

LINES BEGUN AT 11:59 P.M.,
16 DEC 65 ON THE INSIDE OF
A PACK OF WINSTON CIGARETTES...

OIUBT AKWATS #94

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Laughter

like a grace of girl
happy
trained with pleasure
where is the beginning
from darkness
the dance and praise

TRICON! SAN DIEGO! NYCON!

it starts from silence
and mystery
it is the life and river
rainfall on a parched earth
and finally as vast as
Ocean
bearing the beginning
in its finality and end

these starts and hesitancies
bring with their morning myth
disasters and despair
but lie in this,
they cannot hurt
like pain not chanced

and not to start
is to have ended.

before the moment
that is before the Moment
is the vast timelessness
of Waiting; in the sky-blue
failure of the will
lies orchards
of rotting fruit
cold in the snow rich scene
of memory
rime frosts mind's eye

beginning, like the daylight,
repeats its childish chances
blindly offering fortune
so many times, our unlucky disbelief
refuses it once more

dreaming in the old metaphors
yet unwilling to lose control
(or words or heart)
this failure still must be more rich and warm,
more my misfortune's end
than my own

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++++ Perhaps someone will have noticed the absence of my usual symbol that a given poem is complete and finished at that point: /-----/ is about what that symbol is, in case you have forgotten after all. The reason is that the poem on the preceding page is probably not complete.

When I was writing it, I quickly realized that, at least at the time, I was not approaching anything like a pattern that I cd comprehend. Oh, not that I was saying things I didn't mean, or didn't understand what I was writing; it was just that it quickly began to feel as if I were simply collecting "gists" (in Pound's word), fragments, notes toward the construction of a rather longer poem.

As I wrote it, I became more and more sure that I was simply kilning bricks, as it were, that wd have to be assembled later with other ingredients to form a genuine structure.

Now that I've typed it out from the two white writing surfaces I found were available inside Winston's noble cigarettes, and cut a stencil from the typed copy, and have looked at it a few more times, I'm not so sure.

I suspect I never feel so vital and alive as when I am writing, especially when I am writing poetry -- and certainly nothing can compare with those rare moments when I realize I am writing something really good. (Perhaps that sounds egotistical; my feeling is that a person who is rather well read and who has reason to suspect he is capable of judging the relative merits of the writings of others, is not incapable of judging his own writing against those standards -- if he is honest, and I might mention that honesty is the great enemy of any writer's peace of mind...)

This feeling of true aliveness is most truly tested when the product of the moments of inspiration is: reread later, when the moment of creation is sufficiently in the past to permit the creation to be approached untainted with any of the leftover exuberance from that moment.

It's one of those Moments of Truth, I guess. Perhaps you begin to read; a dim sensation of anxiety begins to form, somewhere in the Isles of Langerhaans; you begin to read further; discomfort, fast becoming acute, spreads like ichor of hebane throughout your being; the reading task completed, you realize that that remembered moment of ecstatic creation has actually left you enriched with nothing but a small pile of iron pyrates.

Over the years, though, one does find oneself more capable of shaping the words as they flash from your mind to the paper; one is able infinitesimally to suspend the seperate word-segments that make up the act of creation, long enough to test the almost-writtten word or phrase against that painful, Pavlovian-acquired sensitivity to what I might call "crap", and prevent the "crap" from reaching the page in the first place. It does make the first rereading much easier...

But "analysis-in-creation" can be taken too far; better to set it down if you're doubtful -- the moving finger (holding a pen at least, I hope) writes, but the seated typist rewrites. And hence, I find at times, as in this case, that my judgment when writing (that I was creating pleasing but fragmentary bits) does not match with my enthusiasm in rereading it. And this leaves me rather confused...I find it impossible to decide which moment of Honesty was the correct one! owell, at least talking about it cheers me up. +++ Hoping you are