

The Parliament of Foul Ideas

Or

Our Inalienable Right to Ignorance

A Dream Vision
Awakened into
Rhyme Royal
From Out a World
Perversely Eager to
Privilege the Unreason

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[See last page for publisher's colophon]

1

*T*hat life is short to live while long to learn
Is why, still green for one soon gray, I've come
To search more books for truths I can discern
Of how our world *really* works—to plumb
Convincing *evidence* in place of numb
Conventions that seduce us with their ease
While but extorting from our fears their fees.

2

No, not such books conventional to folk
Who, rather than live *now*, would hold their breath
On palliatives of myth with which to choke
The irksome knowledge of their certain death
And cower in the safety of inept
Ideas of but *surviving* that same flesh
In which thought's just a process of live mesh,

3

But, rather, those inviting us to view
Through lenses undistorted by the tint
Of nervous hope this world that *is* and, through
Our deep engagement with it, leave our *print*
Upon its fabric, not some ghostly lint;
Yes, books meant not to lull our wits to sleep
But wake them into life's vast wealth to reap.

4

Yet, *all* books should be read at reason's edge—
Yes, even those reporting neutral fact—
Lest we confuse *pro tem* belief with pledge
Of FAITH (belief *despite* contrary fact)
And offer up our brain to be hijacked
By some authority unproven, who
Exacts our blind allegiance upon cue.

5

For, while belief in its most basic mode—
Pro tempore, that is, *before* we've wrought
It firmly into FAITH—is *gene-bestowed*
And necessary to our simplest thought.
(It saves us all that time it takes, from naught,
To prove the truth of *every* step we'd need
Towards where the subject thought might
then proceed.)

6

True FAITH is, on the contrary, that deal
We cut in trusting with our eyes tight closed
The verity of that which is *revealed*
To us as true the while our reason dozed,
Most typically because we're predisposed
To find it so through fellowship in some
Conspiracy pretending it's not dumb.

7

And so, I've long maintained that *any* book
Can be misread *or* held in valid doubt
And that what really counts is how we *look*
In it ourselves to learn what it's about,
Not how it's looked upon by the devout,
Who deem a text as worthy for *their* eyes
When judged as such by those they're *told* are wise.

8

Like when some minister of FAITH to whom
They trust their moral guidance (just because
He claims imaginary friends) presumes
To solve life's toughest questions through odd laws
He's read in ancient books of tired saws,
Though *these* were writ by others who knew *naught*
Of why things happened as they did and thought,

9

Conversely, that the superstitious lore
Bequeathed to *them* sufficiently explained
Injustices they saw arise before
Their ignorance of things, and so, ordained
Themselves as masters of but long-maintained
Wrong answers. Thus, from out old fields come *new-*
Grown crops of foul ideas to hold true.

10

Now, I'd of late been reading deeply in
The science of such things as love and sex
And how such appetites, long seen as sin
By hungry disapproving types perplexed
By their own urges as they crane their necks
To pry, are easier explained by how
Our brains evolved than what our gods allow.

11

For, what our gods allow is also seen
More clearly by a peek inside our brain,
Whose architecture, drafted by our genes
In concert with the world that's its terrain,
Will favor features helping to sustain
These genes and, hence, will best predict the sort
Of things these gods we dream will like or thwart.

12

For instance, charitable acts toward those
Whom we enslave—or grovel to when *they're*
Perceived to wield the upper hand—or shows
Of grand respect for rites that seemed to bear
Us fruit when practiced last—like prostrate prayer—
Yes, all such stratagems that served us well
Before we learned to rule by threats of Hell.

13

The physiology of sleep and dreams
Is yet another subject of the books
I read that proves how often that which *seems*
The reason something happens overlooks
The way things *really* work, while tenured crooks
Indulge their readers' longings to come read
In dreams dark myths supporting their own creed,

14

And all in lieu of real-life facts that tell
Of why a working brain does this or that
Toward its efficient functioning. To sell
Such truths to readers of romance proves flat-
Out profitless, while myths make prophets fat.
Hence, knowing how a dream is made reveals
Far more than dream interpreters' ideals.

