: this was, I'm sure -morevoer, they stored the gold -source of monetary systems: they wove the probabilities for all time every computer spinning the uranium was kept there the heavy hydrogen

nerve gas

3

much in the sound of coughing
upbroken of pieces, not organization -in a sudden of a laugh to a cough
a whizz'd of ski, flying snow filaments
the back hotels fear them
there, men age to coughs,
shifting alone in drears of beds
and in their soiled underwear:
a kind of truth about themselves hacking
(no self-sacrificing wives about)

but summer parties, bright houses coughs may be deliberate there, social -- accidental too -- drink which slips from the gullet show-like gargled fears down a path unknown to me: in the by-ways of the throat a mugging

AT NIGHT KEEP STILL

After-twelve darkly comes back full stop, hush about slumberers.

There's an accompanying negating intelligence:

some other will. Take the cupboards: in them, resistances, odd assortments, Bruegel spiteful in the dishes; next, autonomous hands in the fragile ether, a frolicking of silences: cuss of a crash that spills -- collect the vocal glass!

I go soft about it -- slumber, chairs devil the way of hushes thwarting caution -- some sibilance in the radiator amplifying

draw water, havoc the old plumbing, a consternation of its whole network

There are, everywhere unheard
(as one might see deep in an electron microscope)
rigidities
violently breaking

OUT OF JOINT

not with his wife at eased on the refresh of his front porch?

not painting about the house? not tying up the dog with a wave of respectability? not watering his lawn?

he furtives by
unnoticing urged to a prowl,
gargoyled with desires:
 his companion
unseeming as a relative
unseeming even as of old friends
 or of a family
that visits after church

they furtive beyond talking of "bitches", talking of "ass"

### OLD MAN CARRYING A BIBLE IN A HIGH CRIME AREA

Condense, will it? grow a barrel
for shooting?

flash open and spit God's
electric al bullets, Leviticus
as the holy trigger -- the thief
drops into hell? book develops
dimensions turned sanctuary
where no muggers plunder?
Does the dope fiend defer
to this, struck to a fix? will the book
in black, cleric vestment
convert loose women?

Old friend, listen: don't wait -- when they come at you, throw it at them!

### IMAGINARY CRIMES IN A REAL GARDEN

a spring already short of breath on its way to asthma'd summer:

I gather

allergic grass and shrubs' roots sterile from last year (no rainfall'11) help them, no hope from water)

useless beseech by boughs: a blueberry bush asking, pleading; faggots in a bunch, their necks, snap of twigs' necks crunched

thick earth --

between the hands, against knuckles (a fat man's squeezed trachea) a bough woman's fetus,

a shape of a female twig break her

slow, painful scream of rape

a feminine squirming I shove

bind the bag

them down

with a short wire

this is the kill

VIGIL: SEVENTY-EIGHT

1

the winter storm: Pale's extremed, shark fin's blank wanders its sheet through gloom'd snow: octopus'd whir bolds suddenly -- ships of snow behold about surfaces! a white schooner open of aforesail, baffled to a frenzy! when with up lo! a stark white submarine ominouses -- its conning tower horroring out of the squall -- then its streak torpedo! a far off white freighter and a far white battleship there's blither all are struck and blizzard'd whoof!

2

the poltergeist of destructive hoar crackling at the windows pushing in the form of ice

—— lamps still out!

Of brave as sentinels these lit of little guides pallor'd about nodding their affirmatives or pall'd no's. Suspended, they lead me, watching out with sharp antenna. They must deal with the enormous'd! The thing is in the house
—— then pme nu pme ,u giode's scare up with a minture's wee shriek each falls stricken ——

the temperature gasps, plunging!

3

Years chart of my mouth: such weeds hair! grizzled twitch about of burr beard set before in a mirror's glistening: (spectral'd shudder skillfully wizard'd in a tempest --!)

worse aromas

skulk'd from bowls cold in the bathroom. All's deteriorating rapidly, like souring laundry abound'd in bags

### Chorale:

-- this glaucoma:
only small but of hundreds up!
Organ-like stark'd of chandelier,
each awe of glister, bits of glare,
a shimmering of prism'd -- stars
more chimed with incidence!
(The afar of all beyond this tempts me:
grim luminous'd, sinister for travel,
a blue gas, or mists ship
out of realm -- out of bounds!)

