

# Avalon in Two Monuments

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## First: Wrought Iron Monument

As we raft the rivers of Babylon, to carry us  
Pile ourselves, across its reedy waters of burden  
Into a rasped stretch burying weekends, after burying weekend  
Pass while our feet eat the dust  
Of a red soil, piece of terminal land

See us follow the slow hearse, hit a send-off song  
Wreathe with plastic flowers, as life is life, what's there to do  
Besides the tears just telling tales, garments just flap  
Lifted by a naughty wind, to do this in a cemetery,

Leave behind an iron-wrought burglar sculpture  
A plastic 2l bottle filled with water  
Softly dug into the grave's final mound

First vote of thanks, then all voices fain in tune all together  
With hoary hollers, strange winds pervade, like percussive arrangements  
Whirl, wrangle, curl, whichever direction you want to turn

          If ever, as forlon heaven's, our ever distant heaven, oh heaven  
Happens to walk across the graveyard, we will  
Put a face of tombstone  
To encage, wind up this particular bereavement, because  
There's so many more, others

          Present here is a helping we rotate among our members  
Women of the society, take each other's place, line up  
And wave out, like the departing spirit needs, on each side  
A long pole leading out to...

As is life sometimes, in these sections of the graven  
Land, terminal way beyond futility  
Of a grave,

          Unless of course, that's the day things stun  
With a glad a yellow splurged wide in the air outside  
One long and sprightly Sunday,

One that anyone  
Of us, can claim to ever have lived to bury in,

In some burying days  
It's glad to have hands lift us up,  
Giant hands, withal but sweet of their sway,

Abundant nets, days that beg for somebody please  
Blow me to smithereens, I twitch when a witch pricks out to  
And it does try engrain itself on some part of me,

I like my lover's  
Touch, it attracts me to my many perspectives,

In my place,  
Every thought's crawl tempted to devise an excuse, the looks on you  
When no one saw you, walk up the street  
Coming to the funeral, each heart-beat torn by guilt and doubt,  
My row with a *babalaas*, as I stagger, as I fall to pieces.

*Lord, give us this day,*  
More force for new beginning, as life, is life  
It just repeats the dismal phrases of dying,  
I summon today, big reasons, funerals  
Looking beautiful, as life, is life, repeated promised days,

More linking hands  
Fingers that permeate, for beautiful days  
We have find no words for.

As life is, this life, above all else, how many of us  
Are linking hands?

To trip the devils with them, as we were burying our dying,  
Lord, give us this day, some abandon

All our previous efforts  
All the efforts  
All of the time  
All tones  
All the sulk of stones we have known, our patient's temperature  
Where it is mythical, where it is a chimera shilly-shally.

I am feeling populous in a web of fallacy, dreamland  
Is winding down, a purr shimmers, will become a taste  
Punched onto my laptop, stirred, sealed into a folder  
I don't know how long a dream's afterglow will keep or glow, or how It  
may look, dreams,

With their cross-purpose, their foreboding  
Their tangled tripe and intestines, their real ritual  
Flow of blood.

There is a zone, wherein, I am ten fold, of things I knew before. I am a fool, I  
nearly raze my Head into our asbestos roof, I woke up desperately firm, inside my  
Blood pipelines, a clocked ticked, when a deadline starts to pursue You, out of  
your own house.

Into the buses and tents we collided with everyone  
Into everyone,

Lord, give us another effort to plough more, prolonged like  
These leaves of an aloe, in the metal tub at the gate sway  
In the tiny, perturb, circles, sway, as if to say  
There's just too many frequent funerals, in this, *nowaday*.

## Second: Marble Tombstone Monument

How dare we forget  
How the hospitals have begun to smell like death  
How dare we forget, our own smell in between the distance

Looking far ahead, looking for miracles, that will never repeat  
Everything smells very muted.

A smell, just does not echo back,  
Like a boring tune, flat, falls on its back

What are the words, with what? What is their future  
All the words we have not uttered

With what words do we join up  
Memory mountain messengers  
With our dearly departed rotting in front of our eyes,

The scalpel, the sizzled foeticide radiation tower, the smell of  
The hospital equipment, bulging of Baragwana, or any other

Machines that help those in need of breathing,  
Are long past their knell of rusting locomotion, not long ago  
I heard them say Avalon, as well, has long reached, long past  
Its sell-by date. **On a beautiful day, clog upon clog**  
Of long haul convoys, saddled on hymns to rub the wounds of the bereaved, outside, it is  
a jam of traffic. At long last our funeral's procession has just entered the green metal rod  
gates, Avalon, the land  
That locks in our ghosts, we drive toward fresh open graves, to open, let  
Loose the dead one's spirits,

Where they go, is it fascinating, is it confounding  
Is it an opaque grid of gated passages?

Now, as we slowly toll, tombstones relapse backwards  
Into this section of south western township piece of earth, and Everywhere you look,  
tombstones have been beaten up, lost a leg to stand, their necks have cracked, and they  
are collapsing.

The section where our white little coffins buried our little, our babies, is a parched gravel  
elevation, a look like a life lived without a fire, a necklace made of trash moment, after  
moment, full circle without attaining any goals. No footprints, no crunches of the feet of  
visitors.

Reminds how much, this is such a mad city, that I have seen a girl, white girl, I am told  
grew up chasing goats in the eastern cape.

One big day, when the planet of venus stretched out loud.  
On that day we are told, planet venus is in charge of us.

A planet venus they say is *donerig* inclined

A planet venus will speak of its secret chambers  
Its long gain, how it can simultaneously be expanding women's stomachs.

Venus, a planet aligned, the earth slinks, her many many women,  
Some of our eyes made to sparkle, sparkle with sparks that bewitch.

Such was one beautiful day when we linked the cemetery to  
Our hands, linked it our screams, strapped it to the short life of ecstasy.

On another Sunday, the zion priest bore out his arms, speaking

As he was waving the flaps of his garb,  
He feathered these times with a call

For new words  
To be uttered, that those words  
Must bury us, must ferry us across

We enter our grave, and at once we look  
Aligned to the slant of sunrays.

It was not to be, so on all the days of the funerals, it was  
Not so that it  
Was a beautiful day,

At times the day was as incompetent, as when the coffins  
Stop, fall into a stand still, that ignites in us  
Twisted, surreal, portrayal, where we've stirred the dead,  
In a stew of bas lucks, and *sticky somethings*, someone is said  
To have thrown at you, you and yours, that's why we live in this  
Short distances, separating us, huddled, to know that's why it should be  
That makhelwane's coffin froze like fright, face to face with horror sound effects, at the  
floor of a grave.

Lord give us, now and again  
That glad yellow, when it has risen, when it  
Has carried us into the new Monday,  
The sun was setting  
As it curled

The way we walked, we talked, they way  
Our tears welled, our grief sated from hence,

Like a silent sheep was our mutter about a new  
Zeal to utter, the new words spoken about by the  
Overflowing garments of the priest,

Words as radiant as the belly button of the sun,  
Beautiful words spoken into our telephone ears

A cemetery of pain, and bereavement  
Wail, in the voices of our dead mothers, fathers, others

We are now leaving the gated passages of our Avalon  
Death is the most certain of  
Everything we think we know...

*And the frequent whacks that keep bringing us here?*

They look like they have very short fingers, in all their ways and in all their words. In all of their tones, in all of their inkblots, in all of their fuming spheres, striated right across all those that are still alive, that is why I will say, today is still digging us deeper, is still untenable like a stranger, still a torrent, these are the starlights of our terrible, terrible time.