15

For, those who would *interpret* dreams design
Posh metaphors to show the dream to "mean"
Some *other thing* than how it's made—some sign
That shrouds our guilty thoughts of some obscene
Old wish that might disturb our own serene
Time out quite lost in Morpheus's arms,
Hence swapping facts of nerves for myths of charms.

16

Yes, all this goes to demonstrate my view
That books are better savored for their art
Of bringing thoughts and feelings into true
Engagement with our life than as some smart
Prescription for its proper living. Start
With any book at hand and you will feel
Beliefs compete for sway at selfhood's wheel.

17

And just to prove that I mean *any* book,
I chose from off a shelf the one called *Good*
By those who don't read books, and as I shook
Its dust and cobwebs off as best I could
I planned to find in it such stuff that would
Provide me that respite for tired nerves
That prunes the clutter of my day's reserves.

18

I speak of SLEEP, of course: that splendid state
Of drugged oblivion insuring fresh
Connections in the circuits we create
All day and night within our neural flesh
Which, wearied by redundancies of mesh
Accrued by forming synapses at work,
Consolidates its pathways through this murk.

19

Yes, I am one who venerates the nap:
That seeming flick of switch rebooting brains
Grown heavy with their endless work to map
Their world by fooling them to feel the gains
That normally a good night's sleep attains.
And here I'd found that sedative to best
Help lure my tired brain to be its guest.

20

For, I have found no better way to reach
That sacred place of senselessness than through
The blur of print upon a page whose speech
Seduced my tired brain to bid adieu
To my identity and but construe
Myself as one with whom I've just now read
(As if I woke in someone else's head).

21

Now, I had opened up this book of books
Quite randomly to one specific place
(Among the countless of such puzzling looks)
Its editors had managed to debase
Of meaning relevant to that strange "grace"
In which their god had sacrificed his son
For crimes that *everybody else* had done.

22

I mean that pointless place some nodding scribe
Had made when he had Jesus, “by the *grace*
Of God,” taste death for all the human tribe
Instead of what had been in that word’s space
“*Apart from God*” in early texts—a case
In proof that even scripture lacking sense
Will summon devotees to its defense.

23

Yes, in this letter to the Hebrews, Paul,
We read (as published now), proposed this sense
Of “grace” in which his Christ’s betrayal, fall,
And rise again to fame and recompense
May be interpreted as evidence
Supreme of God’s unfathomable *love*
For all—though just some mistranslation of

24

The Greek that really meant “*apart from Him.*”
And thus another strict tradition, born
Beneath a scribe’s bleared eyes, took on a grim
New life its own, protected by the scorn
Of those authorities to whom are sworn
The followers of *any* cult who fear
To question what would make *a child* sneer.

25

So anyway, as I then sat the while
With book wide open on my lap, I felt
My critical facility and guile
Dissolve from where that sense of me had dwelt
Into the nonsense of what here was spelt
And came to recognize the view from where
I now peered out, suspended in the air.

26

I felt the long-familiar presence of
Someone I knew—though not, somehow, by face
Or voice, it seemed—who spoke to me of *love*
That had made necessary this embrace
He'd made of my demise which, by the *grace*...
Of odd illogic made a kind of sense
Now as to why this scene felt *so* intense.

27

For, yes, intense *anxiety* prevailed
As my most salient feeling now: a weird
Concern that this on which I'd been impaled
Of late would be, perversely, soon *reversed*
As but a symbol of that "grace" that steered
Me here to stand for all that's "moral," "good,"
And "loving," though, in fact, *misunderstood*.

28

For, what in any *healthy* mind could stand
For “love” that is so hateful as this hell
To which each must submit at His command
For disobeying some pernicious spell?
How *can* that word denoting how hearts swell
In one another’s happiness be one
That *also* means the punishment of fun?

