Tabletop Commentary; Café Pari—April 2014

By Connor Bjotvedt

Shaking, shattered business deals
oppressed by stacked volumes of Newsweek and Paris Living.

Sultry virgin whispers written in red ink,
surround the edges of lipstick-ridden napkins.

Let lay in array upon the cusp of falling—
onto some one’s ears.

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In the café there is a woman dancing,
singing songs that are best performed

as a duet, but she’s missing her pair
she finds it hidden on the walls,

written in blood that drips to the floor,
scribbled poetry—maroon turning red.
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There is a widow at the window,
painting shared dreams in flowing finger prints,

that coat the glass—cast the glare
of shambled pockmarks,
the face of her dream,
smudged, gray, poor.

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The barista fills my cup,
a third time.

The trip wire acrobats,
caught in Gatsby’s final hour,

their brevity is a circus,
applauded by the damned.
[I’ve spent my life destroying the idea that I am the better man]

By Connor Bjothevdt

“The scene is twilit, the mood existential, the outlook—tragic.” —Joe Bolton

Your hair
of blond ribbon curls
    kissed my neck in draining ecstasy
as we laid like twin fallen pines
    on the baker’s back
    that bought the bed—
on the back of the millsman
    who spun the bedpost
and tied the knots of our marriage
you tightened your thighs around the neck of the pillow
    and with the last drag of our remaining cigarette
barely crossing your lips
    you said
        “I love you”
and I said
        “Okay.”
The Eulogy of Daniel Day, Passenger

By Connor Bjotvedt

“I would love her for the rest of my life” —Daniel, 1967

I will meet my wife for coffee on a Tuesday. I will carry a bushel of apples, and she will carry sorrow. There will be nothing sexual when we meet. She will cry into my palms. She will tell me that we have lost our son. The cancer had already taken both her breasts, and the chemo has made her weak. We will break bread and share one glass, then she will leave. I will walk out to the street sometime later. Four horses will carry the body of a man, down Fifteenth Street. Roses will dress his coffin, and the hair of the women in his precession. I will follow them down to the river where they will wash his body. The trees will stand stoic and unmoving as the crowd lays the naked man at their feet. His skin will turn brown, and melt into the earth. I will follow them back to the church. They will be dressed in black. They will serve fruit at his wake. I will leave them sometime into the night, and will walk the narrow path home. I will lie next to my wife. There will be nothing sexual about our encounter. She will lie naked and untouched, bare without her breasts. I will sleep with my boots on. I will wake on Saturday morning and realize that I have aged twenty years. I will walk to the liquor store and drown. I will sing hymns; bury my bones, force fingers through my skin. Crack my face. Then I will return home, and wait for the end.