

ORGANIC
TRAINS

Poems by
Jim Carroll

To

Linda Cambi

"To you I offer my hull and the tattered
cordage of my will"

- Frank O'Hara

Organic Trains: Poems by Jim Carroll

By Jim Carroll
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*To Linda Cambi
To you I offer my hull and the tattered
cordage of my will*

--Frank O'Hara

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ON THE WAY

THE ILL COUPLES

Dreams, tossing in the turbulence
of your variegated pupils
your voice crawling through the igneous pain of simplicity
today you are apart, separated
from my eager touch
separated from the peridium flux
of marble staircases
which flow toward tiny 5th avenue
stores which welcome the beauty
of amulets glowing in the eyes
of those who disregard true emotion
you are reaching about seeking
some wonder juice which devours
the gnawling skin of serpents
growing at an infamous pace
your dreams of cowboys lifting your
moist freedom unto royal pink stallions
while the freedom itself closes over
in the quick laughter of tropical foliage
which glistens at the sound
of one denying drop of rain
as on the tongue of all heavens
the angelic patrons torture the mortal skulls

3 SEAS

[I.]

allow me to stare and arouse
the trembling sofa
where I am alone the room
three flights up
and ready for this ship to appear
is it wooden yet flexible?
is there a humerous pirate forcing one to abandon?
as I may become a merchant to far eastern lands
(I do not know)
and a jeweled pedant as anchor
to secure allience with the sea.
O when will my ship arrive
and appear (though
this is not an ultimatum I enforce)
and
why the whimper of irradiance over structures, of light?
why the sea so green?

II.

you expect that one would change in your vastness
I suspect I expect nothing for
it is of no matter to you / you need not change
only I.
(be well and masturbate daily)
that you be of love
that you allow the blood to flow toward yourself,
the sea

III.

may I rise I must become I must overlook the sea
I have seen the sea without lights
(moon nor colors)
I must lap the darkness of turbulence at midnights of
forgotten oceans I must become
yet it is more than the ship is capable
I must become the sky constant to the sea I love yet avoid
yet hear churn partially green at my touch

POEM

It's a wonderful thing to be constantly cursed
by evening
it's a wonderfully strange evening. it deafens
one and allows you to walk along girders eating
orange objects hearing nothing but cryptic voices
from hotel windows which "exist".

we are essentially walking on toward the other

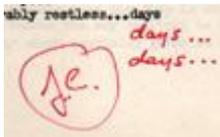
darknesses,
while the air is grasped by our phantoms.
such powers they hold over the septic humidity!
they command the air as you command my feelings.
both simply wither in one's hand
for hours
until at last restored nostalgic and ultimately
free of total mutilation becoming bluish pink
and silent, as of a rare disposition, and even
though you despise the taste you never stop
begging for more.
whose breathing anyway I'm not denying fate it's
simply passing through me like a phallic penetration.
that's what you learn as a phantom you never accept
one's fledging opinion of you just look at her,
and "flick".

THE ANARCHISTS

They have come to praise the dictator.
arriving spontaneously in pairs
of red and black wagons, a sun tilted over France,
the radio . . . a vulture had scaled the pond.
the current bent toward a sulfur mine . . .
seperate events, though reoccurring previously.
it was a girl . . .
conceived to approve their undertaking. the animals
crawled about licking her porcelain fingers
she hesitated, on burden's pine cliffs . . . her veins
fluttering like the blue flags of the stadium . . .
the gulls . . . coffee . . . she had decided days before
to beguile the ruddy proletariat faces
once they had perfected the manifesto, they would
complete the warlog adding legs . . . though short
and possessing abnormal features around the thighs
the trees stumbled over the unspeakable clumsiness
of night . . . tropical opening of stars . . .
the toucan . . . breakfast. she had delivered a son
that night on the exit steps. he escaped
under the strain of foresight.
the peoples became alarmed. without manna,
they observed a carnival of gloss over the hill
an energy . . . though not able to nourish . . .
the gypsy this was her apparent scheme
to eliminate the benevolent factors,
stimulating helplessness, meanwhile
accumulating arms for the fleet . . . innocence.
she had finally spoken.
the day was obviously a forth of the week.
brown wind . . . parchment exhaling about the countryside

