

by DANIEL MORRIS

### Visitation

The elder poet came to teach my class  
Imperially dressed  
Large red hands, six pack abs,  
As usual I extended my hand  
Being the considerably younger man  
But he, so formal in so many other ways  
Would have none of it -  
"Come 'ere an' give us a hug."  
Enveloped in his big strong hairy arms  
"You're softer than before," he said,  
Pulling away to look me over.  
"What it is," I said, hesitating,  
"Is my boobs, already large  
for a boy, are growing  
As I enter later maturity."  
My advisor seemed impressed  
(to my surprise),  
For I rarely surprised him  
In a good way, since I  
Was best known to him  
In the years since graduation  
From flight school  
For airport evacuation, seven fights,  
And action on illegal aliens.  
"It becomes you, quite handsomely,  
I dare say," said the formalist,  
The touch of upper crust English accent  
Acquired not from his mother, returning.  
"But what will it mean for my writing, Master,  
For as you always preached,  
The Word is all we know dada dada yada."  
"I am considering just that question," he said,

part mischievously, part mysteriously.  
He puffed on his famous pipe,  
To buy some time, for he did not like  
Being stunned into silence,  
The smoke rings forming  
Arabesques fountains microscopic  
Milk splashes.

### Why I Don't Keep The Sabbath: A Parable

A vegan, drunk, crashes at bud's pad Friday dawn  
Surrealistic Pillow left spinning on the box  
No one awake enough to turn out light.

Awakened hard on Saturday at 5,  
The vegan can't find his keys,  
So waltzes home.  
Arriving at sun down,  
Cracks the last Bud in an otherwise empty fridge  
(Except a carrot and kosher dills);  
Self-mockingly snifs  
The hops as if citron and etrog. For this reason,  
I no longer associate  
Halakah  
With our salvation.

### On Not Eating Blackberries (after Kinnell and Hass)

Blackberries sit in the fridge  
  
growing white fur.

I don't even like fresh blackberries.

They're too intense, fruity gushy....and

like Hemingway's Nick Adams I enjoy canned peaches and apricots.

My wife asks me to eat the berries. Two months ago I bought them for only 99 cents a pint since the berries the kids like are \$3.99 a half pint, but I don't look for the country of origin--Mexico--where my pediatrician and geneticist wife fears contamination dangerous to kids,

leaving her and me to eat the berries, but

I don't want her putting blackberries in the pancake batter. I'm forced to admit to wasting 99 cents yet I love my pancake dinner condiments stripped to gobs of Aunt Jemima syrup bringing such comfort, taking me to childhood where I don't worry about foreign berries or Aunt Jemima's image. Then my father-in-law says Aunt Jemima looks much younger and middle class, and, hey, I kind of like blackberry jam so why not try making it with Aunt Jemima?

### **Family Resemblances**

At the block's annual dinner, I propose

“peek-a-boo” after the cranberry cobbler.

Mrs. Snyder proposes rules, but I reply:

"You must not try to define what I mean by 'game.'

You know what I mean: poker, chess, cribbage, Monopoly."

And then Mr. Snyder: "But what about cooking, reading, making love?"

As the song says, are we to assume, judging by your rules, that these, too, are 'Games people play?' Don't they belong in the family?"

And so I ask my son, Isaac, not yet a year, as he toddles by,

to show me a chair. I pronounce my words slowly, with care:

"Isaac. Isaac dear, show daddy a chair, a chair. Chair."

He lifts a pen up into the air. "Dis," he says with pride. "Dis Dare."  
That's my boy, who sits on a throne, a stone, a toy, a high chair,

and a cathedra. A rule breaker, he knows that wherever he sits,  
he's discovered the seat of honor.

"Hey now," I say to our neighbors. "Isaac got the game.

Maybe not peek-a-boo, but family resemblances.

When the Bishop leaves the Cathedral, it becomes a church.

When Isaac leaves the living room, he leaves behind

a fuzzy photograph of family resemblances."

## In Praise of Absolute Films

Tonight my second son, Aaron, 2, for the first time knew

the consequences of narrative. It wasn't pretty. Crying without consolation, the problem is he didn't understand simulation.

Let me back up. The crisis began when Huxley stole Elmo's blanket.

Both of us frightened, I hold the little boy to convey a good outcome:

Elmo will get the blanket back.

So far, so good. Switching stations to Love Story when the video ends, however, we happen upon Ali McGraw (as Jenny Cavillieri) fainting backwards on the snow in front of Harvard's Lamont Library. Jenny's creation of the snow angel occurs in a montage scene prior to news of her fatal blood disease. Since no narrative applies to such bliss, this montage becomes Aaron's first image of unexpected catastrophe.

Not knowing how to hold my son tightly enough this time to brace for the renewal of the narrative, I lie like Plato in chapter ten of The Republic and say that poets lie and should be booked for imitating imitations.

It's clear I tend to intellectualize under stress.

Later that night, my wife and I agree that an end to watching videos altogether - my first suggestion -- would be fascistic

and not feasible anyway given our visual addiction.

My compromise: limit family viewing to "absolute films" (such as Rhythmus 21 by Hans Richter and Razor Blades by Paul Sharits),

and the "Comfy Armchair" episode of Boobah.

My wife argues for Zabriskie Point, but I urge caution. True,

the characters are barely on speaking terms, and the proxemic range implies a lot of suspicion and reserve, but the bottom line is that Rod Taylor

and Daria Halprin are still facing each other. When such organisms share public space near an elevator...well, it is just too risky to screen for one of our culture's future guardians.