

“MARRIAGE”

by Gregory Corso

Should I get married? Should I be good?
Astound the girl next door
With my velvet suit and faustus hood?
Don't take her to movies but to cemeteries;
Tell all about werewolf bathtubs and forked
 Clarinets;
Lean against an old crooked tombstone,
And woo her the entire night.

When she introduces me to her parents
Should I sit knees together on their 3rd-degree sofa
And not ask, “Where's the bathroom?”
O how terrible it must be for a young man
Seated before a family, and the family thinking,
“We never saw you before! He wants our Mary Lou!”
After tea and homemade cookies they ask, “What do you do?”
Should I tell them? Would they like me then?
Say, “All right; get married. We're losing a daughter,
But we're gaining a son ...”
And should I then ask, “Where's the bathroom?”

And the wedding! All her family and her friends,
And only a handful of mine, all scroungy and bearded,
Just waiting to get at the drinks and food ---
And the priest! Looking at me as if I were a criminal,
Asking me, “Do you take this woman
For your lawful wedded wife?”
And I, trembling – What to say, say “Pie Glue!”
I kiss the bride, all those corny men slapping me on the back:
“She's all yours, boy! Ha-ha-ha!”
And in their eyes you could see
Some obscene honeymoon going on –
Then all that absurd rice and clanky cans and shoes.

I should get married; I should be good;
How nice it'd be to come home to her
And sit by the fireplace, and she in the kitchen,

Aproned, young and lovely, wanting my baby;
And so happy about me she burns the roast beef,
And comes crying to me, and I get up from my big-papa chair,
Saying, "Christmas teeth! Radiant brains! Apple deaf!"
What a husband I'd make! Yes, I should get married!
Like when Mrs. Kindhead comes to collect
For the Community Chest,
Grab her and tell her, "There are unfavorable omens in the
sky!"
And when the mayor comes to get my vote tell him,
"When are you going to stop people killing whales!"
And when the milkman comes, leave him a note in the bottle,
"Penguin dust, bring me penguin dust, I want penguin dust!!"

Yet, if I should get married
And she gives birth to a child and I am sleepless, worn,
Up for nights, head bowed against a quiet window,
Finding myself in the most common of situations –
O what would that be like!
Surely, I'd give the kid for a rattle a big of broken Bach records
Sew the Greek alphabet on its bib.

No, I doubt I'd be that kind of father;
Not rural,
But hot, smelly tight New York City;
Seven flights up, roaches and rats in the walls
A fat wife screeching over potatoes, "Get a job!"
And five nose-running brats in love with Batman,
And the neighbors all toothless and dry-haired,
Like those hag masses of the 18th century,
All wanting to come in and watch TV.

No! I should not get married. I should never get married!

But – imagine if I were married to a beautiful
Sophisticated woman,
Tall and pale, wearing an elegant black dress
And long black gloves,
Holding a cigarette holder in one hand
And a highball in the other,

And we lived high up in a penthouse with a huge window
From which we could see all of New York –
No, can't imagine myself married to that pleasant prison-dream.

O but what about love? I forgot love;
Not that I am incapable of love;
It's just that I see love as odd as wearing shoes –
I never wanted to marry a girl who was like my mother;
But there's got to be somebody!
Because what if I'm 60 years old and not married,
All alone in a furnished room with pee stains on my underwear
And everybody else is married! All the universe married but
me!

Ah, yet, well, I know that, were a woman possible
As I am possible,
Then marriage would be possible –
Like SHE in her lonely alien garb waiting her Egyptian lover
So I wait – bereft of 2,000 years and the bath of life!!!!