29

Can words be so capricious of their freight
As makes them suited to conveyance of
Whichever cargo we desire? “*Hate*”
Could then be used *precisely* to mean love!
Why speak *at all* if truths don’t count *above*
Conventions of odd sounds we make with tongues,
Teeth, lips and noses, diaphragms and lungs?

30

But I digress, of course; such reasoned thought
Was *far* removed from where I’d slipped through time
And space into that world my text had wrought—
Especially in strictly metered rhyme!
Yes, this concern that some collective crime
Of all mankind could truly be redeemed
By *my* appearance here, as it now seemed,

31

Was not quite *thought* but rather just the *feel*
Of something *truly dumb* stuck in my craw:
That sense one has that something *can't* be real
Despite the oaths of those who claim they saw
It, heard of it, or read it in some law;
That feeling in our gut before we veer
Instinctively from something smelling queer.

32

Yet, often we remember queer events
From out our nighttime dreams that didn't seem
In conflict with our life experience
While watching them arise. For, every dream
Is but *experienced* as well and deemed
Therefore believable until we've mapped
Them with our *waking* sense of what seems apt,

33

Which was *asleep*, of course, the while these stray
Odd remnants of old memories, unloosed
By waves of deep unease, were then arrayed
Into a narrative of sorts reduced
Of sense by night-shift faculties unused
To editing such stuff amid the dark.
In light of *all of this* I've just remarked,

34

We should allow that what we each believe
At any given time has less to do
With what is “true” than how we best achieve
Those feelings of reward we all pursue
Toward validation ever craved anew.
In other words, whenever reason dims
Around us—night *or* day—amid our whims,

35

We are insane, regardless of the depth
Of dignities we rally round our cause
To buy it some respect. The stunning breadth
Of tolerance for half-baked thought our laws
Protect does not indemnify the flaws
Of logic, nay of *common sense* no less,
Revealed in our esteemed religious texts.

36

For these, when read point-blank—I mean without
The aid of such indoctrination stirred
Into young pliant minds till cleansed of doubt—
Betray the hands that forged them as "God's word"
(In hopes of dignifying the absurd).
Said simply, sacred texts are those we've *learned*
To read that way for fear of being spurned.

37

I dare you find a page of *any* text
That can't be read as REVELATION! Why,
A *shopping list* can serve the man perplexed
By death with needed proof his soul won't die
When he does, *read with ample* FAITH! We buy
What's written down much sooner than what's spoke
Because of all the cryptic sense evoked

38

By something *seen*—more tangible than heard.
While words evaporate the moment said,
Those writ remain till our attention's blurred
Envisioning the stuff *left out* instead.
This bent for gleaning *in between* what's read
Gives clues as to how human brains evolved
To fill the gaps they find toward problems solved.

39

And hence, the written word, though really just
Some scratches symbolizing sounds we coin
Toward useful trade in one another's trust,
Becomes for us much more—the very groin
In which things witnessed and inferred are joined
From out their commerce, hence our special sense
We get of something left in *evidence*.

40

Yes, evidence of truth in that weird hunch
Predicting something near us we don't see.
For, those who *lacked* this sense became the lunch
Of stealthy predators, a guarantee
Of less successful genes and our best key
To how we've come to read the way things look—
First on a forest floor, then in a book.

41

Yes, just as when we might unearth some bones
And weapons while we're digging in the dirt
And quick envision violent struggle, groans,
And silenced life that long since lay inert,
These sundry marks found on our page alert
Us to a presence of the past: a clear-
Cut proof that someone else had toiled here.

42

And just because another came and left
This record of endeavor for us, we
Who find it tend to read in it a depth
Of consequence beyond what it should be,
As if mere *transcripts* of events we see
Were, *ipso facto*, truer—yes, more *real*—
Than those *experiences* they might reveal.

