

Rafterous, Rootiment

Tim Ramick

Rafterous

go from the crawlspaces of worn houses to the framework of weathered bleachers, from the structural supports of condemned wooden rollercoasters to the shade of elevated boardwalks, from wherever you are to rafters, travelent, weatherive, shrove is brought to ash and maundy gets it good, spacious (specious) construction (constriction) allows air and elbow room, gracious light, fake cessation for the go-getters and bootstrappers and margin-minnows of this world, promoting ways to determine what should be subject to indifference and what to adherence, dismissing the irrelevant as irreverent and welcoming penetration from either side of the verb for the willfully phantomed as well as the gladly orificed, sky of blue sense and bluer senselessness, white sounds of mobility never fully appreciated but appreciated nevertheless, torque, ratchet and shank, moment subsequent to moment, into the rafters with me you could come, where there exists, without roof above or grate below, a hellish hayloft and a heavenly pyre where one can pass existences without ever glimpsing stars or flames, amid innumerable beams and posts and slanted braces, or tinder and kindling and massive faggots, now, while waiting, I sequester myself under and around and amongst timber, aware of knotholes and grain patterns as if they were the skinmarks (freckles, creases, pores) and the memorized fingerprints of the one love, the untemporary soul's temporal sheath, and these hideaways out of the sun suit my ambition, stakes not on the first breath and the final exhalation but on the keen release of the initial lungful and the swell intake of the last, scrimp and splurge, beam and pout, witness the laugh of a radiant joist and the joy of a hearty lath, my friends, seek my hide, promote the white elephant in me and discourage the termite, out of love cloven from want, the simultaneous

stiffening and loosening of genitals justifies endeavor and the notion of stillness holds hands with that of continuum, a sliver in my tongue, elevating my speech to private language, I wish you were all women or all men or all of less fleshliness and palpability (no fresh buds), reassuringly skeletal with bones striated from acerbic wit, a caustic chiseling toward marrow, to extract it, dry it out, pulverize it and masticate with mouths shared, crouching to eye me under the platform, your shoes and voices my way of supposing you to be you, triangles shorn to stark charm, having fashioned a life for yourselves of cleverness and gestures and red and green longstockings, ways of being remarkable and marvelous without being bothered by living loads, twirl, roil and slink, be the ones to envy, be better at squatting or clambering or hanging like possums, I will feel awkward and partial beside you, disbelieving distances so to surround myself with demarcation, there is comfort in making mistakes, making plans because they can go wrong, making wishes upon disintegrating atmospheric chunks of flux, assuring ourselves of flavorful hope, botch, goof and flub away, we are children up until the end, or what resembles an end, what constitutes an end but is ultimately only an end, *end* being as flimsy a word as *infinity* or a phrase like *Stand exactly there!* (even with an accompanying pointing gesture), ego errors whelmed by grace, rivet, bonch and clemp, smitten by ebullience and follicles, what if cold air rose and hot air sank, cement foundation to attic eaves, putting the squeeze on purgatory, within walls there is insufficient diagonal surge, without walls access becomes the monster, open horizons mold slackers and cubicles breed entrepreneurs, wonder and roam, invest and secure, in the rubble we will cultivate a shaft of light upon a tarn of shade at the bottom of our brains, fencesitting is an antiquated version of standing in the middle of a boulevard at a ventrical and arterial rush hour with your mind calibrated to certainty, homing, tourance, visitate, deliveration, gazing through the railing at some object or scenario

