

# Gil Orlovitz

## Selected Poems



# Gil Orlovitz

June 7, 1918 [Philadel]phia, Pennsylvania] –

July 10, 1973 [New York, New York]

Sed ut perspiciatis unde omnis iste natus error sit voluptatem accusantium doloremque laudantium, totam rem aperiam, eaque ipsa quae ab illo inventore veritatis et quasi architecto beatae vitae dicta sunt explicabo. Nemo enim ipsam voluptatem quia voluptas sit aspernatur aut odit aut fugit, sed quia consequuntur magni dolores eos qui ratione voluptatem sequi nesciunt. Neque porro quisquam est, qui dolorem ipsum quia dolor sit amet, consectetur, adipisci velit, sed quia non numquam eius modi tempora incidunt ut labore et dolore magnam aliquam quaerat voluptatem. Ut enim ad minima veniam, quis nostrum exercitationem ullam corporis suscipit laboriosam, nisi ut aliquid ex ea commodi consequatur? Quis autem vel eum iure reprehenderit qui in ea voluptate velit esse quam nihil molestiae consequatur, vel illum qui dolorem eum fugiat quo voluptas nulla pariatur?

*Concerning Man*. New York: The Banyan Press, 1947.

*Keep to Your Belly*, drawings by Paul Lett. New York: Louis Brigante, 1952.

*The Diary of Dr. Eric Zeno*. San Francisco: Inferno Press, 1953.

*The Diary of Alexander Patience*. San Francisco: Inferno Press, 1958.

*The Papers of Professor Bold*. Eureka, CA: The Hearse Press, 1959.

*Selected Poems*. San Francisco: Inferno Press, 1960.

*Art of the Sonnet*. Nashville: Hillsboro Publications, 1961.

*Couldn't Say, Might Be Love*. London: Barrie and Rockliff, 1969.

*More Poems*. Fredericton, New Brunswick: Fiddlehead Poetry Books, 1972.

*What Are They All Waiting For? Stories, Poems & Essays: 1944-1962*. Arlington, MA: Tough Poets Press, 2018.

# The Diary of Dr. Eric Zeno

ONE

A cat. A child teasing a shadow. A Minnesota license-plate.

I heard a joke: a psychoanalyst was asked how he kept so spruce.  
“Who listens?” he replied.

I wouldn't put a dime on Criteria in the Seventh.

After five years of psychoanalysis,  
a patient adjusted to suicide.

A striped Shade, that rolled up in fright  
at the approach of detectives, in the depths of darkest America.

Whatever else I never knew about her hours,  
I knew on summer afternoons she made love.  
in an airconditioned movie,  
high on the balcony,  
smoking.  
A smoky girl, with dusk in green eyes.

A mirror breaking in a child.

## TWO

I am not so sure, when the young man overstepped his bounds,  
that I would have thought my persuasion beyond my bounds,  
and have pulled back his right to enter the circle of my close ends.  
I am not so sure that I would not have hidden  
beneath my psychoanalytic couch, had a priest bidden  
me dive upward, to save the Deity from enduring bends  
in the person of one young man faltering at straight suicide from one high  
ledge.

I am not so sure that Boston, that day, did not pledge  
more truth to me than I to its savages,  
who would have expected, perhaps, I give them a clean bill of stealth.

Indeed, I must confess the universe quite pure,  
the bestial mob a child,  
that lofted up a skull it called balloon.

Or else I do not understand, for instance, why I loved a girl  
in an orange blouse, a broken eye  
and a slipshod hip the same afternoon.  
Or why I do not care that the Romans burned the library  
at Alexandria, to make historic fires a dull maroon.

Although as yet it is not-fashionable upon the spoken tongue  
to seat the Orient, old or new, I think intestinal fortitude  
has become decor, and we—Chinese, supine in an iron lung;  
and the shocked glee of the choir-breathing press  
an atomic dude.

### THREE

Over the water I bounced some chips of spine:  
I was at a loss  
with a drag of earth I felt at the back of my ear,  
at the middle of my time.

I saw my belly at low tide.  
I saw my friends  
in the teeth of crises with dental floss.  
I saw the electromagnetic fields of force.  
green moss  
growing over the rocks of ages down which we slide,  
child-brides  
giggling and toothless,  
bouncing on chips of spine.

## FOUR

I cannot tell you if there will be war or peace.  
I cannot tell you if God will come by morning,  
and make miracles sweat from your feet;  
or be a leprechaun, and avoid you like the plague.  
I cannot tell you, though I brush my teeth with sage,  
if the communicable-disease of evanescence has infected you,  
for I am no wand-reader of waves.  
I cannot tell you where or who you are,  
or, knowing both, if they will meet  
between an absent-minded statistician and a mountain peevish  
to be a hill.  
To be brief,  
I cannot estimate your bill.

I can only tell you that I smelled the sea tonight  
at penthouse, brownstone and tenement;  
and that, because it was freshly sour, it was sweet.

## FIVE

There is but one purpose in life:  
its possibility.

Keep the muscles tight as lovers.  
Retreat into reality.  
Do not let the meter run too long  
when you take a trip in a macabre.  
There are no dedications worth the slab.

Before the earth explodes,  
do not hide too far:  
you too have a right to be included  
in the light from this star.

If you marry, man or woman,  
let him be Ben Franklin:  
for, in addition to his many saws,  
he has a lightning rod.

What is least ideal  
is, most probable:  
the Rhodes White Scholar Class  
suffering the mass.

Excuse me, there's a patient here.  
But, please remember, that only after treatment  
do we know exactly who the doctor was,  
as yet not quite clear.