43

But then in light of this we must concede
That what is found in sacred books becomes,
Especially for those who do not read,
A proof of authenticity that numbs
One's reason past its inquiry and dumbs
Down standards of credulity enough
To but embrace the most *amazing* stuff

44

That superstition can serve up: such lore
That folk will swallow whole (to circumvent
Its chewing into bits they might abhor)
Without suspecting that they'd underwent
Indoctrination to be made content
With foolishness in place of what is real—
THAT THEY WILL DIE—hence, *dodge the need to feel.*

45

Yes, lore that's conjured out of their own fear
Of not surviving death and used to lure
Them with absurdities they yearn to hear
In guarantee of their extinction's cure,
Which only comes, of course, to hearts deemed "pure"
(I.e., full gullible). Thus sacred books
Provide the fisherman of souls fine hooks.

46

Now, it's well reasoned we should wield the *right*
To entertain whatever muddled thought
Has worked its way into our appetite
And trust uncritically what all we're taught
In books by those who'd been there first and brought
Back news—for instance that the dead will rise
And live without their brains up in the skies.

47

But then it's only fair that those who yield
To us this right to our delusions should
Themselves be free to harbor, unconcealed,
Their qualms about our having understood
This world of ours sufficiently as would
But recommend us to their confidence
Concerning facts we *all* agree make sense,

48

Like gravity and other staple laws
Of physics or biology we bank
On with the trust of our own lives *because*
They are unyielding—this despite our frank
Indifference to them when we stoop to thank
Some "outside" force for (somehow) *intervening*
In this same steadfast mesh of laws—demeaning

49

To our species when you think of it.
For, these same folk who dare to board a plane
Because they trust that physic's laws permit
No breeches *whatsoever* in this chain
Of happenings that keeps their flight sustained
Still hold (once safely landed) that their God
Can reach right through this weave to wield his rod,

50

Adjusting outcomes here and there at will
Without (somehow) disrupting all the rest
On which the whole depends. Now, such a skill
Would need ignore, of course, that very test
To which we put all truths we would invest
In otherwise where our survival's sought.
I mean, of course, *consistency of thought*—

51

Yes, that innate aesthetic sense employed
Toward weighing choices in our path we can't
Yet know the scope of, though we most avoid
It when it's inconvenient and thus grant
Its use but when we wish, as to supplant
Real wisdom with expedience's hopes,
Like swapping treatises with horoscopes.

52

And this *precisely* mirrors what our laws
Effectively promote: obliged respect
For *bad* ideas alongside good because
They're all the work of circuits that connect
In human brains—as if we should select
A ball to eat when hungry for a fruit
Since both are round, a fact beyond dispute.

53

By *bad* ideas, therefore, I mean not just
Those inconvenient to our aim but, more
To point, those *unsupported by our trust*
In how the world works—yes, setting store
In sheer absurdities that any boor
Can see who's not *obliged* to call them true
By some tradition sheathed in its taboo

54

Against its well-deserving ill respect;
Absurdities repeated by one's peers
Enough to *gain remembrance*, hence collect
The cozy feel Convention commandeers
From sense till they're perceived as souvenirs
Of comfy habit, though mere anodyne
To reason's wounds to make them *feel* benign.

55

*A*gain, we *should* be free to be such dopes
 If so inclined, but that we'd honor, prize,
 And *privilege* such inanity—where popes
 Are kowtowed to as alpha males all-wise
 Though masters of mere fairy tales and lies—
 Reveals a most perverse esteem for those
Least representative of how man rose

56

To dominate the life forms on this earth.
 Our scientists, who've studied long to learn
 Why things but happen as they do, are worth
 In popular regard a *fraction* earned
 By church authorities, who've but discerned
Their answers to these same hard questions through
 What things were known when *wheelbarrows* were new!

