

CREATIVITY. FAITH. IMPOTENCE.

Charles Deemer

Writing is fucking. Words, music. You fuck the material and a novel is born. A short story. A play. A song. A chamber opera.

The process is focused and intense. Mind, body. Sometimes soul, sometimes not. Intensity does not guarantee engagement. You can fuck a whore. Wham, bam, thank you, ma'am. You write for money. You take the money and run. It's a living. But it is not engagement.

When engagement happens, you are actually there. All of you. Fucking becomes epistemology. I fuck, therefore I am. These children – the books, the plays, the stories, the music – are born from love. A different concept entirely. When you put these children into the world, it matters to you. You can't take the money and run. Maybe there's no money at all. Or little at best.

You put your children into the world and have faith that you are not murdering them in the process. You believe there's a world worth entering out there. You believe your children can have a good life. They will have friends. They will grow and perhaps have their own children. They play a part in a cosmic cycle. It's called Literature. Music.

There is no guarantee any of this will actually happen. You keep the faith that it will.

But sometimes something else happens. A child finds a cruel world out there. No one gives a damn about her or her siblings. It's like walking into a country club in a strange country, under-dressed and not speaking the language. You are shown the door. At best, you might find a warm hideaway that keeps you warm and dry while you try to figure out what happened. A library shelf. An archive. Nobody pays any attention to you, no one gives a damn, but at least you have a Library of Congress number. You can wear it on a T-shirt. Existence of a sort.

All this, the faith in the children, happens as subplot. The main plot is still fucking. Your insatiable appetite. You keep populating the world with children. It never occurs to you, at least not early on, that the world may have a limit, that Literature, Music has an ecology, a necessary balance. There can be too much fucking going on.

And on and on it goes. Scribble, scribble, scribble, 'ey Mr. Gibbons?

The shadow appears without foreshadowing. What entity is blocking the sun? It has a voice, a stern deep voice, sounding like God, and what it asks is this: So what?

This is a new question. The lover in the process of fucking generally is not asked what he is doing. Unless, of course, fucking is really rape. What are you doing to me?, the material wants to know. Maybe the material thought this was love, not lust. Maybe the material wanted a literary prize, not a paycheck.

But the question from the material is rare. The question from the entity blocking the light is unexpected and jarring.

So what, indeed?

The less successful the children in the world, the more jarring the question becomes. Why keep creating the homeless, the lost, the invisible shelved archived waifs of Literature, Music? What, when all is said and done, is the point?

A perfect cue for a traditional hallucination. Because, in your faith, you still believe in Possibility. It only takes one, and the next child may be the One, the Prodigy, the child that makes a mark in the world. And then all her siblings can come on stage into the limelight, sharing the glory. It can happen at any time. If not today, tomorrow. Or the next day. Or the day after that. Keep the faith.

But so what? Does the world need another Prodigy? For what? To what end?

Questions can be distractions from fucking. Fucking is fun, not facing strange questions. You try to ignore the questions with more banging. More homeless children, preparation for the One, birth as foreword, preamble, introduction, announcement. Soon the One will appear. Keeping the faith.

Until even faith gets tiresome. We need a change, baby. Goddamn, no one has time to feed all the children out there. You're not the only one fucking your brains out. So many children, and more of them homeless all the time. How many neglected literary archives does the universe need?

In this moment of existential crisis, a stranger appears. He brings a friend. It's Camus and his buddy Sisyphus, reminding us that "the struggle alone is enough to fill a man's heart." It works this way. You push the rock up the hill. Near the top, you lose your grip. The rock crashes to the bottom and you have to start again. This continues on and on for a very long time. Into

eternity, as a matter of fact.

The struggle itself is enough to fill a man's heart.

Say what? The exhaustion, the blistered hands, the aching bones, the sunburned skin, the mindless boredom of it all, meaningless labor into eternity. Fuck this shit.

Filled heart, my ass. Do not go gently and all that. Bitch at the gods. Give a rat's ass about justice. Don't let even the gods get away with this.

Let's look at this from another angle. What is it about fucking you like? The material, the process, the intensity, the focus, the relief? All of that. The children? Not necessarily. That is, birth happens later. Birth happens after the fun is over.

Wear a condom, asshole. How exactly does this work out? You keep fucking, yes, but you don't let the process lead to the child, to a product. A little like masturbation. You go through all the motions except the part that strays beyond the Majority of One. You keep it all to yourself.

You even discover models for this variation of the literary process. But you have to look around for them.

The old man on the bus, mumbling to himself. He's not as crazy as you think. Crazy like a fox. He is writing a poem in his head and testing its music on his lips. He writes nothing down. He composes in his head, rewrites in his head, tests on his lips, the poet reciting to himself. An audience of one.

The man moving down the street, talking too loudly to himself. You assume he is angry and on drugs. You are wrong. He is loud because he is excited. He just found the right passage in his novel, and he is shouting it in celebration. He writes in his head. For himself, alone.

The way to create without needing faith in your children is to become a little mad. The explosion of fucking becomes the implosion of literary masturbation. There is no archive. There is a moment of consciousness that comes and goes like the ocean on the sand. Now you see the sand castle, now you don't.

Aha, Camus is right! It's not the rock, the labor, the exhaustion that fills the heart of Sisyphus. It's the work he is doing in his head, not on the hill. He fills his heart with song, with songs that he composes himself. Singing on the chain gang.

The writer becomes a Majority of One. Fuck everybody else – but not, of course, literally. As you get better at this new dance, you won't even have to speak in order to hear, to listen. You can do everything in silence. The best work you've ever done, Silently.

Silently.

And no one but you can hear it.

And the struggle alone is enough to fill a man's heart.

*