



Chornophagos

By John Loofbourow, MD

It was a universal carnage that I knew not;
 He had agreed from before time began to attack by day and by night;
 To infiltrate, subvert, steal, or poison all and every thing that made me human, free, and
 whole;
 I was his enemy, unaware, and unwary.
 At first, along the shrinking years,
 I laughed at his pretensions;
 Flaunted my innate strength,
 Ignored his puerile rant and cant.
 But he used holy weapons unknown to me, yet known to all.
 They served him in covert and overt ways,
 As lately have my rebellious fickle powers,
 Silent deserters; old and querulous.

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They enslave me; proclaim him my heaven- appointed master.
 And I? I give mute consent;
 Am his bond servant, working vainly for my own chimeric freedom.
 He grows more demanding; I grow weary of caring for his aging flesh.
 He gives cynical praise to my efforts;
 But denies my release from servitude.
 We dispute and redefine the term and the terms of my sentence.
 He is relentless; my illusion is his strength. He relies on my lies to myself.
 "The fine print reads," he says, "that before your release,
 You will serve as my nursemaid."

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I wash his tortured feet, warm his rheumy joints,
 Attend his phlegm clogged airways.
 Suffer his remembrance of a past which was, and was not,
 Go with him to bury and mourn those who loved us, or not,
 Watch over his shrinking form and sallow face,
 Past rheumy, crusting eyelids;
 Remain silent as he takes even my own name to himself.
 Shaking, I feed and dress him;
 Stumbling, I walk in his pain filled shoes;
 Mumbling, I curse my dedication to his welfare;
 Terrified, I fear we shall live forever
 While he seems to fear that we shall not.

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Yet sometimes he seems wise, and not altogether evil.
 I fear to mistake him for myself.

He is sleeping now in fits and starts.
I could break free. But no;
I pity his infirmities as my own.
A failing resentment, a tired knowing,
Prevents me from tearing out his heart,
Or wringing his turkey neck.
When he imagines himself alive,
I charitably confirm his illusion.
"This, and this alone," he claims, "is the timeless text of God's eternal law."
I see. I shall not prevail.
God is love, and so must abandon all of His creation, except for my enemy.
Meekly now, and reconciled, we wait,
While the immortal infant Chronos,
Grown huge, devours the universe.

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