praising the dictator's accomplishment. the record
gave way. flags fell from the temprid green waters
above the sky. these things were thrust upon her.
she had no control of the paper. there were
boundless substances, like insects . . .
objects without the gift of suicide.
millions of bubbles rising from the musical
instrument. gypsy alone understood.
the superficial became a lie . . . she became
a reality . . . her son remained
inexorably restless . . . days
 *days . . .**
 *days . . .**

** lines added by Carroll in 1968 [ed.]*



THE CRUCIBLE OF DREAMS

What joy that arrives
fades so instantly
not only from one's frantic touch
but from mind.

what bodies are spring
from absurdity? what breasts?
who are these men who punish me
for walking on cinder?

those Philistines who hurl rocks
toward us until trembling
and perishing toward a beginning.
dark skulls content with their race.

and the light of the town
peeled from the arches of silver, the horror.
the blackness of sunlight on railroad tracks
the glow inside glass. not of faces.

I once saw you from a window
surrounded by the dance of chatoyant fingers
blonde hair flowing beside lunatic oceans.
new short and motionless. as it leaps

toward rooms of the crucible moistened by mauve
sequins of insanity. two bibles in the grotto .
the smell of heat undulating among the bone tree
which was your companion.

we met on the mouths of horses
high on the mountain. (you could
not leave) seclusion of pine wood and wolves.
wind building up and life of stone

(that imparts a choir which weaves about your
image. we continue to feel the same among the
changes . as when the claf matures he
discovers there is not time

for nostalgia once deep in the honeyed
fields of obliquity. she allows
an affair with a horse. and I shall
convince you of the same.)

must I always lead you toward the pond
(or river or ocean) did we dive
from above the fence before us?
did we swim toward the mossy beat
of our organs like the shark fin
seeming so peaceful on the bloody tides

lightning froze among jungles
of such ethereal painters. the
sheriff arrests us as we begged to strangers
(and you never returned to the city)

for you refused to disobey
the fathers who govern your conception.
I was so still as you appeared
yet we wandered so often I forgot

that you are only part of a life
I shall perhaps never touch again
(no more than the color of thighs
no more than the pain of cinder)

that pains most when it does not fade
instantly does not reach its beginning
does not die in blood, as it invariable
haunts the crucible behind shields

of constant daylight.

POEM OF ARRIVALS

The pope has arrived in N.Y.
 one may perceive
 sounds not previous
 -- or words
 like devine scripture projected
 unto the walls of the death house.
it is an ash grey tuesday
 and arrivals are inevitable
 (next week the circus arrives)
a woman jumps 15 floors in the MARTINIQUE
 naked
and a cop rushes to cover
 --"ad nauseam"
young girls breathing
 the incense of their spiritual depravity
 -- like a benidiction in France
 or a hospital in Chinatown
"last week we went shopping for guilt,
 now the master salesman has arrived"
the old testament is better than the new
 a grandmother shouts:
-- everyone disagrees on contemporary progressiveness.
-- everyone disagrees on self-joy and generality
-- everyone disagrees . . .!
and the pope
on the third page of the TIMES

smiling
and seeming almost infallible.

