

TIFERET: LITERATURE, ART, & THE CREATIVE SPIRIT

"A Little Levity, Please": A Writer's Doxology

By George Blecher

Thanks for a full bladder, the will's secret motor to start the day. Thanks for the morning fear—even if I exist now very soon I will not, and then what a distance to eternity!—and for vanity, Aphrodite's gift, that dispels the fear by offering a pimple over one's eyebrow. Thanks for that pimple.

Thanks for the short walk to the coffee shop past London plane trees perpetually shedding their bark. Thanks to Mr. Moody, my high school biology teacher, for showing us how life thrives on death, how it eats the rot of itself and prospers.

Thanks to Gus, Mike, Janni, the two Nikos, Pancho, Maria, Graciella and the unseen cooks in the diner for fast service and smiles. Thanks to the customers for sharing their need for closeness, the regulars eating their breakfasts elbow to elbow, as unknown and familiar as secondary players on TV sitcoms.

Thanks for the view from my window with its sliver of park, light reflected off a church tower, outline of a bridge miles away. Thanks for the bad caulking around the window frame, a reminder that life is draughts and aggressive bacteria as well as good views. Thanks for distractions—magazines, e-mails, dirty dishes, phone messages—that take up time until the anxiety becomes manageable. Thanks for the wisdom to have stopped yesterday in the middle of a page. Thanks for the difficulty of work, and for not being able to remember how difficult it is after it's over. Thanks for tiny truths being so shy about revealing themselves: how else could they be sure that they're wanted and deserved?

Pigeons circling above the projects. Hunger for

Chinese food—thanks to that country for egg rolls! Thanks for full stomachs and procrastination, for the urge to take a nap and the lack of will to resist; and thanks for sleep ending, the fear coming back but the birds circling, for friends' phone calls and their petty complaints—and thanks for the revulsion against their pettiness, thanks for fantasies of power and sex and towering fame, all that pent-up frustration ending in a paroxysm of disgust, and thanks for being disgusted by disgust and finding one's way back to work.

Pigeons still circling, though fewer. The moment around 4:00 in the afternoon when the day sprawls in an armchair, takes a deep breath and exhales. Out. In. Out. In. One is never more in life's hands than now. Thanks. Thanks.

Thanks for the cessation of work! For the basement exercise room that costs only \$175 for the entire year! And scented soap in hot showers! Thanks for not revealing what tonight may bring, yet encouraging belief in its possibilities—that the restaurant's tablecloths will be so white that one's eyes will tear, that conversation will restore our faith in charm and wit, that for once the movie director won't cut to the chase but leave it out entirely. Thanks for the hope of self-improvement and of improvement in general (though it is a vain hope). Mostly, thanks for the loneliness that makes us seek out other people. Thanks for all the problems—the high PSA count, the reflux, the son's sudden whim to drop out of high school—that make us need each other even more.

Thanks for the fact that even if the fear is justified, one is capable of moments of gratitude. Thanks for what's on the other side of the door.