57

That's right, back when technology emerged
 At last to lug some rock upon a wheel—
 Millennia before glass lenses urged
 Us to investigate those worlds revealed
Beneath the surface of what seemed—we kneeled
 In base subservience before our own
 Best image of authority we'd known

58

And bade these parent figures in the sky
Come lavish on our most unworthy skill
Advantages allowing us to buy
In subjugation those less worthy still
And asked too why our begging came to nil
So oft despite our offerings bestowed
On them in fearful supplication owed.

59

It was back then, when we knew *nothing* of
What made things work, that these good texts were writ,
Revealing how we crave parental love
And validation. Now, although worth *shit*
In terms of showing us the way things fit
To build the here and now, these texts became
Of help in teaching us to locate blame.

60

For, easier than understanding *why*
A crop had failed or slave had died while strong
Was finding *culprits* we could punish, buy,
Or influence till there might come along
An outcome we preferred. Thus right and wrong
Behaviors learned upon our parents' knees
Would later help us know what would not please

61

Our parent-*gods* as well, explaining just
Enough to satisfy the clueless why
Bad things befall good folks: erotic lust,
For one, which disrespects the gods on high.
Now, this confusion of a parent's wry
Disapprobation and the reason things
Are *as they are* is what religion brings

62

To our attempt to better understand
Our world. Where science questions each thing taught,
Regardless of authority's command,
Religious doctrine yearns to ban each thought
Refusing to salute the rule it ought.
And hence, the sacred text's assured appeal
Lies in the ease with which its truths *seem* real.

63

Yes, more alluring even than the fact
Of verity is that sweet rush we feel
When dopamine rewards us for the act
Of *recognizing* it—as if the meal
Were less sustaining than that sense revealed
By appetite new-satisfied. It's *this*
We chase: less truth than *certainty's* cheap bliss.

64

But once again I see how much I've strayed
From where my dream was taking me—way back
When I'd first sunk into that text displayed
Across my lap and found myself but smack
Between a pair of thieves, where I'd been tacked
Aloft to save the world from sin and bring
Redemption to mankind, or some such thing.

65

Like any dream I've ever had, this one
I'd lived within my nap seemed just as real
As being *here* amid this line begun
Above with "as," and I recall the feel
Of hoping that this *ludicrous* ordeal
Through which I'd been thus sacrificed for crimes
Not mine might promise me some better times

66

Ahead, once all were said and done. And yet
I also felt the while that strange old sense
We get when assets won against our debt
Accrued in winning them *don't* match expense
And we're worse off the more we're recompensed.
For, here I was, the hero of a cult
That saw my death as something to *exult*

67

In—no, not *mourn* my loss but *praise* it's worth
To all who value most what's out beyond
The scantest proof of it known here on earth—
As if these devotees of mine who'd donned
The sordid relics of my broken bond
With some despotic parent of the skies
Came not to grieve but *savor* my demise,

68

Yes, see it, *somehow*, as the very source
Of *their* anticipated life-to-come:
That perfect, endless sentience as some force
Ideally unencumbered by this hum-
Drum earth-bound stuff we call "mere flesh."
As this might sound to you (I hope), to *me*
It had the ring of clear *insanity*:
Now, dumb

69

That superstitious mythic space where each
Coincidence one meets is read as cause,
Confusing chance with agency's long reach,
As if but governed by those very laws
That merely *recognize* inherent flaws
In our ability to pattern out
The whole from those stray parts we find about

70

Us here. Just picture it yourself: a crowd
Of followers assembles at your feet
(Among the skulls of those whose disemboweled
Careers forewarn *unpleasantly*) but greet
You *not* as one whose life looks incomplete
Of late, and thus deserving of their aid,
But one to whom it's prudent to have *prayed*.

71

Yes PRAYED! Not helped, nor even understood,
But *preyed upon* as bait toward bigger catch,
As if some Ur-progenitor they would
Conceive to dignify the way they'd hatched
Were further dreamt to eat His young, who snatched
Some misfit from the brood to offer Him
Whose jealous vengeance threatened life and limb.