The frored together -- now pale chandelier's organ vast of tinkling! its pipes ringing, its harmonies baffle! Sound fulls, an overwhelm of hollow -- it whirls into a flaming ice expand of flash, glistering tulip'd, or roses open of bright --- it is awake's dream alight!

#### ANOTHER BIRTHDAY

Several darknesses too early, back to cast aspersion, its given of years remorsed as a bill with its warden of dour now handed down as for a pick up of old goods, phonebooks, shreds of clothes, onetime grocery lists, changed addresses

Several darknesses too at home, back it seems, like unwelcome relatives, back more grey-hair'd with anxious'd

You, falsed by minutes and hours, are all the while, horroring with await six planets deep, ominouses with their effluvium!

the drears that shall be given me? what do do?

several darknesses too perfidiously late several darknesses too monstrously early

### CHANGING SEASON

Arrives as if to drive a hard bargain around the first of November -that in a plain dark suit the hair greying in a flurry he fends off complaints with cold authority, willing to listen -- but, he says, the contracts have been drawn -- opens his briefcase, hands out statistics to reporters -- things look bad, like stocks falling, banks crashing, he'll meet with all: "Iknow," he says, "but that's the way things are --" he is angered, his body tightens up in a breezy overcoat he has other appointments and much ground to cover: a conveyance pulls up (a woman, with vermilion hair, sits in the back seat)

there's no getting around it: he has the last word

#### EXCLAMATIONS FOR GREY HAIR

1

Anguish as misery'd twisting of hands in the dark-mood'd rooms of asylums!

A void where awful surrenders have had their day -- aghasts of the bones left long after blunt battles! or this:
a household dust, insidious'd, thickening in lax'd corners!

2

-- no ordinary wind:
this is a mad fierced up of it!
lightning affront'd straight over
the forehead -- a bold ablzae
across the back of the head sea:
a black sea ponderous'd around
under scrawled electricity!
-- listen, now, to my hair's
thunder!

3

to peer through the hair's blur there's a long place -- apparitional hair at a long place within! Anything can dread through such fall's hair from occipital places! Leukemia'd hair! In the garden between ears' gates, the suicidal, drained arteries -- hair much too late!

the grey chimes of a skull chapel or blanched ashes!

sinuous'd fog! Time, now

once, have more to allow, you ghoul, before you feast about a head on the hair's good mushrooms leaving the bad ones!

4

Flung up by my tooth'd comb

-- a miniature steam-shovel -the white coffins: the dead roll out:
a resurrection without a judgment!
For all those who "believe"
it's in this hair, the sad
and disappointing thing: my comb's
dredge of silent doomsday!

-- the end-stopped old earth still
very much here --

from a deep nap (the comfort of ill'd old age) roused to the same pastel shone sun,

the same weary'd!

LATE BUS

Theft's hour -- the bus against the hark lights afright from houses!
Two dark men board laughing (their teeth, crooked) and take a seat in back, two men in jeans, jackets:

the men sit still: One talks to the other yeah, -- their eyes (--sure, we know what's up --) one feigns awhiled of sleep, one coughs quickly as a signal while the other holds -now! --watch their pockets, their hands are moving: one as for a cigarette and one as if finding matches he reaches, reaches up falsely to pull the bell cord East 55 they leave the bus

it makes no difference:
four dark men board
 -- laughing

#### APPARITION

I had come to rubbish everyplace, crush to corrupt extraneous'd with wind in an avaunt!

