

BABEUF AND OTHER POEMS

Paolo Manalo

Babeuf

Not the first time to get his heart broken
This way, or that the relationship ended
By text but it still hurt. Up on the roof
With his phone raised waiting for

Better signal, a cloud in the shape of a toucan
Passed him by while he was being unfriended
By his ex on each social media platform. "Babeuf"
Still the password for these accounts. He was sor-

Ry not sorry it was left unchanged
For him to use as a backdoor
Some day. For now, a selfie

With the cloud bird so rearranged
Who can say what it is. He's been single before
So why can't he stand on the ledge and tell me.

Cold Mountain Gram

How good our bodies looked before Instagram
And everything that could happen, happened to us.
Life was one long medley and we didn't give a damn
If we didn't know the lyrics. We sang, drank, and pissed

Wherever nature called. Our bodies forgave
The lack of sleep so long as the sex was good.
And the sex was always good but no one believed
We were getting laid. Send nudes?

The dial-up connection couldn't handle our sexy
640 x 480 pixelated 1998-selves!
Then 2010 called to collect the debts:

We woke up like an advanced stage of cachexy
Or a botete that discovered the gym; such DILFs
With 1001 likes and no regrets.

a version of Han-shan

BL Rondel but Make It Elizabeth Bishop

Today's the day when I am yours
But after tonight, we shall not meet again.
While we've known each other all these years
Today's the *only* day when I'll be yours.
Choose places to visit, tasks to do, and then—
I'm assuming—there'll be sex, of course;
Today's the day when I am yours
But after tonight we must not meet again.

Tita Cold Mountain Remix

And I must confess that my loneliness is Kili-
manjaro. That's not Hemingwayesque
But my inner climb feels like I borrowed
someone's pen and forgot to return it all
These years and it has grown heavier and heavier
first as stone, then rock, now a boulder rolled
Up as I make it to the top—a cure to what's
deep inside. It makes me jump from the nearest
Ledge where what awaits is very kind: I am alive
though just a little I lose my mind and start
The journey over like some respawned Avatar
thinking I had dropped what it was
I was holding in that fancy restaurant's
suggestion box on soft opening; I am alive
Yes, but always like a half-eaten sandwich
that was meant for later, only later was
A squirrel being set up for the joke: *O Tita Baby,*
how was I supposed to gnaw? I am alive
But for how long for me to be here? Give me
a séance and I'll tell you how good I am
At spelling *Serengeti* with one eye
frightened of the thing, that I've become
Tita Baby one more time.

*a version of Han-shan,
Toto, and Britney Spears*

Confucius Say Beans Without Pork is Like Bangus Without Belly

“Where can you find such fish that’s all head
And tail? The best part, tiyan, already
In someone’s belly,” my daughter said
“Before the fish even have an idea
Of the missing, or why they dead-
Eye the world. They’re not fish, they’re fishy.”

My son the poultry expert: “In the farm
Where they raise twelve-legged hens,
Pure drumsticks—no breasts or arms
But some will have wings every now and then...”
“Those were the fishy once and this is their karma!”
“And in their lives before that they were men

Like you Dad, who love to explain
That too much pork is bad for the heart
But forget to say that beans make you farty.”