

NAG'S HEAD/HATTERAS/KITTY HAWK/KILL DEVIL HILL

We have found an absolutely charmed old beach hotel, with two story wide verandas all around, and overhanging weathered shingles, white trim on the beach, almost deserted just north of the dunes. I went running on the beach this morning very early. The rain advanced from the mainland side of the spit, as the sun rose over the ocean. How lovely and soft. I showered and later ran again with Greg, swam in the ocean and showered again. Clean and rested, three days by the ocean to think slowly. [I have qualms about this holiday, my first in almost eleven months. Greg and I fought about hotels over breakfast. I accused him of pretension regarding his preference for finery. He accused me of slumming and self-torture for my refusing to enjoy myself. We have happily compromised in this modestly restored antique of such great character not to move. I saw one man come in to inspect and then leave! Things I do not understand.]

The Approaching Rain

It is raining again, mildly

The few people in view retreat slowly from the beach,

I move back slightly on the verandah

The horizon darkens

As the poets say, the surf is pounding

—No, they wouldn't say it is so plain—

Whatever the steady noise isolates me

Protects and transports me

Often I have dreamed of diving

Through the horizon; through a crack;

Passing through the mist, beyond

It is my sensation of another world

My symbol of escape

And here as the rain quickens

And the sound of thunder
Mixes with the surf and now the rain
This horizon advances upon me
Slowly gloomy & blue, slowly grey,
Coming to me close enough to touch
Moving down the beach
What would happen if I spread the misty curtain
& slipped behind
What is there?
Backstage
Stand here quiet at the mouth
And let me think
Between one world and the next is this
The only link

Which way am I pulled? On which shore?
Perhaps I could just rest here evermore
Never choose and never know
Whether chosen or where to go

JULY 7 NAG'S HEAD

Why do I enjoy these episodic bouts of pantheistic serenity;

Is life so simple or is it me?

With no god or father, just simple awe of the

Limitless energy and space, of countless galaxies

With which we are not even minor interference

We are then completely free to enjoy our dreaming

To devise imaginary ways of uniting with the infinite

Diving through horizons and scattering ashes and the like;

To add our nothing to the absolute

And enjoy eternity from a vantage point of everywhere.

In the meantime I shall enjoy the company so thoughtfully

Supplied on earth, work together and celebrate with my friends.

JULY 7, 1976 – NAG'S HEAD

THE BEST MINDS

I have seen the best minds of my generation burned bleached
and electrified

Spread-eagle on the screen, the jugular mic in their
throat

Giving blood to the crackling colossus

We were the children in the laugh track, the friends
of Howdy Doody;

We were the believers, and the buyers, sleeping secure
in the arms of the toothless monster;

Dialing away bad dreams, witness to the
the endless triumph of righteousness in white hats;

Chasing drug-crazed mobsters who murdered puppies in
dark alleys;

With clean shaven barrel chested cops who never suffered acne,
victory was consistently sweet.

Would not life?

How rude the interruption of the world.

Television portrayed a grunt, but it could not be one.

It did not shit Wheaties or soap or houses or beds,

It did not discipline the government or the corporations

It could not give massage, or hoe vegetables.

There were our necessities.

We disciplined the government with television discipline

Our only known resource

With moderate success and devastating result.

My kind army of friends, moral actors, stormed not

the enemy, but the media,

The chosen word was precise and correct

to demonstrate, demonstrate, our righteousness

And watch on channel seven our sound and light fantasia

Warriors in the maelstrom of public opinion.

I have seen them in the video garden conversing

with the lens on the telescopic horizon

Striding purposefully to the X and feeling proud.

I have seen them interviewed and analyzed and forgotten

I have seen them interviewing, probing with polite questions

staging moral dilemmas

I have seen them on reruns

I have forgotten them as one must with reruns

I observe them watching therapy sitcoms

Now content.

I hear them on phone-in shows speak their mind

in edited paragraphs.

Where is the enemy? On another channel?

Where are the people, or is there only audience?

The struggle has perished. All the brothers and sisters have
perished

Strangers and friends have perished.

Our secret campfires have been covered.

The colossus has us all; we have all perished.

We are all stars, and no one can see through the glare.

There are no advantages here in the belly of the beast

No advances –

Mumbling, fumbling, milling, crying, sighing, dying

We can't hold hands, or sing or make love.

Should we even speak about those minds and these times

Destroyed by television, raging dreaming gutted

babbling on?

Should we talk at all? Who would we tell?

Who will make another Special, another Study,

another Investigation and stick it deeper

in and make us dance?

Could I pass silently in the dark corner of the

studio, do something insignificant on air?

Talk into a blind mic? Do I dare?

Let us go, you and I, go and hide someplace ugly and boring,
dull and uninteresting, on a used set, in the
rerun library.

Down in a cellar without electricity

Pretend to be dead, close our eyes,

talk only to each other

And then, perhaps, go hunting other friends.

1976