(some resentment, repressed, running saliva along the esophagus: too nauseating with a suspended sort of sensation in the stomach)

Sudden'd
out of bash blown about decay,
a contortion some amix legs
onto which a wool shape
-- as with chassis and all,
ears of antenn'd orts -dreadul'd!!!

it deadly'd growled rush overturning, smashing blunder and thud even skull'd against like some resentment taking shape with a -- a slur of smears?

a siai oi smeais.

dark everyplace trash again but hushed and my breathing in and out like crazy

slowly, slowly
it all faded
forlorn'd
old bannisters a coat,
fragments of a car
and legs of half
a table
and just
me, my legs

# STEPMOTHERS: GRIMM BROS. RE-VISITED

it had been of a day
when old tree limbs of about to fall
did fall - when near broken
broke finally, when a diet
seemed to have failed and hair
won't comb right, or a headache
blunders about the brain when much
to be done dares: there is, likewise,
garbage's affrontery, or a
maintenance man
is nowhere to be found as faucets
loose their rinse percussively

whirled up the children's clothes
with a devil of ire
that flung them short, her huff
was not usual somehow -- one would
say of her: old youth,
the hair a storm's careless, and her
fingers through it made to drown
of them suddenly,
the two children came all bounce,
plump of chattered luaghter

she flew at them with a hiss,
 a dark pterodactyl of fierced
-- the boy's shirt she drew tight,
"You idiot! Noisy, dirty!"
 her abrupt flung him to the floor
""Get up -- take yourself off!"

having married a bastard,
a nobody, she set about cooking
his food, to, with, of invective!
plunged the cherries from their can
with a curse, kneaded the dough
as if she saw her spouse's head
in hand, and with a bang at that,
pounded it flat

she raged to the oven
and took a match, almost an incendiary,
lit it, and as it burned, so it seemed
did she -- she baked maniacally,
blaze in her eye,
then it was done
and she sat down and wiped her forehead
far offs were whistled high
high in the air of mauve five o'clock:
the nobody and bastard would be back
-- his footfalls -- first, upon,
then against, then forward
then in the room -- and there!

"Ha, ha!" he flung
his lunchpail down, "Honey, baby,
honey, come to daddy!"

#### YOU ARE ENTHUSIASM UNTIL THEN: DISCO

Quiver, shake out neckties and hair with energy and rumor passing -do not hold back, be as awkward as it is cold: with heat, dress for the dirty-minded.
When you have taken to pauses, to a maturity's identifications, naturally, that shall be the stroke for stern disapprovals, for inner sentencings in still places while you wait for the lone of judgment's voice!

Until then  $\hspace{1.5cm} \text{you are enthusiasm} \\ \hspace{1.5cm} \text{the dream}$ 

for the uncommitted ones who watch you, compromise you into their perceptions

Quiver, perturb with forces anything uniform and with whores and others' wives deliberately handle yourself for fucking, the billows of the vibes spill over you the stimulus of gin and Scotch whisky. You are where the booze is and while dancing insist upon baring your ass!

to make the sense you have to, go and lose! ( -- adolescents, the young adults forcing all devils up a tree)

until the inner sentencings, stern disapprovals awaiting the voice of lonely judgments --

you are enthusiasm until then

### CONTENTS

A Winter's Walk	2
Flu	2
At Night Keep Still	3
Out of Joint	4
Old Man Carrying a Bible in a High Crime Area	5
Imaginary Crimes in a real Garden	5
Vigil : Seventy-Eight	6
Another Birthday	7
Changing Season	8
Exclamations for Grey Hair 12	8
Late Bus	9
Apparition	10
Stepmothers: Grimm Bros. Re-visited	11
You Are Enthusiasm Until Then: Disco	12

### BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

# RARARARARARARARARARARARARARA

Russell Atkins' published work covers thirty years. Printed in some of the best literary magazines of the forties and fifties -- Beloit Poetry Journal, View, New York Times Review, Voices Botteghe Oscure, Western Review plus many anthologies -- Atkins poetry continues to be among the most innovative and singular. He was awarded an honorary doctrate from Cleveland State University and has recently received a \$5000 Creative Writing Fellowship from the Ohio Arts Council. He plans to work on several unusual books of poems, an experimental poem-play plus a book of short piano pieces.

# RARARARARARARARARARARARARARARA