

APRIL FOOL BIRTHDAY POEM FOR GRANDPA

Today is your
birthday and I have tried
writing these things before,
but now
in the gathering madness, I want to
thank you
for telling me what to expect
for pulling
no punches, back there in that scrubbed Bronx parlor
thank you
for honestly weeping in time to
innumerable heartbreaking
italian operas for
pulling my hair when I
pulled the leaves off the trees so I'd
know how it feels, we are
involved in it now, revolution, up to our
knees and the tide is rising, I embrace
strangers on the street, filled with their love and
mine, the love you told us had to come or we
die, told them all in that Bronx park, me listening in
spring Bronx dusk, breathing stars, so glorious
to me your white hair, your height your fierce
blue eyes, rare among italians, I stood
a ways off looking up at you, my grandpa
people listened to, I stand
a ways off listening as I pour out soup
young men with light in their faces
at my table, talking love, talking revolution
which is love, spelled backwards, how
you would love us all, would thunder your anarchist wisdom
at us, would thunder Dante, and Giordano Bruno, orderly men
bent to your ends, well I want you to know
we do it for you, and your ilk, for Carlo Tresca,
for Sacco and Vanzetti, without knowing

it, or thinking about it, as we do it for Aubrey Beardsley
Oscar Wilde (all street lights
shall be purple), do it
for Trotsky and Shelley and big/dumb
Kropotkin
Eisenstein's Strike people, Jean Cocteau's ennui, we do it for
the stars over the Bronx
that they may look on earth
and not be ashamed.

REVOLUTIONARY LETTER #1

I have just realized that the stakes are myself
I have no other
ransom money, nothing to break or barter but my life
my spirit measured out, in bits, spread over
the roulette table, I recoup what I can
nothing else to shove under the nose of the *maître de jeu*
nothing to thrust out the window, no white flag
this flesh all I have to offer, to make the play with
this immediate head, what it comes up with, my move
as we slither over this go board, stepping always
(we hope) between the lines

REVOLUTIONARY LETTER #2

The value of an individual life a credo they taught us
to instill fear, and inaction, 'you only live once'
a fog in our eyes, we are
endless as the sea, not separate, we die
a million times a day, we are born
a million times, each breath life and death :
get up, put on your shoes, get
started, someone will finish

Tribe

an organism, one flesh, breathing joy as the stars
breathe destiny down on us, get
going, join hands, see to business, thousands of sons
will see to it when you fall, you will grow
a thousand times in the bellies of your sisters

REVOLUTIONARY LETTER #3

store water; make a point of filling your bathtub
 at the first news of trouble : they turned off the water
 in the 4th ward for a whole day during the Newark riots;
 or better yet make a habit
 of keeping the tub clean and full when not in use
 change this once a day, it should be good enough
 for washing, flushing toilets when necessary
 and cooking, in a pinch, but it's a good idea
 to keep some bottled water handy too
 get a couple of five gallon jugs and keep them full
 for cooking

store food — dry stuff like rice and beans stores best
 goes farthest. SALT VERY IMPORTANT : it's health and energy
 healing too, keep a couple pounds
 sea salt around, and, because we're spoiled, some tins
 tuna, etc. to keep up morale — keep up the sense
 of 'balanced diet' 'protein intake' remember
 the stores may be closed for quite some time, the trucks
 may not enter your section of the city for weeks, you can cool it
 indefinitely

with 20 lb brown rice
 20 lb whole wheat flour
 10 lb cornmeal
 10 lb good beans — kidney or soy
 5 lb sea salt
 2 qts good oil
 dried fruit and nuts
 add nutrients and a sense of luxury
 to this diet, a squash or coconut
 in a cool place in your pad will keep six months