

## **Survivor/ : The Sequel**

for Leslie Anne Mcilroy

And it came to pass . . .

A group of them came to a wide, raging river they had to cross to get to the Smart phone on the other side. They had to let their “invisible friends,” whom they had recently “liked” on Facebook, know/ : whr we at. One had to remind Citi-Bank that they still hadn’t replaced the \$2,520.36 that the identity thief had spent buying Smart phones, porn magazines and lingerie, and two of them still had to buy \$200.00 concert tickets remaining on sale for seats in the nosebleed section of the theater. They couldn’t wait to hear the American Idol one-hit wonder lip-sync the song that Billboard told them was the latest #1 hit with a bullet.

The first of them, a Think-Green acolyte, says/ : Let’s get all the waste plastic and build a bridge across the river. That will help the environment while recycling the plastic.

They all discussed the idea for twenty-three minutes amongst themselves, but nixed the plan for what seemed a better solution. They had, after all, been weaned on the belief that a democracy only yields to the collective voice, the vocal majority, no matter that it made sense or not.

The urban designer, shrouded in a visualization of acclaim and monument as legacy, made a motion to dam the river to slow its flow to a trickle/ : We all could then wade across easily.

The immediately animated and appalled environmentalist was quick to point out the error in that plan/ : There is a species of near-extinct bridal algae that lives in a five foot length of this river. Altering the flow of the river could disturb its natural habitat, disrupt the food chain and consequently lead to their extinction.

What to do!?

The CEO steps up with a gleam in his eyes and visions of profit dancing about his hollow conscience, a dollar sign for a corrupted heart/ : How about I hire all of you to part-time jobs to build a boat that you could use to cross the river. I could even sell it to the group at a discounted price, after markup to defray production costs!

The oil tycoon quickly seconded the motion, having already calculated a maximum profit/ : I can supply all the imported gasoline you need at a cut-rate price.

The environmentalist frantically interjected/ : You surely can't be serious! The use of fossil fuel would again do irreparable damage to the natural habitat, forever destroying the food chain.

The federal employee decided his pragmatic authority was the only way to solve this problem/ : I propose that I assemble an ad hoc committee to delegate private sector studies towards compiling a list of solutions, which can then be put forth to implement the formation of legislation to create a standard operating procedure, a protocol in effect, to initiate an environmentally safe, economically expedient and legally sanctioned means of crossing the river. I will of course have to compile a budget to forward to the Congressional Finance Committee so as to procure the funds to cover committee, private sector and legislative costs.

Five years later, and now a further 2 billion dollars in debt, after having blindly followed the blue ribbon commission's proposal, the group congregated on the far bank of the now dry river bed looking like goddamn fools. Upstream developers had used big-business lobbied loopholes of eminent domain to divert the course of the river two years prior, despite massive non-violent protest, and of course, regrettably, the algae had succumbed to extinction once its habitat dried up.

Besides having gone into debt—as the federal employee twice requested, and received, additional funds that grossly inflated the initial agreed upon amount—they now crossed the river to discover a now outdated Smart phone in which the battery had corroded; victims of their times and fools for the ages, too little, too late they realized the blind leading the blind only blinded the third eye of common sense.

Adding ruin to their rage, their “invisible friends,” having received no response to repeated calls to the out of reach phone on the far bank, quickly posted “un-friends” to the group's Facebook page.

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**[bathysphere, or the sparrow and the hawk]**

We strive to survive the gaze of that  
of what is the norm along a narrow line

even slightly outside of those markers

which establishes the parameters

making radical  
anything that might stray

leaves ~~us~~ confused and dazed and

ass-out on the center divider  
of rush hour traffic

a cardboard sign in homeless hand  
after spending a lifetime

working and buying and making ends meet

and for what?

most times I tend to talk people's ears off  
if given half a chance

only to later feel  
that I've said something wrong  
or said too much.

I tend to dissect every conversation in hindsight—

a deconstruction of perceived insult  
analyzing a vocabulary of multiple meanings  
that fails precisely

because it cannot accommodate  
the overheard slur  
writhed under ~~our~~ skin.

cannot repeal  
or repudiate

those first impression moments.

the formication of vitriol

and future [w]reckonings  
that every racist creates.

the protest signs and rubber bullets.

no one ever gets over  
where they are told they belong

in a way that can never be repaired

when they don't really exist at all.

a subdermal writhing of slights  
that is finally revealed  
when logically pursued

social immiseration  
is the fistful of fish guts  
that soils ~~our~~ demeanor red

is a dissonant music of ruination  
from the shattered throats  
that refuse to be silenced

despite the selective physics  
of racial violence. but ~~our~~ lives

is irksome rather than painful as  
the needling tip of a rose thorn  
lodged in ~~our~~ fingertip.

some things break

only managed

like the sensation  
that bugs  
are squirming  
on or under ~~our~~ skin

like missing car keys  
or the mislaid cellphone.

a rounding error  
that influences behavior

condemns and de-*nigger*-ates.

when the few rule the many  
and the many fight to survive—

are too beautiful  
to ever be destroyed

—are unapologetically melanated

always an accrual of gravity  
difficult to unhinge  
and articulate.

the media editing Black bodies  
to infamy  
and chalk outlined the splayed perp  
in character assassination.

is the arrogant violence of every stereotype  
that is simultaneously perpetrated by individuals  
and legislated by society.

are *They*  
who will crawl under ~~our~~ skin

like cannibal maggots

and distort deny deceive ~~us~~  
to surrender ~~our~~ dignity

and swallow their fear.

is a bone-convulsive smack  
of steel against water  
the surface tension

that dangles /lynches ~~us~~  
so briefly afloat.

then descent. fathom after fathom.  
the strange moan of metal under pressure from daylight  
to half-light to twilight's gravity  
past the edge of darkness to the dangerous silence

of umbrage.

~~our~~ dreams die by deferment  
erosions and abrasions

by too much submerged history  
to call it unintentional

as the winged gods circle their prey.