

THE CHRIST COLLOQUY Andrew Grattan

BOOK V *Mary*

Our Lady and St. Joseph, nurse the two babies, Andrew and April on the floor of the sanctuary of Heaven. Our Lady places a pearl rosary around April's neck and St. Joseph holds Andrew. Then, they are joined by their son, Jesus. Christ places miniature bars of gold around Andrew's neck in honour of St. Thomas More, recognizing his office of Lord High Chancellor of England, while Thomas is now the Chancellor of the *Logos* in Heaven. Baby Andrew is recognized as Chancellor of the literary *logos*. Then, Jesus recognizes April as his sister, April having been presented to Our Lady by Beatrice to be Mary's daughter and Jesus recognizes Andrew, as the spiritual offspring of More and St. John, as his own baby boy. Then, Jesus summons St. Ignatius, St. Benedict and St. Dominic. Dominic proclaims that he will let fresh air flood upon Blackfriars and Jesus claims Andrew as his own *doctor ecclesiae* and foretells that Andrew Wood will far exceed Dante Alighieri as a poet.

CANTO IX

And, two little heads lay next to each other;

And, two little sets of toes lay intertwined;

And, two little arms lay wrapped around interlocked;

And, two little chests rose fluttering up and down in peace,

Rising and falling in tandem, as inhalation and exhalation occurred

Until they awoke at midday to hear song of sacred speech.

And, scooping up the idol of Heaven, no golden calf cult worshipped

By wayward desert Israelites, or Queen of all her sex, Our Lady

Wrapped her arms around April's lower half, supporting frame,

As little legs waggled, wriggling, convulsing, with excitement and joy.

And, baby April slipped fondly her arms around Our Lady's neck

Looking up in simple host adoration, until breathless, she exclaimed:

'I love you, mummy', cried baby April. And, as Jesus had once

Wept, tears rushed down the cheeks of the Bethlehem girl.

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And, chary careful, Mary slipped a necklace of pearl rosary beads

Around the neck of April's child, for the baby priceless beyond pearls.

I, who knew the chagrin of foisted disgrace, that the protector had
Implanted illicit seed within an untouched womb, accept this Genesis

Creation of Dante and Beatrice within the manger of light.

No filaments of Russian Fabergé, I set around your peerless neck,
No revolutionary baubles, but a string of oyster pearls that

Dominic would not recognize for their heavenly magnificence,
When wood and cheap stones articulate their reverence for me
In that most prime of prayers, the Rosary of mysteries.

The baby Jesus is now paralleled by the baby April, to complete
The natural pairing in reproduction'. And, tearful,
St. Joseph claimed Andrew from the basin and rocked him in

Tenderness and calm to soothe baby distress, discombobulation,
Before wrapping his right arm around his slight shoulders,
Delivering him gently back into wicker work of the *Summa* man.

And, stooping, settled around his neck, baby bars of gold ingots,
Such as had dwarfed the shoulders of More, when the Office of
Chancellor had claimed him for the King's man and state office.

And, light shattered Heaven that morning, with midday,
Shards of bountiful gleam, opening up opaque that reserved area
Of Heaven, that was no debauched knightly bower, but a place

Of serendipity, the manger place, where Lot did ever look back and

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Knew no pillar of salt, but the eternity of Aquinas' straw.

And, cool air streamed that midday in Heaven, flowing and

Coursing through that giddiest of atmospheres, an air, even more

Rarefied than that of a priestly seminary because Melchizedek

Himself was present, no Zadok, but dove man and *magister discipulorum*.

Shadow passed, then, over the manger, of a clean-limbed man

Of olive hued skin and brown flowing hair, and the shadow

Of the face of the man from Galilee overpassed the manger

And cast into dark and light reed rushes as Holbein the Younger's

Picture is crossed by a skull in that most illuminative of scenes,

Where garrulousness on the human condition is cemented into

Wallow sadness for the death condition of man, and the

Cross-bones that govern the grave of all human aspiration.

An open face swam over that modest basket that morning

And breath slow swarmed over two cute, happy faces,

Of the baby April and the baby Andrew, breath tiding to

A Pentecostal wave of oxygen clean and pure to disperse

The rank breath of Herod inaugurating the slaughter of the

Innocents to claim the scalp of the infant King.

And, the face of Jesus Christ overflowed the interworked

Filaments of that straw composition where wrought architrave

Of tense tender tendrils dry of *opera* of the dumb ox, had been

Reimagined by transubstantiation complete, from dull as

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Ditch water, old scholastic Latin, into living tissue of life
And, the wavy fronds of green vine Jerusalem, complemented by
Barn blessing of fibrous crop of strong cancelling straw, nexus

Of pertinence and optic tubing, so that even Lear, would at last
Have been able to see clearly and recognize *rerum natura* rather
Than bunkum and verbiage for new stuff *ad punctum*.