72

Now, puerile claptrap such as this but proves
To *live* more stupid even than it sounds,
Which says *a lot*, of course. For, it behooves
Me to point out right here the different grounds
On which a pain described and *felt* impounds
One's sense of being. Where you would need *pretend*
You're me, I *feel* this pain you'd apprehend.

73

Yet wait!, I hear you now protest. This dream
 Of yours had never *really* "happened" though,
 Not as a *physical event* (redeemed
 In time and space). It's but *imagined* so,
 An *immaterial* reflection thrown
 Of jumbled *misconceptions* of the real—
 Hence, *not* a "thing," as such, you *really* "feel."

74

To you I'd answer thus: Well then, just go
 And find a brain that isn't altered—yes,
 And let me highlight *physically*—by so
 Much as a thought! Just follow the success
 Of all those nerve connections coalesced
 The while you think and watch them rearrange
 Brain tissue till it's *palpably* been changed!

75

Yes, thought is but a *physical* event,
 A happening, *quite tangible*, convened
 In circuitry that's formed of nerve cells sent
 In search of correlation found between
 Hard facts about the world out there we glean
 And that predictive model we maintain
 Toward mapping out survival's best terrain.

76

This *process* of a working brain, called "mind,"
Is, in relation to the object, "brain,"
What incandescent light is to that kind
Of wire filament that will retain
Sufficient heat. And so we must abstain
From thinking mind a substance *separate* from
A brain when it is rather just the sum

77

Of all its working attributes in play
That cannot be reduced to those same states
On which the whole was built without decay
Into incongruously disparate traits.
In other words, this mind each brain creates
Is its *emergent property*, with thought
Being one late layer of this system wrought.

78

And yet, these mappings of our world our brains
Evolved to weave in such increased detail
Are spun from little more than what our pains
And thrills are: an electro-chemic veil
Of stimulus response, now on a scale
So vast we cannot grasp it till it's seen
Divinely: as some ghost in our machine.

79

These ghosts are byproducts of our far past,
When folk who had perversely feared some dead
Thing as still animate had thus amassed,
Ironically, survival rates ahead
Of those less superstitious types who'd fed
With fearlessness their predators in place
Of progeny. Hence, spirits were embraced

80

As not just plausible but *requisite*
Components of our cognitive design,
Permitting us to utilize, a bit
Less dangerously than otherwise, that line
Of hazarding an option as defined
Less by real evidence than by some hunch
Made clear through fear we're someone else's lunch.

81

Now, all of this—regardless whether sense-
Perceived, recalled, imagined, or *sleep-dreamed*—
Is done with ions in synaptic clefts
Toward that remembered present of what seems.
For, as our poet long ago had deemed:
The dreamed and the perceived, seen close enough,
Reveal that they're both made of that same stuff!

82

Yes, "stuff" none other than that language writ
In atoms charged unequal to their nerve
Cell walls, conducted as potential, bit
By bit (as on or off), from ports that serve
To bind with other neurons and preserve
A circuitry semantically complex
From out the varied options it connects.

83

Yet, this same stuff communicating sense
Through flesh by means of that electric meld
Of chemically-inspired membrane—hence,
Dependent on those very laws beheld
By science to discern how it is spelled—
Is trusted by most folk to but *survive*
The body's habitat in which it thrived!

84

In other words, they hold in FAITH this stuff
That is the product of a process of
Biology and physics close enough
To be predicted *can still rise above*
The death of cells in which such things as love
And satisfaction were achieved, despite
The fact these cells are dead and won't excite!

85

How does this mechanism of a brain
That forms this circuitry in which to hold
Those special attributes we still explain
To be intrinsic to this thing called "soul,"
Like wit or verve or knowing how to bowl,
Remain *intact*, alive to its last shred,
Once those same cells that nourished them are dead?

86

Let's take for argument your Uncle Dick,
Who was, while still among the living, quite
Recalcitrant—a textbook model of a prick—
Though it turned out, *to everyone's delight*,
His brain scan showed a tumor that grew right
Where his compassion should have been enclosed
In just those circuits now long decomposed.

