1 Refugee Blues

A song about 2 German Jews during the Holocaust. Its hard to understand 6 millions. But what about two?

Say this city has ten million souls,
Some are living in mansions, some are living in holes:
Yet there’s no place for us, my dear, yet there’s no place for us.

Once we had a country and we thought it fair,
Look in the atlas and you’ll find it there:
We cannot go there now, my dear, we cannot go there now.

In the village churchyard there grows an old yew,
Every spring it blossoms anew:
Old passports can’t do that, my dear, old passports can’t do that.

The consul banged the table and said,
"If you’ve got no passport you’re officially dead”:
But we are still alive, my dear, but we are still alive.

Went to a committee; they offered me a chair;
Asked me politely to return next year:
But where shall we go to-day, my dear, but where shall we go to-day?
Came to a public meeting; the speaker got up and said;
"If we let them in, they will steal our daily bread":
He was talking of you and me, my dear, he was talking of you and me.

Thought I heard the thunder rumbling in the sky;
It was Hitler over Europe, saying, "They must die":
O we were in his mind, my dear, O we were in his mind.

Saw a poodle in a jacket fastened with a pin,
Saw a door opened and a cat let in:
But they weren’t German Jews, my dear, but they weren’t German Jews.

Went down the harbor and stood upon the quay,
Saw the fish swimming as if they were free:
Only ten feet away, my dear, only ten feet away.

Walked through a wood, saw the birds in the trees;
They had no politicians and sang at their ease:
They weren’t the human race, my dear, they weren’t the human race.

Dreamed I saw a building with a thousand floors,
A thousand windows and a thousand doors:
Not one of them was ours, my dear, not one of them was ours.

Stood on a great plain in the falling snow;
Ten thousand soldiers marched to and fro:
Looking for you and me, my dear, looking for you and me.
2 Oh Captain my Captain

In the following poem by Whitman (yes the bridge you know so well used to be a poet) we have plenty of metaphors. His hero Lincoln is compared to a captain of a ship (the USA). The trip is the war. Here is the poem explained:

O Captain! my Captain! our fearful trip is done;
The ship has weathered every rack, the prize we sought is won;
The port is near, the bells I hear, the people all exulting,
While follow eyes the steady keel, the vessel grim and daring:

Remark: Dear Lincoln the war ended. The USA (ship) prevailed the war. The prize, namely, the unification was achieved. The port (end of war) is near, the bells of happiness are ringing, and the people are happy (exulting). But the ship (the USA) is not happy. It is in fact: Grim and daring. They are very sad but they have resolve. But why are they sad?

But O heart! heart! heart!

O the bleeding drops of red,

Where on the deck my Captain lies,

Fallen cold and dead.

Remark: The heart of Whitman bleeds with red drops because Lincoln was assassinated shortly after the war. The captain is dead and can not participate in the celebration. Lincoln is fallen cold (his body turned cold) and dead.

O Captain! My Captain! rise up and hear the bells;
Rise up for you the flag is flung for you the bugle trills;
For you bouquets and ribbon’s wreaths for you the shores crowding;
For you they call, the swaying mass, their eager faces turning;

Remark: Lincoln could you rise and hear the celebrating bells? Rise up and see the flags who are held high due to the victory. The bouquets (of flowers) and the ribbons are for you in display. They shout for you, the multitude, and wait
for you in expectation.
This arm beneath your head;
It is some dream that on the deck,
You’ve fallen cold and dead.

Remark: Walt Whitman says it’s hard to believe that you are on the deck (the USA) fallen cold and dead.

My Captain does not answer, his lips are pale and still;
My father does not feel my arm, he has no pulse nor will;
The ship is anchored safe and sound, its voyage closed and done;
From fearful trip, the victor ship, comes in with object won;

Remark: He also calls Lincoln father, an emotional word. While the ship, the USA is on the port (the war ended) The war ended

Exult, O shores, and ring, O bells!

But I, with mournful tread,

Walk the deck my captain lies,

Fallen cold and dead.

Remark: What a beautiful mix of happiness and deep sadness. We won the war but our father is dead.

3 The dangerous lives of the alter boys: Did he who made the lamb made thee?

3.1 A film with a poem

There is a Poem is called Tiger Tiger (at least in contemporary English. It used to be called Tyget Tyger.) I did not know this poem. Of course.