(summer grass, birds in formation, gentlemen hanging laundry) toppling no post and blurring no boundary but shifting a portion of the fence's purpose from the pragmatic (short-sighted) to the aesthetic (sentimental), do it daily while coring your apple, under clouds or not, dressed for the wind or not, absolutely alone or absolutely not, trestlings and scaffolds, I remember when she smelled my neck, her lung tides inconsistent and solar, my shame for my specific living collapsed into a lymph node, marble-like and non-transferrable, she, about to speak, but suddenly silent, rolled it with the tip of her tongue, her happy chest hoven and brushing my flank, ribbed and slickened, satellites blinking as they revolved around her pupils, solitary in her irises, while he, sweat-limbed, pulled the paperback, sweetly limp, from his front pocket, brilliance like sap staining his trousers, dead wordsmith residue, unspendable treasure, and he quoted an archival blurb, a twilight hillside of 100,000 fireflies, I squinted, he spat, I wish you shrunk and petrified, strip a bolt with my teeth, the water is rising, we must struggle to drown, rafts may float but rugs can fly, twitter, shimmer, belly your way into hearts, serpentine and talent tongued, flick delight, a spray of glory mornings, or get there by proxy, later than afterthought, what is left of a painting on the retina after a polaroid of the painting has been glanced at and discarded, I crave vast debris with oxygen pockets, our Earth hollowed out and filled with broken bridges, tangled spans and wooden hair, God is not a brush, there will be no bearings but gravity and sequence, splinters will be the souvenirs of every fall, tweeze and pluck, what if none of us could motion toward anything that could not be otherwise, inertia never teases, this ≠ that, this —> not-this, not-this = that, keep death as a pet in an aquarium out on the patio of your eventuality, tending to it daily as if it were an exotic cactus blooming once in a millennium, nonplussed by its lethal spines and enamored by its ultimate fragrance, cul-de-sac faith mounts yard islands, gravel and bark, if I put your

breasts upon my chest there is quick despicable harmony, like cockroach eggs friends are capable of rafting into conglomerations, rattle and hum, cattle and cane, under the house one hears living being accomplished by those above, the timbre of their filtered voices filling the gaps between their toes, the strain of the furniture strung taut by unnecessary memory, affection sifts through the floorboards as manna (genuine) and nostalgia's breath (terminal) and ransom (renewable), where electric light carries musty odor and dark dirt conveys illumined sound, two by fours and free for all, in a crowded room stroll past me as the marrying gift, spill your drink in my lap and dive into its ancient grotto, speak of childhood mapping, of apparel cartography, of mazed charting, the sky rains balsa and we build a lightweight totem out back on a warm September evening while we listen to a radio station out of a neighboring country, space between songs as between stars and ears, car-lot spotlights sweeping the sky, criss-crossing, alluretive, projectant, strategemed, my palms taste of kneepits, tell me, over beers, of a swilled original paragrapher, one who cares not only about what went before but about what should not come after, this is my personifesto, makes me wince, kidney poke, regurgitated failure coats my throat, nothing new in the shade either, blink and we are blue, we survive on borrowed urge, ascend the old rough pillar with your butt at my nose, reach the highway underbelly, your feet caked with pigeon droppings, eyes aglow with taillights, tap my sternum for chagrin, exaggerate whine and you have sin, amplify self-pity to achieve contempt, purge and slouch, biff bang pow, pass and stow, under the pier one can barnacle trust to the up-and-up or to the heft and suck of the surf, we are more about what sticks to us than what we stick to, what-next storytelling springs from the tempter while inbetweens and go-betweenes are divine and sheer joyous plotlessness would be ours still if not for that one pulpy pick and bite, plunge into the tale and be in collusion with the lie or lie in an opium field and watch clouds

uncloud and circumvent the coming *rapture* (render it superfluous, make it moot), out on the father river the eddies beautifully blue-ball, out on the mother sea the doldrums fry your petals, suspect that being with me is the next best thing to being alone, beginning to throw the bone but never actually throwing the bone, being alone being the condition of choice for all who cohabit stuffy rooms of erudition, accreditation, elucidation, wed and stead me, read and feed me, tread, leaden and lead me, put a canvas lawn chair in my head, level and lassitude perfect, not to be budged by stringent time or pliant forgetfulness, we should follow our own footsteps with our whole beings (wrapped) rapt