SIX

Five toes in a nylon stocking  
past the ear of the girl nodding.

Now pith instead, you see, may be a Jew:  
discipline by dispersion.

Who is discriminated against  
may become most discriminating.

The one does not complement the other.  
But suggestibility defines adaptability.  
If the prey is beyond (as I suspect, with both eyes closed,  
to avoid evolution's focus),  
then birds must arc wider and wider.  
They do, when they disappear.

Five toes in a stocking  
past the ear of the girl nodding.

## SEVEN

Tonight only the blind, young negro pianist knew,  
playing the slow, keen-chorded New Orleans blues,  
drinking bourbon as I would smoke a pipe,  
smiling at a scow in a bra, or somebody with thick glasses, looped,  
that three new mice were dead beneath the piano-strings,  
after they'd had a session on my analytic couch.  
It was the day I'd begun to throw all the people out of my house.  
It was the day I knew only my lower-animal patients would listen to my  
dreams.

As for me, I couldn't figure out the point of the joke I'd told myself.  
And I was no more tight than any citizen is in his right off-balanced mind  
at twelve.

Midnight, friends. Not the dawn of puberty. Nor the boy soprano with a  
beard.

Midnight. I remember I was iri the toilet with Diogenes.  
No, pants down, he had not been looking for honestly-lost puberty.  
I told him that he was a liar, and- his lantern what we now call a projection.  
And I left, a golden calf behind me, and debt-propulsion ahead.

## EIGHT

If my brain should blow off in mid-air, quietly,  
like a thin, ill-fitted wig from a skull's astonishment,  
at butterflies eating gnats, or some other elegant jeopardy,  
well, I am not so hungry as before.

Bellies swirl round my head,  
and the rats are in the radiance.  
Walls are thin as pickaxes,  
and Shir H'Shirim  
(thy belly like unto a heap of wheat)  
sticks in the throat of Ecclesiastes.  
Two navels stare from my cheekbones:  
how can I dose these eyes to sleep?  
I am not so hungry as before.  
What is the feeblegram from ship to shore?

They will have built a model of an ocean-liner, ·  
to exhibit in my empty brain-pan;  
and a placard shall read, "These painstaking craftsmen  
took thirty years to fashion this miniature."

## NINE

— . . . and all survivors  
burn in envy's effigy.— I have searched an old shoe's mind,  
and found two drunken lovers  
on a streetcorner's toe;  
they lit matches to each other's eyes,  
where I could not go.—  
. . . the analytic couch behind steel bars:  
it reared at me one day like sudden cobra.—  
Breakfasts at night are colder. For  
I look in mirrors now, that invention for lesser vanities.—  
“. . . but you have been taking money under  
false pastenses,” only my son could have cried.—  
. . . our boredom's entertainments, science.—  
How perfectly logical and clean  
to test next war's new weapons  
on the American desert, the American sand,  
the spectrum's specious aura round god's vacant rock,  
while cautious Americans' instruments  
eat greedily at the table of elements,  
of which Americans have the most abundant supply.  
What Son's therapy aveils against the uranium sky?—  
. . . it is a problem, my sweet friends, of providing  
the long dark shadow to the sundial against the awful cellophane of noon.

Though  
I am afraid,  
let me be calm.  
Do Arabs wait  
outside the oxygen-tent?  
There is a camel and her humps in white.  
There is a man with a veil,  
doubtless a Mediterranean homosexual.  
How warm to know someone doubtlessly.  
Someone. Someone.—  
Gallowed Be Thy Name.—  
. . . ah old door, closing, moos a cow.

## From The Papers Of Professor Bold (#2)

There goes helicopter man.

I tap a pencil: light dots of rage.

I can recall, with your associative permission, those tideless nights when each color, scarlet, amber and go, absolved their memorial alimonies: I walked a lollipop without a stick, in optical succulence, a childhood rejecting, however late the age, annual subsidies.

Of course I am considerably over your heads, but concede my hovering. Conceive me statesman to babies, that is, I bend, but cannot quite their cheeks.

What need

has one of votes, really, by practicing the loftier politics?

Not that I should ever outlaw

jurisdictional disputes:

how can one live without hijacking

interiors, to pull a yell from our tasselled, possessionful mutes?

My apologies: these are light dots of rage,  
the Pied Piper critical of his flutes.

I would remind you that you will suffer  
by insisting devotion, like Hollywood, to moving textures:  
so much motion can only result in stills.

You will do your doctorates in the sciences  
and the psychoanalytic humanities,  
and dismiss the molten morphologies.

I sincerely regret that, as you will have bowed out, your cape  
may merely have puffed the generic rumps of your shape,  
hardly to be hung as the parting rift.

Let me see. Where was I? Oh yes, between Vain Street and the sewer—full  
dream ahead!

Could one, percentage-prize, ask you to accept your own gift  
but once? that, that suspension between the give and take  
but one helicopter evening of your lives?

One must be alone, and the season Fall.

Arrange perspective as— pop the buttons of your zest;  
yet walk, my friends,  
in perking verticals.

Walk— as though each distance were the youngest girl  
you might give breath to,  
in the aftermath of tentative ravishment.

Those frontlets upon thine eyes let be  
the murder-media for each assassin-entrechat sprung back from  
the costumes of commitment: paper cornices  
on black sky, that fail to earth: the top of Manhattan's  
vibraharp caught, like a virgin Harpy  
twisting in the scarlet purple torso of an Illustrated Ape, moaning  
in the moon's quicksand, that she had bent  
for a ground man's coin.

And, if thou shalt walk the pavements,  
the clear cuckoldry of concrete containments.













































































































































































