

Going Home to Another Way
September 12, 2020

Opening

On Turning 10
Billy Collins

The whole idea of it makes me feel
like I'm coming down with something,
something worse than any stomach ache
or the headaches I get from reading in bad light--
a kind of measles of the spirit,
a mumps of the psyche,
a disfiguring chicken pox of the soul.

You tell me it is too early to be looking back,
but that is because you have forgotten
the perfect simplicity of being one
and the beautiful complexity introduced by two.
But I can lie on my bed and remember every digit.
At four I was an Arabian wizard.
I could make myself invisible
by drinking a glass of milk a certain way.
At seven I was a soldier, at nine a prince.

But now I am mostly at the window
watching the late afternoon light.
Back then it never fell so solemnly
against the side of my tree house,
and my bicycle never leaned against the garage
as it does today,
all the dark blue speed drained out of it.

This is the beginning of sadness, I say to myself,
as I walk through the universe in my sneakers.
It is time to say good-bye to my imaginary friends,
time to turn the first big number.

It seems only yesterday I used to believe



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there was nothing under my skin but light.
If you cut me I could shine.
But now when I fall upon the sidewalks of life,
I skin my knees. I bleed.

1 Corinthians 13:11

When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child;
when I became an adult, I put an end to childish ways.

Closing

Gerard Manley Hopkins
From "Carrion Comfort"

Not, I'll not, carrion comfort, Despair, not feast on thee;
Not untwist –slack they may be – these last strands of man
In me or, most weary, cry *I can no more*. I can;
Can something, hope, wish day comes, not choose not to be.

From Rilke's Book of Hours
Love Poems to God

I believe in all that has never yet been spoke.
I want to free what waits within me
So that what no one has dared to wish for

may for once spring clear
without my contriving.

If this is arrogant, God, forgive me,
But this is what I need to say.



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May what I do flow from me like a river,
no forcing and no holding back,
the way it is with children.

Then in these swelling and ebbing currents,
These deepening tides moving out, returning,
I will sing you as no one ever has,

streaming through widening channels
Into the open sea.