Rootiment

come into the sheltering tangle of near origin where beginnings swell toward sustain while growth is a swift given and survival is granted ancestor to punk — sprout from a rift after a-sowing they did go (hi-ho the nary whoa) and now it is spittle and bounce and cloverbreath and a boy becomes a beast and devours a damsel — scouts often unblossom this way — watch me stir and segregate your knees, let me root your canal, seed I was and weed I am and dandelion I will be for you to puff and wish upon because I can no longer droop myself — to loosen your lips, big mistake, to loosen your other lips, mistake a million fold — stem the tide, feed the tree, hug your kid, Mack the Knife — grant us friction over fiction, sage learning over page turning, plain agony over protagony — rise induces paradiso ambitions, sheer Babel beanstalk energy, sweat surmounting for the sure-handed sure-footed acclivitors among us, those who lilt pep and silver lining, the words rousing this little light of mine and that little light of yours to shine outside our bushel pecks — give us gerties over ernies, vladimeres over stradiverys, gasses over bellows, eggs over queasy — we still have dirt under our nails from clawing our

way to air, now, while tarrying, fathering has torn me from the ether and slid me into loam, slid me into women who have salamander eyes and who perpetually secrete and it is difficult (now that I find myself mattering) to be a clean negligible husk in such a moist world — rock the boat, keep the faith, have a heart, pull the plug, buy the farm, Christ the Lord — my father and his father and his father before him . . . plant a gallstone, my friends, reap an heir, cast it into the sky and conceive a Creator, plunge your arm up to your elbow in a feminine cache and fury out a howling future, or go from inconsequent to ordinaire to foundatory, accepting, for the moment, that dominos are incapable of falling backward and forward simultaneously, that milk sours faster when the glass sits on skin and not on formica — amazing what must be swallowed in any given half hour on this planet, swallow my spillings with vehemence into your hips, speak fallow love with plowed joy, beat around the bush for the sake of the bush, exhumers seldom discover tumors capable of bulbing or tubers nurtured from crib to crypt — a shovel is no match for a big tree but two spades in sync can do the trick, crush the lumberjack with the lumberjill, poppycock with daisycunt, make room for the sniffly sapling with the digging spoon — dogs snuff lawns with damp dog noses — switch blather with bother, lather your other, slaver the clever, father your mother — refuse to relinquish yourselves to prefixes or suffixes and deny the sanctity of the root word, the verbatim source — entice with your tar pit eyeliner, lure lads who labor honestly for a place to park their swollen picnics, birth a billion guppy sapiens in the frigid liquid of the Hudson as easily as the fertile waters of the Mediterranean, open yourself to markings and drool, whisper to me across a fleshworld shoulder (your ovary voice testicled) about fertilizer in the past and fodder in the future, be the present furrower, revere the kit and kaboodle while I lobby for uprootedness, revel in the no-outletting, the cul-de-sacking, with celibate fists shoved into pockets, shoes

unsure but sidewalk familiar, knees pointed toward home, toward the having and the holding, the sounding and the fathoming, the torquing, igniting, recouping, winnowing, garnishing, facking, prying, sicking, guving, a-e-i-o-u-ing, 3-2-1-blastoffing, gone going going, my father and his father and his father before him . . . nevermind, sweet men all — agree with me that life is always ripe but we ought (tenaciously) to hold dear our private scurvy, sunny citrus suits us not, nor voluptuous summer peaches, nor apple autumn snap, nor guava exotica, nor even vineyard trappings, we lick freezer metal, we suck quarry slab, we chew petrified stump — armchair travellers (Raymond Roussel is rad!), castle builders (mad virgin Ludwig is to weep for!) and slice-of-pie painters (Thiebaud rules!) understand gorgeous ferocious inertia — languish, dream of dreaming, read with your reading light off, assent that every one of us goes dark, tell yourselves that there is no more melancholy in the sudden shadow of a falling airliner than in the cave rendering of a woolly mammoth, no more vigor in a stampede than in cloud dispersal, our sum total is buried out back, what delicious luxury to take for granted what we must never take for granted — a morning meadow of 100,000 mushrooms, garden dirt seldom grotesquely overacheives, long live tangled coxcombry, the twisted, brambled, roundabout long cuts, nothing is as clear as mud, breathe in more of what is missing than what is here — take a billiard ball, of any kind, striped or solid, cue or eight, ingest it whole (along with a pea for its moon) and the tide-wash across its enamel surface will flush away unproductive blood — be embroiled, not hard-boiled, be muddled, be mused, be wildered — turgid torpid tepid prose \geq clever aphorisms, truisms \leq slice of life can't-put-them-downs, disavow sentences that metastasize into fig leaves, what gets exchanged is a shift of matter, and what matters is not the impact but the ricochet — hoist insinuates presumptive effort, projected might, a tightening of sinew cables, intention beyond the elegant whim, not simply a lifting of a leg to improve