87

When your dear aunt had buried him (in feigned
Remorse, perhaps, for her most "grievous" loss),
Your family had but sat around and strained
At justifying why he hit the sauce
And, then, his wife. For, now he came across
As someone *not* responsible for those
Behaviors we once thought he really *chose*.

88

Now, most believe this poor prick's soul enjoyed
His way to heaven as a packet of
"Pure energy, which cannot be destroyed,"
They'd hold. But it *can* be *transformed*, above
His corpse, *as heat that rises up* past love
And hate to dissipate into the air—
That place they'd have him float in, full aware

89

Of *everything* on earth he didn't know
Alive. And this same personality,
Remembered differently by friend and foe,
Still seemed, despite the immortality
He scored beyond his brain's finality,
Distinctively his own...though no one knew
Quite whether this would be the one that drew

90

Upon his brain *just prior* to this growth
That interfered with how he'd seemed till then,
Or, rather, *after* it replaced with oaths
That kinder Dick the pastor spoke of when
The eulogy was read aloud, amen.
And so we see that Dick's immortal soul
Depended *vastly* on which brain he stole.

91

But you who've dared so far to follow me
Upon the tightrope of each line stretched taut
In careful feet above the sharp debris
Of misinterpretation really ought
To know the actual feel of being caught
Enjambed between these very lines with which
We draw our sense of self so true to pitch.

92

For, this is but a *literary* work—
A *poem*, not some tract, the meaning of
Which one might find but buried in the murk
Of rhetoric instead of how some dove
Or plover sounds to ears tuned high above
Those earth-bound mutterings of prose, which deals
At best in facts and not in how stuff *feels*.

93

Our model for this parody in verse
Has as its central scene—that is, *within*
The "frame" our narrator had us immersed
In touching how he fell asleep chagrined
By Love and how She *still* eluded him—
A lovely fuss about how all earth's birds
Had met to try out some seductive words

94

With which to find their mates, and then, once they
Had failed at that, to but appeal to Love
Herself upon this obscure martyr's day—
The one we celebrate love on *above*
Those better candidates we've long heard of—
And then agreed to settle it *next year*
On this same day, hence ending in good cheer.

95

These lines, composed by that most subtle ear
In English (*if you call what Chaucer spake*
That self-same language we speak now) endear
Us to the value of those dreams *we wake*
From into those *we live in* and *partake*
Of with great certainty that we can know
The difference, *which is difficult to show*.

96

For, this most vivid dream of mine I'd sung
About above while dangling from my cross
Was made *identically* to those I've clung
To in the daylight of my life and glossed,
Therefore, as quite veridical. The cost
Of each is but experienced the same
Regardless of which term I use to frame

97

It in a rhyme. We live within a vast
Continuum of consciousness we call
"Real life" or "made-up shit" or else what's classed
"Insanity" according to the fall
Of consequence around us. That is all.
In short, our wakeful conscious life is but
Some narrative we weave of what means what

98

To our survival of such varied sorts,
Including, *when not literal*, that kind
Of *social* circumstance that best supports
A comfortable living unconfined.
And so, regardless of how it is enshrined
In our vocabulary, *we must dream*
To live, lest we forget how life *might* seem

99

In certain situations posing threat
To the assured survival of our genes.
So, when I dreamt my sacrificial debt
Was paid by gruesome and inhuman means,
My brain was but preparing for such scenes
I might endure when this you've just now read
Is judged to be *quite worthy of the dead* —

100

Yes, by religious critics who would call
Aloud for my good name's dismemberment
To punish me for how I'd so appalled
Their God with blasphemies that give consent
To seeing FAITH as *so much time misspent*.
And thus, these books I'd read became in me
The very stuff of which my dreams might be.

—The End

Publisher's Colophon

The Parliament of Foul Ideas

Or

Our Inalienable Right to Ignorance

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by

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