

*Wednesday July 12<sup>th</sup>, 2017*  
*(finished on July 23<sup>rd</sup>)*

**a manifesto (?) of commitment  
amidst the city of splendor**

My life can be defined  
as I suppose all lives can –  
in their own uniquely common ways –  
as a continual awakening.  
From grand darkness, into immediate brilliance  
and then the slow and steady awakening –  
some dulling toward the end... (if one is 'lucky')  
and then to a place unknown...  
most likely the grand darkness, yet again.

as it is right now,  
a Wednesday morning  
approaching nine in the morning,  
the excited bells of Venice  
sing their historicity every half hour;  
with a few soft lullabies in between,  
the sun is bright, the breeze cool  
and the city, strange in its splendor  
awakens for the 582,540<sup>th</sup> day  
(give or take a few)

1600 years of human identity  
alive in the water, the marble,  
the roofs, the bricks –  
in the gold-crusted ceilings  
and billboard sized paintings.  
This place is in no way my favorite.  
not the most beautiful, nor the most splendid, and the tourists  
certainly don't help the cause.  
but if there is one thing I have learned this morning,  
by the bells in my continual awakening: is that  
it is of no importance what I think of this place or any,  
and of less importance still  
what anyone chooses to say  
about what they surmise of someone else's desires and truths...  
there is only interest, its spark, the death  
of the body that maintained the flame, and in some cases,  
a physical remain – a manifestation  
that we call:  
art.

a place with so much history  
could easily be renamed  
The City of Death  
or  
The Crystallization of the Fascination with Death.  
rooms lined with faces of dead doges  
and more bloody Christ's than one wishes to see –  
but here again I muddy the waters with my opinion of  
this place – that useless, human,  
feeling, that has no gravity  
in a place like this.

The message of Christ  
the great confusion of mankind  
on display here in all its grandeur  
a theater of the magical  
and the mystical in a fun house  
of multiplicitous mirrors, mirrors of the death  
of one man pointing directly  
to the death of one's own  
and one's loved ones, and further death  
- and the most beautiful fact: missing.  
We haven't a clue.

(if only mirrors could have  
been put to better purposes  
like microscopes and telescopes  
for the real inward and outward views!)

### **INRI**

**HCE** – Joyce was in Trieste, not Venice.  
Here lies the mask of the city of masks,  
the clash of Byzantium and Catholicism  
and its centuries of art  
and government , turned into  
museums and now  
a shopping mall.

### **HLMCM CBCCAG TM *ana* SM**

a few letters off from a string of DNA  
a frightening thought, what the doges may have done  
with such knowledge...  
such unwieldy heretical power. The psyche  
of the past

is impenetrable in its scope...  
entire generations identifying with a shadow-faced woman,  
being visited by Christ  
for a little blessing and defense  
thrown in for safety...  
but alas, America c. 2017  
still believes in Lady Liberty.

Lady Venice,

at this juncture in my commonness, you have supplied me with a few simple, truthful, and unmasked insights of this grand drama that I have been born into:

- the blindness created by religious devotion knows no end.
- inanimate things, existing alongside animated beings for so long, do tend to take on some of that animation, no matter how 'spiritual' or how 'imagined'.
- mankind is a historical trajectory toward the good – if we define good as a creation of more peaceful and hospitable tenderness (take the Doge's prisons for example)
- 'art' is the quickest way to watch the human tendency toward navel-gazing, gossip, and self-aggrandizing. (especially with art-criticism and 'preservation')
- Media has always been the means of public self-deception (take the armory and weapons history **vs.** the paintings in the Senate room, depicting you, Lady Venice, as the great 'bringer of peace'.)
- Seeing people from every corner of the world (call them tourists or gluttons, or bacchanalian fodder, or whatever you enjoy) inhabit a rustic and rough relic of the past, puts into stark relief the delusion and psychosis of our own time. (no one is fit, all fat, out of breath, sunburned, angry, self-involved, certainly not ready for war, or work, or anything except the spiral of pleasure.)

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and now, safely back on another ship-shaped island,  
Whitman's Mannahatta, and Baldwin's Harlem,  
Ferlinghetti's 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue L, Ellison's Riverside Drive,  
Ginsberg's office, Dylan's Village, Coltrane's FiveSpot,  
Ive's Central Park in the Dark, and all the others of this  
so complex history, I sit, in the shadow of Lady Liberty,  
and you Lady Venice have given me a maxim, in your graffiti called *Tintoretto*:  
amidst all the happenings on this earth, work and craft prevail.  
and this may not be for all, and certainly not those two stalwarts at the expense of  
say, Love & Marriage, *but* work as a pathway to the loss of ego,  
a trip on just another island ship to a realization that what one puts into the world

is an extension of a particular and individual experience in this grand experiment we call, Life.