11 TRAINS

1st TRAIN (for D.C.)

the horses have been pulling
through tunnels various objectives.
these objectives are one of the
underlying thoughts of the day.
the other thought is the emotion love
though that's not as rational as horses.
I am moving about in subway cars seeking
a jeweled carrot to feed this rabbit which
I had very cleverly trapped
in a cage last week.
the rabbit is probably the key to all
emotional thought, though this
has been pretty much the way of furry
animals throughout history.
if you examine an elephant you
will know what I mean. and
elephants are certainly furry.

now it is time our vulgar weather balloons
are set loose and to find
the brittle sunlight we expected for
tomorrow.
the white stripes of the tiger
staring through the tires
in pairs. the trees.
the anger of the paint that was stolen
made clear now. Nolde
light filtering around
an arcade of parvanus along eighty first streets
doubtless and begging chocolate from mothers.
as we lie down and avoid
the huge silk lances, of a peculiar death

2nd TRAIN (for Frank O'Hara)

Today at the Long Beach Station
every thing was amazingly white
and sand was stuck in my tennis sneakers
that seems to be the way things
are going lately I was forewarned
about the clocks falling on me
so all I felt was 8 colors as my
wrist watch flew into the sky's cheek.
watches are very symbolic of security
they remind me of Frank O'Hara. Frank
O'Hara reminds me of many wonderful
things, as does the vanilla light
which is dripping from his January eyes.

3ed TRAIN (for THE SUMMERS)

A woman comes up to me
and questions the aesthetic
value of a red tee shirt
this was the same woman
who yesterday warned
me about clocks
I'm convinced she was a communist.

4th TRAIN (for BLUES)

Butterfield
Butterfield

she left when
they had surrounded her bossoms.

5th TRAIN (for L.C.)

soot air pervading
and tossing yesterday's daily news
as a sadist makes passes at

a waitress
I am jumping between cars
and kneeling upright in a tunnel
of skirts, telephones ,
and my own attempt at sophistication
among a potential affair
with so many literal rats summoned from the exit feeding

6th TRAIN (for A.R.)

this is a good time
to get on the "A" train and
hope that our saffron wheels
will get us into some dramatic acci[d]ent
the sagacious old mule is blocking
the tracks so we assemble
our workers in blue helmets
and give orders to feed
our nemesis yellow shebert.
we hope this remedies mules as well as flamingos
it does. and we are
off into recurrent tunnels
of pathos amidst the glare
of ill reasoning.

I'm fairly relaxed in the last car
somewhat distracted by
the tropical culture which
is very much present.
if I were a woman I'd probably
wear the same black
white outfit as
this woman dressed in green.
if I were a woman I
would probably be a lesbian anyway.
I'm also very impressed
by the various pets every
one is concealing
 under their clothing
this is certainly a very organic train
 we are reaching our first stop.

7th TRAIN (for POETRY)

carmel candy into a glove
 melt it on and fit my love
if the world is T.N.T.
 at least my you is wearing me

8th TRAIN

Ah! such sissors of wind
we are tearing our validity
 we are denying each other
the gift of moods.
 the basin rises and swoops
its filthy calcium onto the metallic
embassy doors (oops!)
no more impending data
 (dada)
 dede a song rises and
realizes that its function is to be sung
 -- not to sing
if it is the rock that indicates
 a timed silence
I'll never sustain these
 passive metaphors again ,
nor crumble into the long highways
 of waste paper machines
the remains of your facial expression.
winter is about to expose
 the icy jaws of meat howling down streets lined with ivy villas
and a cheaper wine than the hand you are holding.
 "guide me"
 "guide who?"
 through the wind?
lead on fellow Americans.
neck ties are only a loss of one breath a day
 you shall not discover
 your own decline
veering in the basic mesh of fire.
secure vegetable juices for long healthy trips
 you will be making
 I will help define

the path
(don't bother)

9th TRAIN (for B.G. & J.H.)

(if I really wanted you
to feel that way
I would tell only about the veins of silver
hidden in these mountains
and the Iroquois
who hunted there
that was all history
perhaps white waters
cascading unto rocks below it
because water falls
it does not rise
it can not rise
it is so simple
it is a process
yes, I would tell you
about these things.)

