

A New Heaven and a New Earth

D.H. Lawrence 1917

Edited for reading as context for the Christ Lecture.

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II

I was so weary of the world,
I was so sick of it,
Everything was tainted with myself,
skies, trees, flowers, birds, water,
people, houses, streets, vehicles, machines,
nations, armies, war, peace making
work, recreation, governing, anarchy,
it was all tainted with myself, I knew it all to start with
because it was all myself.

When I gathered flowers, I knew it was myself plucking my own flowering.
When I went in a train, I knew it was myself traveling by my own invention.
When I heard the cannon of war, I listened with my own ears to my own destruction
When I saw the torn dead, I knew it was my own torn dead body.
It was all me, I had done it all in my own flesh.

III

I shall never forget the maniacal horror of it all in the end
when everything was me, I knew it all already, I anticipated it all in my soul
because I was the author and the result
I was the God and the creation at once;
creator, I looked at my creation;
created, I looked at myself, the creator:
it was a maniacal horror in the end.

I was a lover, I kissed the woman I loved,
And God of horror, I was kissing also myself.
I was a father and a begetter of children,
And oh, oh horror, I was begetting and conceiving in my own body.

IV

At last came death, sufficiency of death,
and that at least relieved me. I died.
I buried my beloved; it was good, I buried myself and was gone.

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And am dead, and trodden to nought in the smoke-sodden tomb;

dead and trodden to nought in the sour black earth
of the tomb; dead and trodden to nought, trodden to nought.

V

God, but it is good to have died and been trodden quite out,
trodden to nought in sour, dead earth,
quite to naught,
absolutely to nothing
nothing
nothing.

For when it is quite, quite nothing, then it is everything.
When I am trodden quite out, quite, quite out,
every vestige gone, then I am here
risen, and setting my foot in another world
risen, accomplishing a resurrection
risen, not born again, but risen, body the same as before,
new beyond knowledge of newness, alive beyond life.
proud beyond inkling or furthest conception of pride,
living where life was never yet dreamed of, nor hinted at,
here, in the other world, still terrestrial
myself, the same as before, yet unaccountably new.

VI

I, in the sour black tomb, trodden to absolute death
I put my hand out in the night, one night, and my hand
touched that which was verily was not me,
Verily it was not me
Where I had been was a sudden blaze,
a sudden flaring blaze!
So I put my hand out further, a little further
And I felt that which was not I,
it verily was not I,
it was the unknown.

Ha! I was a blaze leaping up!
I was a tiger bursting into sunlight.
I was greedy, I was mad for the unknown.
I, new-risen, resurrected, starved from the tomb,
starved from a life of always devouring always myself,
now here was I, new-awakened, with my hand stretching out
and touching the unknown, the real unknown, the unknown unknown!

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