

"Pigeon Park Sentences": Glosses and Paraphrases

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I.

You should know that in the drug kingdom
rock cocaine holds a unique dishonour:
It has never come to the service of an artist
in the creation of a song, a book, or a building,
or anything.

Let us first unmask an uncomfortable truth: the mythology of cocaine, particularly in its crystallized form—rock—is not the vehicle for artistic expression, for the birth of books, or songs, or architecture. Its dishonor is unique; it is a parasite to the human spirit.

II.

You quit doing coke because there were just too many
people in your room.

You abstained from cocaine, overwhelmed by the disconcerting multitude in your chambers.

**Too many,
So you quit.**

III.

You started doing coke because there was just one
person in your room.

Yet, it was the poignant solitude that drove you into its beguiling embrace.

**Only one,
So you began.**

And yet, you had initially sought it out because you felt alone. One person in your room, and that was yourself, distorted by solitude.

IV.

You were an unsuccessful hermit;
your quiet had the gentleman in it.

In your silence, there was a genteel presence.

Hermit's hush,
Not silent.

Your failed hermitage was no sanctuary. It was a room still filled with the noise of patriarchy, a silence that was anything but quiet.

V.

You almost know how much you cherish
the downtown eastside as an incarnation
of your lovely shame.

Ah, the downtown eastside, a geographical manifestation of your shame. You almost appreciate it—its ugliness, its grime, its honesty.

VI.

You are safer walking outside anywhere in the downtown eastside at any time of day than you are anywhere in any American city at any time; same can't be said when you're inside, though, in the rooms or on the stairs.

It's rather curious to think, the streets of the downtown eastside, at any hour, offer more sanctuary than the vast stretches of American cities; but alas, within its walls, such security is oft debated.

Safer outside,
Not within.

You claim safety there, say it's safer than any American city. Physical safety maybe, but what about the emotional rot, the soul decay? What happens inside the walls, on the stairs?

VII.

You are terrified of the downtown eastside,
your vice-ridden wishes louder with each step
toward Pigeon Park.

Each step towards Pigeon Park amplifies the dissonance of your desires, laden with vice.

You admit you're scared. Each step toward Pigeon Park amplifies your vice-ridden fantasies. You're getting closer to the abyss.

VIII.

In Pigeon Park your gyroscope pops
right off its string.

In the heart of Pigeon Park, your bearings seem to lose their tether.

**Gyroscope,
Snapped.**

IX.

You talk about the downtown eastside the way you talk
about God, with reverence, with righteousness,
and with unwarranted certainty.

The reverence, the moral fervor with which you speak of the downtown eastside mirrors the way one speaks of the Divine, oft with an unfounded conviction.

X.

It's rude to convey your worries to the people you're worried about;
it's usually hypocritical as well.

It's a curious social convention, that voicing concerns to those they concern is seen not only as impolite but frequently insincere.

To articulate your worries to those you worry about is to embroil them in your hypocrisy.

XI.

You have a best friend but no she's not alive anymore.

You had a most cherished confidante, but alas, she breathes no more.

Your best friend is no more; she, too, has been claimed by these streets. By this life.

XII.

There is no one left for you to leave behind.

An unsettling realization dawns; there's none left for your departure to affect.

And now, there's no one left to abandon because you have been abandoned—by society, by morality, by humanity itself.

XIII.

Sham virtue pollutes your neighbourhood.

The façade of virtue clouds your vicinity.

Your environment is poisoned, not by drugs, but by the sham virtue of society that ignores you, that lets places like this exist.

XIV.

Pigeon Park is your dream den; it's no park.

You envision Pigeon Park as a haven, yet it bears no resemblance to any garden.

You think Pigeon Park is your sanctuary. It's not even a park. It's a microcosm of exploitation.

XV.

Your first friend in the downtown eastside had three names:
The name she greeted new people with, the name she used
with people while getting high, and her real name,
known in the neighbourhood only by the two or three people
she tried to trust.