the angle — screw yourselves without dildos, donuts, inflatables, appendages, gourds, pillows, kettle spouts, eggplant, mukluks, bedknobs, broomsticks, rhetoric, health insurance, herbs, hindsight, prophecy or industrialstrengthgoldenrulepollendispersal, give me pretentious over sanctioned, artificial over apparent, really fake over sort of real — expect yourselves into disappointment like domesticated carpet corners, foolish to leave, stupid to stay, and assuming that the radius of the tether is as much for the pole as for the ball, give off a laugh closer to a yowl than a titter, the sorrow of absence giving birth to that most sensual of grievings: loss before there is loss, not a glimpse of Machu Pichu as it was or of Las Vegas as it will be, not the patented furnace or the baptism tub or the nosebleed ladder, but yourselves projected so far out in empty space that a glance back shows the expansive objectified universe as merely a pinprick of light, as if all the substantive stuff composed a solitary star — my mother and her mother and her mother before her in their hap-hap-happy rise and shines — something must exist that is not greater than, nor less than, nor in any way equal to, something not now, previous or next — an instant undone and the pollywog is back in the waiting pool and we are insular and bereft — find fault with self before other even when this is ridiculous, when the plant diserects miserably from rot who could fairly point a finger and say *serves it right* — I am not you, you are not me, we are not them, so what if I do not know what *you* is or who you are or why you keep becoming, there never has been, nor ever will be, a You-generation, although there was, until recently, a you-gender — nonetheless (allthemore), there are scads of yous, yous here and yous there, here a you, there a you, everywhere a you, you know, peering out at me from the shadows of a shortening day, from the bowers of a percussive tree, from the folds of an analytical land — we, as the encapsulated world, save our *I-and-Thous* for the holy Only, our *I'm Okay, You're Okays* for the generic Other, our I-O-Us for whomever

(whenever), but for the you of yours we reserve our saliva, our softer tissues, our eaves and pits and back doors, our most hearty false hopes, our spectacular evils, our monthly bills and blood and new moons, our morning breathing and flexions, our fetishes, our toothpaste and tweezers, our daily bread and commode, and rarely (by sweep of hatred, random violence, confidential romantic pact or swift disaster) our death rattles, our final takings away, our oblongs and biers and urns, our evanescent sleaving spirit risals — surf the kerf, pay the piper, make your mark, meet your maker, kick the can, kick the bucket, pass the buck, Smokey the Bear, *rudimentary*, curb the berm — the earth is susceptible to arousal, insert your big toe into her and measure her temperature along your shinbone, find a rain puddle, crouch low, stare wide, resist blinking, let your cornea touch water and absorb it through your dilated pupil into that palm at the end of your mind (mental fronds greening) — if love is rifled and accomplishment is lauded then happiness is witnessed as ineffable luck, reeve the rope with confidence, virtually all ownership is false and disgusting and condoned, create a mistresspiece and disrupt the language trajectory, stretch a hammock in my chest and empty your steamer trunk, it will always smell mobile, weatherent, travelous, we should never pilgrimage toward a place to abide upon this Earth where nothing is — rude — rued.