

Pieces from *THERE IS A SEASON* as ACCEPTANCE SPEECH

by Patrick Lane

(read by Lorna Crozier)

There's not much I want this early morning in the first heat of a summer day. At least, not much beyond this new sobriety I am only beginning to understand. Honours, prizes, and awards are of little importance to me now. I've won enough of such things in the past, a time when I wanted them if only to have the world prove to me its love and respect for my endeavours. Yet a life can turn into quietness, and peace and the affairs of the world, the place where such benefices occur, can seem far away and less important than the day. So it is this quiet morning as I sit under the apple tree with a cup of hot coffee and watch a hairy woodpecker on the branch above me working away at the bark.

It takes time to know what beauty is. It is not given us and must be worked for. It is in the private eye and is not innate in the thing seen. The little woodpecker is quite content to be himself and my finding him beautiful is as much to do with a lifetime of observing birds as anything. To find beauty I must first find it in myself. Does the bird think me beautiful? I wonder. Every few seconds he tilts an eye at me to make sure I am still there and quiet. If I stare directly at him he gets nervous, so I stare just to the right or left of him and he relaxes. Nobody likes to be stared at, animals and birds as much as humans. A bear hates to be looked at. He takes it as a challenge, and woe betide the wanderer who tries to stare down a bear. When you meet one, look to the side as if uninterested. And pray a bit if you can.

Prayer is speaking to what knows you. The names of the gods are silent and to speak them is to risk much, in the Christian faith or any other. The gods are not to be trifled with. For years I used God's name in extremity. Some pain I might have felt, some struggle, would have me calling out for God to damn the hammer that had just struck my thumb or the cupboard door that banged my head.

Today I speak to the gods daily, in the quiet of an ordinary moment.

This morning I am full of prayer though I do not utter it. I pray all goes well this fine morning. Lorna is back from her retreat. I've just seen her at the kitchen door in her red robe. She is letting the cats out and once they're on the deck she calls my name as if it were a question and I answer and say. I'm here, here in the garden. She comes to me then with two cups of coffee and as she walks across the moss I see what beauty is and am undone by it. I say to her, You are beautiful, and she smiles as she comes to me barefoot, her feet wet with dew.

Pray God, there be many more days, I whisper.

There are times I seem to stumble about, unsure of what to do. My father seemed to know. My mother too. Yet I wade into my garden at times and flail about, insisting that the plants do what I want even though I know it is against their nature. I feel like the monarch Latimer was trying to teach. I feel like the

carpenter with a chisel who ends up with a pile of shavings and no beam left to hold up the roof. I feel like a mason standing among rock chips with no stones left to build the wall with. I approach my garden at times with the same kind of violent insistence Latimer warned against.

I carry my sobriety into a new year. I remember getting up in that early morning a year ago and drinking thirteen ounces of vodka, then searching for more, my hands stumbling through the bookcase. Did I hide a bottle behind the books on myth, or was it behind the poetry books? All I know is that the bottle I drank was not enough, never enough. I'd already drunk two bottles in the night and there I was with another while my hand slipped along the thin spines of poetry books in search of more. Then the morning, the spasms, the wretched collapse of a body gone so far past life it was a thing and nothing more. Tears, but not for anyone. I licked them in hopes they were tears of alcohol. I licked my skin for the sweat of alcohol.

A year ago. I keep saying that as if the words will give me a feeling of triumph over adversity, nobility of purpose, grace, or anything resembling what it is I am supposed to feel. So what do I feel? I feel immensely tired. I feel as if my body and my spirit have been pulled through a pinhole in the night. I feel imagined here in the moon's light. I have gone a year without a drink or a drug in my body. I have gone a year with every cell remembering those drinks, those drugs, remembering and then letting go.

I am standing under a tree that is maybe forty-five years old, as old as my drinking. I place my hand on the trunk and feel the rough bark under my palm. I would cry if it was a time for crying, but it's not. It is not time at all. I am a man of blood and bones, and tonight is a night like all the nights of the year. I lift my hand and it doesn't shake, it doesn't tremble. I stare into the southern sky where the old warrior, Orion, cartwheels in his slow circuit around the pole.

The Mongols called the sky the world-tent. The stars were light shining through the tiny holes that sparks from their fires burned in the skin walls. Beyond the sky was only light. It is such a tent I stand beneath. An old Japanese lantern sits on the millstone a few metres away. It is rough with rust. In it is the remains of a candle.

When I sleep the birds come to the garden
with their gifts of seeds. Out of ice

last year's leaves of grass lift into night.
All my songs have been one song.

The palm of my hand and the sole of my foot
remember everything I have forgotten.

The old lantern by the pond has always been there.
Now is the time to light it.

I walk over to the millstone, open the tiny door of the lantern, and light the stub of candle. I close the door and sit on the stone bench I built for Lorna.

The light of the garden is as small as this.