Your earliest acquaintance in the downtown eastside possessed a trifecta of
nomenclatures: her introduction, her whispered alias in intoxication, and her genuine
identity, known to a select few.

Three names:
Hello, high, real.

Your first friend there had three names; each name a coping mechanism, a shield
against the hostile world. Names known to only a few, and trust is a rare currency.

XVI.

That person helping you has more resentments than a Palestinian.

Your benefactor harbors grievances, rivaling those of an oppressed nation.

Helping hand,
Resentment thick.

XVII.

Your stench still ambushed you
and didn't leave with your socks.

Despite changing vestments, an odor lingered, a haunting remnant of past indiscretions.

Odor clings,
Beyond socks.

XVIII.

You get high not to find new sensations but to return to original sensations, of safety and power and delight.

Your dalliance with highs was less a chase for novelty and more a yearning for familiar ecstasies.

You get high to revert to original sensations. But these are not original—they are copies of copies, each one more degraded than the last.

XIX.

You learn waiting by more waiting;
that's the nuance of Pigeon Park.

In Pigeon Park, patience is cultivated through perpetual delay.

Pigeon Park teaches you patience. It's a waiting room for oblivion.

XX.

Heroin and rock cocaine are daughters of your nostalgia.

The allure of heroin and rock cocaine seem birthed from your wistfulness.

Nostalgia's kin:
Heroin, rock cocaine.

XXI.

Heroin can finger love that finds no other technique.

Heroin's touch,
Elusive love.

Heroin, you claim, is love. No. It's an emotional anesthesia.

XXII.

Rock cocaine promises more than it gives,
but it does give a real nifty experience there,
for a moment or two.

Rock cocaine, while deceptive in its promises, does momentarily bestow an exquisite rapture.

XXIII.

Going down to Pigeon Park the first time was as thrilling
as the first time you professed love to a friend,
the first time you had sex, your first and last wedding.

Your inaugural descent to Pigeon Park bore the exhilaration of first loves and sacred unions.

The excitement of your first visit to Pigeon Park parallels your first declarations of love, your sexual initiations, your marital vows. All are equivalent in their capacity for self-destruction.

XXIV.

Nothing that had happened to you in Pigeon Park had been
as bad as what led you there in the first place;
you had taken more out of Pigeon Park than it had taken out of you.

The tribulations endured in Pigeon Park paled in comparison to the torment that led you there.

Park gave,

You took.

You've extracted more from the Park than it has from you? No. You've traded your humanity for transitory sensations.

XXV.

Next time you would bring your identical twin
who could make art out of that venereal collapse
and share your snacks.

You contemplated introducing your twin, to draw beauty from the depths of your
shared descent.

Twin,
Art and collapse.

Your twin, the artist—will he sculpt your collapse into an exhibit? Will he immortalize
your degradation?

XXVI.

Twenty dollars would be okay;
you can conceal your disgust.

A mere sum of twenty would suffice, masking your revulsion.

XXVII.

You're just scared of the options the good ones have.

Your trepidation lay not in the darkness but in the luminous possibilities.

You're frightened of the good options because you recognize the void within yourself.

XXVIII.

You would have been more of a menace had you not
enjoyed conversation most of all.

Conversations, rich and profound, ensured your transgressions remained contained.

Words preferred,
Less menace.

You could have been dangerous. Instead, you're an idle conversationalist, a distraction.

XXIX.

You take on men or women, depending,
depending on whether you want conversation
before or after.

Your inclinations towards companionship were conditional, swaying between prelude
and epilogue.

XXX.

Violet ruled the dream den;
Violet was the Princess of Pigeon Park.

Violet, the sovereign of dreams, was Pigeon Park's crowned princess.

Violet:
Pigeon Park's crown.

Violet, the unofficial ruler, the Princess of Pigeon Park. She's the illusion of authority in a
lawless world.

XXXI.

When you told Violet that smoking rock cocaine made
you lose your good judgment, she reminded you that you lost
your good judgment the moment you came down here
to smoke rock cocaine in the first place.

Judgment lost,
Before light.