But then I saw a film called The Dangerous Lives of Altar Boys. In a strict catholic school, Tim and Francis rebel. Francis is a born artist and engages in comics. Thus, like
many artists, Francis is also very shy. Tim is the one who rebels without limits. Its the 70’s and its the south and its a rural area, namely one of the most conservative places in the USA. The school is highly oppressive. They suffer a lot and try to smoke and drink alcohol to lessen the pain.

3.2 The enemy

The one who makes them the most angry is nun Assumpta. Does she assume to much?

She is quite terrible (the author even gave her only one leg as a punishment, and she drags the other artificial leg). The faith of the school seems blind. Assumpta reminds you of the nurse in One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest. Among other things she confiscate a book by the poet William Blake. The book is called Songs of Innocence and Songs of Experience. In this book Francis and Tim found some consort, and now its gone.

Francis and Tim pull pranks. Francis rebels by making comics that would look highly inappropriate to his teachers. They call the comics by the blasphemous name: The Atomic Trinity. The heroes of the atomic trinity are Brakken, The Muscle, Captain Asskicker, and Major Screw; Just silly vulgarities. They choose the nun, Assumpta as the evil character in the comics. They call her by the easy to understand name Sister Nunzilla. They also have drawing of the nun they hate in sexual poses. As the school will say: She is drawn in an "inappropriate" way, with sexual insinuation.

3.3 Love

Francis loves Margie. But Francis is shy. As Francis cant act, his friend Tim sends her a love note in the name of Francis. Francis and Margie become boyfriend and girlfriends.

At one time Margie tells Francis that her brother Donny, RAPED her. As suited to a school of only pure at heart like a Catholic school, Donny attends the school as well.

As usual, passive Francis does not do anything about that. He makes the mistake of telling Tim, though. Francis did not expect Tim will use it.

In one scene in the gym, Donny tortures Tim for no reason. Tim suffers and suffers, until he cant help it. He tells Donny: "At least I did not rape my sister". Donny is furious. He finds a way to revenge. Donny steals the comics as a retribution. He gives them to the nun.
3.4 Busted

The Atomic Trinity: the violent, blasphemous and inappropriate comics is given to nun Assumpta. She says: I dont know how to get to you.

To understand them, she has to understand the doubts that the kid have, because of the discrepancy of the real world and the divine teaching they get. This she can not do. She cant doubt god. Tim and Francis are suspended. They are probably going to get expelled.

3.5 A prank

The boys (and again its mainly Tim, the rebel) plan an insane prank against the nun who only young children can dare plan. There is a zoo near the school. Tim and Francis plan to scare the Assumpta to death. They will steal the tiger, sedate him badly, and bring him to here room. A crazy dangerous insane plan.

Tim enters a tigers gate after he shot and sedated the tiger. Tim starts to carry the sleeping tiger. But plans are often riddled with unexpected turns. The boys did not know that there are two tigers in there. They visited the zoo and saw one tiger, but they did not know that probably a few days ago, they brought a mate to the tiger. Tim, the most alive character in the film is now dead.

3.6 The poem

After that there is a ceremony. For the first time in the film, the school does something decent. They let Francis quote a poem of his choice. Francis quotes from the book the nun confiscated. A painful song. The song only contains questions. But not even one answer. Its by William Blake, a person that the nun spoke about as dangerous. Now you will see why.

3.7 The poem and what it means

I will explain what the poem means * in my opinion *. But more than that, I will try to explain what it means to Francis. Again, in my opinion.

Tiger Tiger, burning bright,
In the forests of the night;
What immortal hand or eye,
Could frame thy fearful symmetry?

Remark: The tiger, is an extremely cruel animal. This is not a theory. The tiger *killed Tim*.

He is burning bright, namely, he is like s fire: kills anything that it touches. He leaves in the wilderness (forest) and in the night, so its victim cant see it. A dangerous beast.

What kind of god (immortal) could frame (create) a creature so evil and dangerous that kills with no reason? What a god can create the tiger?

This question was asked so many times. God, why do you allow so much evil in this world?

The last line does not rhyme. To draw attention to the end of the creation of evil. The tiger is a quite perfect killing machine as the word symmetry implies.

In what distant deeps or skies.
Burnt the fire of thine eyes?
On what wings dare he aspire?
What the hand, dare seize the fire?