受奖感言（回忆录《皆有其期》片段代）

帕特里克·雷恩（洛尔娜·克罗齐代读） 赵 四 译

在这夏日一天大清早的第一波暑热中，没什么我想要的。至少，不想要我刚开始懂得的新的清醒以外的什么。荣誉，奖项，奖金现在对我来说没什么重要的。过往岁月里我已赢得足够多此类物什，曾有一度我需要它们不过是想要世界向我证明它的爱和对我的努力的尊重。但是一个生命可以变为平静、祥和，变为世间事，此类恩泽发生之所，可能似乎离得很远，不像每日生活那么重要。因此这就是这个安静的清早，我坐在苹果树下，手边一杯咖啡，注视着羽毛丰盈的啄木鸟在我头顶的树枝上一直对着树皮工作。

懂得何为美丽是需要时间的。它不是给予我们的，而是要经由努力去获得。它存在于个体的眼中而非内在于被视之物里。小小的啄木鸟心满意足于是其所以是，而我之发现它的美与一生观察鸟类、观察无论何物都有关系。为发现美，我必须首先在自己内部发现它。鸟会认为我美吗？我不知道。每隔几秒它就会斜上我一眼，以确定我还在那儿，且安静。如果我直直地盯着它，它就会紧张，所以我只是凝望向它的右侧或左侧，这样它放松下来。没有谁喜欢被盯视，动物、鸟类和人一样。一头熊讨厌被看。它将这视作挑衅，那试图以眼瞪服熊的漂泊者可要悲剧了。如果你遇上一头，务必装作不感兴趣地望向旁侧。再做点祈祷，如果你能的话。

祈祷是在向知你者说话。众神之名俱沉默，向他们说话风险太大，无论是基督教信仰中的还是任一他种中的。众神皆非等闲之辈。有好些年，我极度地使用上帝之名。我可能会感到的一些疼痛、挣扎都会使我呼召上帝去诅咒那砸在我拇指上的锤子、撞了我脑袋的橱门。

今天我对日常的众神说话，在平凡瞬间的宁静中。

今晨我全身心充满祷告，虽然没有发出声音。我祈祷这个美好的早晨一切顺利。洛尔娜从她的隐身之所回来了，我刚才看见她，穿着红色长裙，在厨房门边。她正让猫出门，一旦它们到了露天平台上，她便叫我的名字，好像它是个问题，而我回答说，我在这儿，在花园里。随后她端着两杯咖啡来到我身边，当她走过覆地青苔，我看到了什么是美，我为此失魂落魄。我对她说，你真美，她笑了，当她赤足向我走来时，露珠濡湿了她的脚。

祈求上帝，再多给些时日，我低语。

有时我似乎会跌跌撞撞，茫然不知该做什么。我父亲似乎知道。我母亲也知道。然而，我有时会突入我的花园，挥舞着手臂，坚持让植物按我的意愿行事，即便我知道这有违它们的天性。我觉得这就是拉蒂默君主试图教导的。我觉得自己就像一个拿着凿子的木匠，最后只剩下一堆刨花，没有梁可以支撑屋顶。我觉

得自己就像一个站在碎石中间的石匠，没有剩下石头可以用来建墙。我有时会用拉蒂默警告反对的那种暴力坚持来对待我的花园。

我带着清醒的心态进入新的一年。我记得一年前的那个清早，我起床喝了十三盎司伏特加，然后还想再喝点，我的手在书架里摸索着。我是不是把一瓶伏特加藏在了神话书后面，还是诗集后面？我只知道，我喝下的那瓶不够，根本不够。头天晚上我已喝了两瓶，现在又喝了一瓶，我的手沿着薄薄的诗集书脊滑行，想要找到更多。然后是早晨，痉挛，身体痛苦地倒下，生命已经如此遥远，它只是一个物体，仅此而已。眼泪，但不是为了任何人。我舔了舔它们，希望那是酒精的液滴。我舔了舔皮肤，寻找酒精的汗水。

一年前。我一直这么说，好像这些话会给我一种战胜逆境，目标崇高、优雅的感觉，或任何类似于我应该感受到的感觉。那么我感受到了什么呢？我感到极度地疲惫。我感到我的身体和灵魂好像在夜晚被拉过针孔。我感到自己是在月光下想象着这一切。我已经过了一年身体没有沾任何酒精或药物的生活，我已经过了一年每一个细胞都记得那些酒，那些药物，记得，然后放手的生活。

我站在一棵大概有四十五年树龄的树下，它和我的酒龄一样长。我把手放在树干上，感受着手掌下粗糙不平的树皮。如果这是该哭的时候，我肯定会哭，但现在不是。现在根本不是哭的时候。我是一个有血有骨的人，今晚和一年中所有的夜晚一样。我举起手，它没有哆嗦，没有颤抖。我凝视着南方的天空，那里老勇士猎户座在绕着天极缓慢地转动他的身子。

蒙古人把天空称为世界帐篷。星星是自皮墙上燃烧的火焰火星崩灼的小孔里筛下的光。天空之外只有光。我站在这样一个帐篷的下面。几米外的磨石上放着一盏古老的日本灯笼。它粗糙不堪，锈迹斑斑。里面有半根烧剩的蜡烛。

当我入睡时，鸟儿们飞到花园里
带着种子作为礼物。去年的草叶

从冰层中起身，进入黑夜。
我所有的歌都是一首歌。

我的手掌和脚底
记得我遗忘的一切。

池塘边的那盏老灯笼一直在那里。
现在是点亮它的时候了。

我走到磨石旁，打开灯笼的小门，点燃残存的蜡烛。我关上门，坐在我为洛娜建造的石凳上。

花园的灯光就是这么小。