

THE DUAL ANGEL

By Carson McCullers

For Sidney
with love

Carson + Reiner

THE DUAL ANGEL

A Meditation on Origin and Choice

Incantation to Lucifer

Angel disarmed, lay down your cunning,

finally tell:

The currents, stops and altitudes between

Heaven and Hell.

Or were the scalding stars too loud

for your celestial velleities,

The everlasting zones of emptiness uncanny

to your imperious hand?

Did you admit the shocks and shuttles

of the circumstance,

And were the eons ever sinister

Or were they just vulgar as a marathon dance?

Did you keep camping all through chaos

Comparing colors of infinity to neon lights?

Forever were you inconsolable during the

downward flight

Spurning the comfort of affinity and rose,

the rest of sunset, clarity.

Avoiding rainbows in that desperate clash

against the stars?

So please come
visit us before

we leave for

Europe again

We long to see you

Your tearless wizardry soon caught the rhyme
Of universe, the planetary chimes, atomic quandary.
It took you only a zone or two to riddle
The top-secret density relating Space to Time.

Did once your hurtling senses turn
To paradise that you had robbed and spurned?
Did you once wonder, one time weep?
As earth nears, turn again defaulting eyes to
paradise,
Defaulting eyes, turn once again
With the presentiment of further bliss
Before you shudder with the first and final kiss.

Hymen, O Hymen

It was the time when the newest star was inchoate
And there were only revolving seas and land still
malleable.

There was no garden at that time -- but there was God.
For when the sun burst God chose the minority side of
firmament

And settled on earth to study an experiment.

We know nothing of that meeting, nothing at all
Only the protean firelight fearful on the wall.
Since we only know it happened it's anybody's guess
How abdicated angel asked for and found God's rest.

Ecce, the emperor of velocity and glare
The splendor from his awful odyssey, his starlit hair
Landed on a rim of ocean, striding to shore
The radiant grace and arrogance before
The blue-veined instep faltered and slowly dimmed
the pirate eyes.

Ecce, the quailing emperor against a violet sea
and the primeval skies.

Behold this homage to a majesty almost

impossible to explain

For after the heavenly hold-up God was

left rather plain.

Deliberate and unadorned, but after all what need

Of sceptor had the hand that hewed the Universe?

And ruler of infinity has little use for speed.

His visage black with wind and sun, almighty hand

vibrant with strife

Feeling in blank mysterious seas the secret

miracle of life.

Imagine the encounter when the polarities chance

When stars of love and sorrow met Satan's jewelled glance.

We are told nothing of conception, really nothing at all.

Only the firelit symbols of an antique nurse scary

and changing on the wall.

We are told nothing:

Of the vibrato of desire remorseless

Until the solar-plexal swinging

Orchestrates to all flesh singing.

Post coitum, omnia tristia sunt.

Sadness, then sleep, the blaze of noon, love's gladness.

There was no witness of this bridal night
Only azoic seascape and interlocking angels might.
So now we speculate with filial wonder,
Fabricate that night of love and ponder
On the quietitude of Satan in our Father's arms:
Velocity stilled, the restful shade,
Satan we can understand -- but what was God's will
That cosmic night before we were made?

The next day he completed his experiment
Found in the seas that atom he willed alive
Nursed in his awesome hand, taught to survive
The shock of creation, watched with his love and care
Astride in ocean and unknowing that Satan's ocean-skipping
eye was there
Envisaging end in the beginning, wrestling with God's life,
The eye of guile, had sliced the atom with Satanic knife.

Love and the Rind of Time

What is Time that man should be so mindful
The earth is aged 500 thousand millions of years,
Allowing some hundred thousand millions of margin
for error
And man evolving a mere half million years of consciousness,
twilight and terror
Only a flicker of eternity divides us from
unknowing beast
And how far are we from the fern, the rose,
essential yeast?
Indeed in these light eons how far
From animal to evening star?

Skip time for now and fix the eye upon eternity
Eye gazing backward or forward it is the same
Whether Mozart or short-order cook with an infirmity
Except the illimitations alter their shafts
Except we would rather be Mozart, we want to last as
long as possible, to radiate, to sing
Although in eternity it may be the same thing.

In God's cosmos according to report
Nothing lapses, no gene is lost
After centuries may bustle in the sport
Which will in time command the line.

Those who find it a little harder to live
And therefore live a little harder,
As struggling gene in oceanic plant
Predestine voluntary cells that give
The evolutionary turn to fish, then beast
With multiplying brain that diminates earth's feasts.
From weed to dinosaur through the peripheries of stars
From furtherest star imperilled on the rind of time,
How long to core of love in human mind?

After the half a million years this is the century of
decision

Between obscenest suicide and Man's transfigured
vision.

Here are the flowering plant, beast and the dual angel,
The living who struggles with the weight of dead and,
Recognizing victory, surmises radiance in lead.

Father, Upon Thy image we are spanned

Why are we split upon our double nature, how are we
planned?

Father, upon what image are we spanned?

Turning helpless in the garden of right and wrong

Mocked by the reversibles of good and evil

Heir of the exile, Lucifer, and brother of Thy

universal Son

Who said it is finished when Thy synthesis was

just begun.

We suffer the sorrow of separation and division

With a heart that blazes with Christ's vision:

That though we be dual-natured, deviously planned

Father, upon Thy image we are spanned.

Ave

August, 1951, London

December, 1951, Nyack-on-Hudson