Remark Fire is evil in this song. The tiger is fire. After the tiger is born, who do you expect to control it? Where do you put it: In what distance deeps or skies. burnt the fire of thine eyes? Can you put it in a safe distance. In the sky above maybe? Deep inside earth maybe? Can you control evil after creating it? Rhetorical questions whose answer is no. The tiger will be with us not far away.

Therefore the song asks: ”What the hand, dare seize the fire?” Is there a flying creature who dare comes near the tiger. Who has the guts to get close to a tiger (evil). Who dares face evil?

And what shoulder, what art,
Could twist the sinews of thy heart?
And when thy heart 
began to beat, What dread hand?
What dread feet?

Remark: The poet compares the god to an artist. In frustration he asks:
And what shoulder, what art, Could twist the sinews of thy heart?
God: How could you let the heart of an evil like the tiger start beating? Namely, how could you twist the sinews of thy heart?

And after you created the monster, did you look in horror on the dread hand and the dread feet? These amazing hand and feet who are so deadly?

What the hammer?
what the chain,
In what furnace was thy brain?
What the anvil?
what dread grasp,
Dare its deadly terrors clasp!

Remark: Now, he is comparing god to a blacksmith. People who know Blake know that this is a very frequent comparison for Blake. Those who know the film *The seventh seal* may remember that a blacksmith is among those who death took to the last run on the mountains, toward their death.

Furnace is heat. A blacksmith often deals with fire to melt metal. But here the poet asks: was god crazy when he created the tiger? In what furnace was thy brain? Namely, did you have fever of some kind when you created the tiger?

From Wikipedia: An anvil is a basic tool, a block with a hard surface on which another object is struck. What tool dares be used in the creation of the tiger asks Blake? Even the non human tools do not want to participate in the creation of the Tiger.

When the stars threw down their spears
And watered heaven with their tears:
Did he smile his work to see?
Did he who made the Lamb make thee?
Remark: The last verses can not be understood without knowing the work of Blake. Blake wrote a lot on a hugely long, and hugely boring in my opinion poem by Milton, called *Paradise Lost*. In this poem, Satan once lived in heaven. He was the most powerful and beautiful angel in heaven. There was no hell.

But *Paradise lost* describes a mutiny by Satan and some other angels. Jesus took on them alone and won the war in just 3 days. The rebels tried to shoot spears to kill Jesus and failed.

God then then he punishes Satan and the other rebel angels. A very cruel punishment. He creates hell, a place in which his habitants are being burned for ever. He expels Satan and the other rebel angels to hell.

Stars is a metaphor for the rebelling angels. The spears were used in the 3 days war.

Now Satan and the other rebel angels have to leave heaven and go to heal. The angels start crying. They think the revenge is way to cruel. Before they are expelled, their tears fill heaven. Like the song says: "watered heaven with their tears". Is hell not a too harsh punishment?

And what about what happened to Tim. Is the tiger not an excessive punishment?

Did Tim really sin? And if so you think death is the right answer?

Then Blacke asks good if he enjoys what he does. He asks god:

Are you glad to see your win? Or like the song says Did he smile his work to see? Did you feel superior and better than the created? That you always win? Are you glad to see how you are so powerful and all the rest are so small compared to you? Did you enjoy their demise? Did you take some sick pleasure in their pain?

The main question:

Did he who made the Lamb make thee?

Do you not think its a bit Hippocratic? You created the Lamb, Jesus, and he preaches love. But then Tim (maybe) sins and then all the love Jesus preaches to is forgotten? What about the line "Love the sinner hate the sin?"

Blacke wrote on the Catholic faith who is extreme since it says that the church can never be wrong. The church was always here. Before any existence. The
pope is the voice of god. And he is never wrong.

The Lamb is a poem by William Blake about innocence. A child talking to a lamb. The lamb as we know symbolizes Jesus. And while the tiger is evil, the lamb is innocence.

Blake asks: How could you have created Jesus that preaches so much about love but then you create the tiger? The same god that creates Jesus his son, creates the tiger? Is this not hypocrisy.

3.8 Question I would think Francis would ask

You talk about mercy but create evil? You talk about mercy but have no compassion for the girl raped by here brother? You have no compassion for Tim? They told us you are good, in the Catholic school.

But the existence of this cruel school, and in your name, makes a mockery of the idea of a good god. They mistreat us here. In your name. Are you fine with that?

You do not seem to care. You still created evil. You let Tim die by the creature you created, the tiger, God, dont you think it is as if you killed Tim yourself. You are such a cruel god!