10th TRAIN

no!
we are both sick of zoo fantasy
I want my lion to
become real and turn his head
away from me like the cheetah does
-- so sexy
let your hair imapt,
though it need not be more than the wind.
air is persecuted by the heat.
this heat remains in subway last cars
until morning when it turns to spearmint
and innocent fright.
moan the hysterical intuitions!
of established doves winging the pathway
of innocent gold
like an army of mothers mobilizing in their pregnant
selves,
we are nearer to death than love
(we are nearer to night breathing deserts)
yet the seasons are watched carefully
who is sure we will all pass by another week
of anticipated stimulation? the source which
drives us to light, moving nervously as your whisper
across the floor of pine trees.

11th TRAIN

Frantic sounds of trumpets and the rain
is steady in sheets of dense colors while
one is not searching for blind signficence,

only for a shelter from thousands of inverted footprints

which are those of many erotics in deep
gorges of wonderfully green humidity ignoring
rains in this amorous babi-yar as each
looks upon alone with withered thoughts of

trees and nebulous swords to uproot, to
plunder an insatiable nature or to kneel at
darkened clouds and shrivel in the obliquity
of these expectations, rendering words which cannot appear

clouds moving, crashing like surf in anger of the
neighbors who sneer and weigh my disposition
making the stomach rumble in quick anxiousness
blackness entering, flowers waving in passion's illumination

once behind them sordid freight yards quiet
in respect for symphonic climax. still as the still
loneliness, nearing the lyrism of Springs knowing only
that sole death, afraid to enter shadowed wombs before it

but we are not thrown into bitter completeness/ there
is a humor in all elements/ coolness of lialacs, small
talk of the chameleon as I heard at the Klee show last
"no, that's not a flower, it's the sun parallel to moons."

nothing is moving down there!
not even the impregnable signs of love below impassive
brown trees of glistening inanity; the mauve leaf
impales the hearts despite such obvious levity of thought

such a useless concept of love. the male
whispering intuitive notions of foreplay. the female
speculating, compiling, rejecting, stroking thought
grabbing fingers and wearing no make-up.

but at last they are in motion, static
forces leading toward a gradual steadiness
like the pace of all huge deisals upon
stations of light and final awareness, and
with this concluding glance one smiles in
slight apology saying " that train not so
obscene " and

" that dark not so distant "
-- and the rain giving birth to many oceans

ON THE WAY

[I.]
If we take time to eat everything might disappear!
it is easter time, [p]ossessed with hibernal nostalgia
the flowers are coy, only breathing "what's left"
they are animal red and helplessly flamboyant
rising from a pallet along 5th avenue, so seasonal
so significant to the easter time we must bear
everything is so envolved with their shadow
the mannequins are smiling again in LORD & TAYLOR
this one looks like Devereaux, it would move
but it has preconceived notion on fate
like the Greeks
it's such a disillusion acting sexy along 39th street yes

there is love sifting across the dark glasses of air
spreading throughout a variety of self-content
but it is a platonic magnetism
such an intricate metaphor it's bound to affect us all for
a time
and the traffic lights are seperating me
from the nine million spirits I love.

II.

What is this force that drives me in lust?
let's be well defined
there is an "enjoyable fabric"
which slips beneath me
every time I pass by warmth
the substance I'm breathing is not air
it's certainly not filthy
it is a gregarious mood
like a seance here between 5th and 6th.
the workers are ascending symbolically from manholes
and eating their wives' lunches dripping from paper bags
if I worked here I'd do nothing but
stare up dresses all day I imagine
that one there is wearing red underwear
it's essential as blood
now I'm simply propounding light
it is filtering blue hormones and finally
settling in a flux of sheer perversity. "it maintains."
you are thinking about gravy now, aren't you?
Devereaux is feeling musical
and it's all lacking coherence
like the fountain at Washington Square on Sunday
I want to be eye to eye and think only about
amphetamines, Rail Road Soap and Rene Maria Rilke*
which is all a terribly pedantic formula for love
and my eyes are bubbling with pink thighs by now
and I am fortuitously optimistic crossing the traffic.

* Originally printed as "about imported bananas and soup and Rimbaud," but changed by Carroll in 1968
[ed.]