Violet reminds you that your loss of judgment predates your addiction; it was your first
step into this underworld.

XXXII.

Violet could give you retroactive empathy and your own.

With Violet, one could feel a bridge to bygone emotions.

XXXIII.

Violet injected herself with heroin halfway,
putting the rig containing the rest of her blood
and heroin into the fridge for later, then she'd go out
for cigarettes and ice cream, pointing out
you need to be smart in Pigeon Park.

With meticulous intent, Violet would inject partway, reserving the remaining cocktail of blood and drug, venturing out only to satiate her cravings for the mundane.

Violet's modus operandi is caution, even in self-destruction. Her refrigerator contains both her death and her sustenance.

XXXIV.

Violet gave you a notebook shaped like a Valentine
and insisted that all reverie be written,
demanding that you compose with plain openness, or at least quickly.

Valentine notes,
Quick thoughts.

She gave you a notebook. She demands your honesty. She insists you confront your own degradation.

XXXV.

The Princess of Pigeon Park had authority, good language,
reason, and no self-pity, reminding you to pay attention.

The Princess commanded respect, exuding eloquence and reason, urging constant vigilance.

XXXVI.

The Princess of Pigeon Park saw, in the remainder of
people, who they first were, before they blinked hard.

She had the unique ability to discern the true essence of beings, glimpsing their initial innocence.

See the before,
Pre-blink.

XXXVII.

The Princess of Pigeon Park woke up wanting to fight,
and she asked you to stay and to go away.

Her mornings often began with combative zeal, torn between your presence and absence.

She wakes up combative; she asks you to stay and to leave—a paradox, a mystery.

XXXIII.

Violet never made you promise.

Violet seldom sought assurances.

No promises,
Just Violet.

No promises made. No expectations.

XII.

The downtown eastside appealed to you because you
wanted to be part of a club.

Your appeal for the downtown eastside is your desire for belonging—a club of despair.

XL.

The club was the Lonely Club, strangers in any room
together, sharing their times of trusting no one, of having
no friends, of losing the game.

The club you yearned for was one of solitude, where souls converged, baring their vulnerabilities.

The Lonely Club is a collective of isolations, a community of individual tragedies.

XLI.

The Lonely Club was the only club you belonged in, where you could witness and be recognized exactly right, totally high, afraid of fights.

In this club of desolation, you found true recognition, a shared sense of heightened emotions, and an aversion to confrontation.

It's the only place you fit—a room filled with people you don't have to trust.

XLII.

You need to return to your mind, the way it originally felt, when it was curious and you were confident; that is to say, you want to smoke crack again right now.

A longing persists to revisit the pristine state of your psyche, a subtle hint at your cravings.

You want to go back to your original self; to revert to a state that perhaps never existed.

XLIII.

For you love was its own aversion therapy.

For you, love was a paradox, a cure, and a curse.

Love,
Aversion's echo.

XLIV.

God hears three prayers of true complaint, to recall his own great sinning: prayers from the evil, prayers from the insane, and those prayers from the abandoned; you are not OK.

The Divine, it's said, hears the anguished pleas of the wicked, the mad, and the forsaken; your lamentations echo in such corridors.

God's trio:
Sinners, mad, abandoned.

Prayers—yours belong to the categories of the damned. Your distress is a siren that only a silent God can ignore.

XLVII.

No love deserves the death it gets;
same can't be said of the lover, or of you.

Love's end seldom does justice to its intensity; the same might not hold for its bearers.

Love's undeserved end,
Lover's deserving.

Love dies undeservedly, but lovers—and you, especially—reap what they sow.

XLVIII.

You wanted to die in the arms of the Princess of Pigeon Park,
or at her hands; you need to be known at your end.

Your final wish, to either be embraced or betrayed by the Princess of Pigeon Park,
yearning for profound recognition.

Your death wish is to be known.

XLIX.

Violet died first.

Alas, Violet was the first to depart.

L.

Stealing is your promise.

Your silent vows lie in appropriation.

Steal,
A vow.

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