3.9 Francis on love

All of this was caused because of love. Do you have anything against love? If I would not have loved Margie, then she would not have told me that she was raped by her brother. Thus, if I did not love Margie, Time would have been alive. What is wrong with you? You have something against love.

Why did you pull such an over cruel vengeance on the rebel angels? Or on Tim? You are simply an evil god who does not care.

3.10 The end of the poem

Tiger Tiger burning bright,
In the forests of the night:
What immortal hand or eye, Dare
frame thy fearful symmetry?

Remark: The repetition tells us no question was answered. God keeps silent. All the above are questions remain with no answer and especially one eternal question: God, why do you keep silent with so much evilness in the world? Why dont you even give even a sign? Show that you care. That you care for the raped girl? What about dead Tim? Why dont you say SOMETHING?

Well, god is not the only creator. The film ends with Francis inventing a new comic series. The character is Tim, Skeleton Boy. Skeleton because this is all what remains of Tim. And from this comics at the end it is as if Tim comes back to life and is reborn.

4 Beware the Gorilla

A song: By Georges Brassens

There is no one in history whom I love more. One of my adopted fathers and among them the most dear to me.

Beware the gorilla

Peeping through the cast-iron gate
Many a girl of the neighborhood
Examined a powerful ape
Without hope, ’twill be understood.
Brazenly with no shame each maid
Even looked at a certain spot
Which, because of my mother orders
To say it out loud I cannot.

Beware the gorilla !

All at once, the prison, well-closed,
Where the glorious animal dwelled
Opened; don't know why (I suppose
They didn't lock the door so well).
And, eschewing mendacity
"Today's the day I'll it lose!"
The ape referred to his chastity,
You'll divine, if you're not parvenus.

Beware the Gorilla!

The zoo master, irresolute
Cried in distress, invoked God's name
"I'm afraid as the big brute
Has never even known a dame."
As soon as all the female crew
Learned the innocence of the ape
Far from tempting the ingenue
Run away and to far have escaped

Beware the Gorilla!

The very same gals that, hereto
Wolfed him down whole with their glance
Fled, proving they had not a clue
How great can be such a romance.
Fatal error, we should insist
For a gorilla's ziggurat
Can better a man's in the lists.
Many a girl will tell you that.

Beware the Gorilla!
Everyone run as hell
From the reach of the ape in heat
Save a certain wrinkled old belle
And a young judge dressed for his seat.
Seeing all retire from the field
The quadrumane chartered his shag
By the aping gowns that revealed
The magistrate and the old hag.

Beware the Gorilla!

"Bah, whispered the hundred-year-old,
This will not constitute my demise
Cause if its intent is to touch me
It will be just a pleasant surprise
His honor considered calmly:
"To believe I am a she-monk
He’d have to be quite balmy”...
An idea the facts will debunk.

Beware the Gorilla!

Now suppose one of your genera
Like this poor beast were compelled to
Violate a judge or a grandma,
Which would he choose here to do?
If a likewise election,
One of these days should be mine,
It is, I’m sure, the direction
Of the dame I’ll take every time.

Beware the Gorilla!

But, sadly, if the big primate
In the game of love’s worth his toll.
It seems he’s indiscriminate
Both in his taste and with his soul.
Now, instead of choosing the gal’s robe
As would anyone else but he,
He seized the judge by the earlobe
And dragged him into the trees

Beware the Gorilla!

The rest would be more than jolly.
Alas, it is not here for me
To tell and believe me I’m sorry
I’m sure it would give you much glee.
For the judge, at the Moment of Truth
Called ”Mama!”, shed many tears, and cried
Like the man this day he had earlier
sent to the Chair to be fried!

Beware the Gorilla!

Remark: what do I care?

In the USA the States(s) kill people and call it the rule of law.

I am not for killing anyone, but just wishing that every judge to ever confuse himself with god, and to ever send even a single person to death (by the way: many of whom are sent to death were innocent, but committed the ultimate USA crime: they were poor and they were black) even if this person was guilty, shall endure an experience as the above. Be raped by a Gorilla. After all it does not kill you. You did kill someone. Just a wish. Just a wish.

A controlling body (like a state) is evil by definition (because power corrupts).
The power of states should be reduced to the absolutely minimum.
I will make people that worship death a suggestion. If a prisoner is convicted