And the man from Galilee spoke up in tersity and plainness:
'That I should have a pair at last and a gorgeous sister'.
And Jesus breathed on baby Andrew: 'I elevate you to a dukedom

Of babyhood, and baby boy my own, who did not familiar intimate
Reproduce with a Magdalene, but rather came to heal the hymen
Hurt, as Prospero forbad the breaking of Miranda's chastity knot,

And as an orchestrating Prospero, weep already that you shall
Know so many base Calibans that will buffet your island spirit.
My revels now are ended and hard yards are to be hectared

In by no gyrovague, but an athlete Olympian questioning,
For, I have had a Hippo surfeit of my old doctors, and
Times are Dylan changing and I would command new Miltonic

Monody and lyre lyric music of the Cross, literary *logos* Chancellor,
And change of course, current and trajectory from Joycean
Filthy streams'. A flicking finger summoned *status quo* of sanctity,

Three of Ignatius, Benedict and Dominic, and the latter
One spoke up hymning like Caedmon rueful, accepting:
'Ibsenic, I will let in fresh air, that it pour upon Blackfriars,

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No, *qui, quae, quod* of often plodding Aquinas, ever broadening his
Self-engrossed and self-referring world of stagnant scholasticism
Irrelevant today, and these modern times, gross fat, lardy lardons

Ingesting in one end, and, at times, excreting out the other, until bulbous
Books upheap, so that Johnson lexicon dictionary will be required to
Span the Gilbey *opera* of my timebound, imprisoned Thomas,

Such that the other Thomas had to interlocute with beloved'.
And Jesus: 'Durante will create the world, William will create
Renaissance world, and Andrew will create a brave new world,

Post despairing Eliot, depicting Thomas Becket murdered in a
Cathedral and *Four Quartets* comprise modern Christian poetry in
Slim volume and soulless state. My *doctor ecclesiae*, he will be that

A *Christ Colloquy* begun in cradle of these Aquinas pasta tubes
And Sicilian plum tomatoes of cherubic cheeks crimson, shall
Forge doctrinal gospel created by the lionheart of John, so

That it shall be acknowledged in Heaven that the time has come
To herald, that two old masters are to be joined by clay apprentice
Master of the guild, that Andrew Wood shall be soft spoken as

Being in radar distance of Da Vinci for original originality of mind,
That depiction of Vitruvian man, legs splayed in Leonardo's ink cartoon;
And, as a cartographer maps the continent of a Columbus expedition,

He will compound the globe into a *logos* ball toy to fling, and flay
His arms and legs splayed about this basket'. And, lifting up the boy

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To a high above his head, he set the little chap upon his shoulders,

And tight grasped each foot so that the baby boy was a Dahl Danny
Champion of the world. 'Beckett's awaited Godot and Jean Anouilh
And all existential nihilism and Lear nonsense verse are to be forgotten,

And crumminess quashed for Ribena juice of Dominican new
Wine, but as no unoriginal turgid of an Angelicum friar will he lecture,
But recreate the world again, smashed by Nighttown's Joyce.

For as they drew lots for my cloak, they have like body snatched
Despatched my body into so many modes of lesser literary discourse:
Modernism and postmodernism and a pumpkin poetry prize

In the name of Thomas Stearns, and I am as unhappy as
Sylvia Plath at the mercy of furtive woman hunting Hughes.
No bell jar, but a Virginia Woolf lighthouse shall shine and

The *logos* is to be eternally rebuilt by a new Guttenberg Bible
And blocks of typeface are to be reset and reordered as
A game of scrabble changes all the codes of the middle-ages

Of James Joyce, and C. S. Lewis' dawn treader will play safely
In my nursery until he hides around his mother's Laura Ashley
Skirts in acres of Midgham idyll and begins to Violet Elizabeth lisp

To just William of the grammar school desk in distant Stratford,
As Guido governed development intellectual of the Florentine
Boy entranced to glimpse the May Pole angel of angelic Beatrice.

And, the *summa poeta* will be Concorde supersonic superseded

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So that contemporary lazy Florentine builders shall recite no more
Inferno, but throstle up a rainbow seven of unimpeachable

And unbeatable poetry by the new most supreme *somma poeta*,
Leaving lackadaisical Alighieri to languish in the shades,
Kicking his kibed heels, undisturbed by Lear's Fool, but left

Beginner foolish by new master, a Picasso Cubist to far exceed, great early modern artist'.