

GERARD BEIRNE

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## Mediation #42: The Commotion of My Passing

I wait my turn on clumps of hay/the mounting pile of amputated limbs/surgeons in blood and pus-stained coats working by candlelight/whiskey, quinine, slops/manure, offal, gangerine/the filthy lucre of life's theatre/anesthetised and raving like Broadway critics/let's not nit-pick/the blurb ways

of someone else's days/the pin scratches, splinter pricks, pustulas, and abrasions that bring the curtain down/chumps, the lot/Alright then, so the condemned man is electrified/cod-fried and he's had his greasy chips/by God the bloodied limbs are five foot high/the saws and knives are out for us/I say

bring on the dancing girls, the chorus line/in any case there's more of us with gross atomic secrets we're taking to the grave/I ask you, why save the best till last/the cast is overcast/don't blab too much/keep troubles to yourself/I'm feeling fine/a healing of first intention/Don't mention it/okay,

okay, I'm sick.../a second class intervention/lunch then/crackers, cheese, tuna fish/how can I get out of this/ meanwhile all around us the war goes on/the covered carts and litters remove the wounded from the field of battle/or transport the invalids in a retrograde march/my oh my, how we do prattle

on/perhaps another one of your songs/*here we go looby loo*/that moan, they say, was for your leg/ thrown on the rotting heap/let no one say the end comes cheap/not a peep/tomorrow the packing and tentative goodbyes/and that's about the size of it/the rest and then some sleep/

the incredulous human vision of something better than that which is/all in stitches with thread moistened by saliva/surgical knives sharpened on the soles of your boot/cornmeal and hardtack fried in pork grease/arteries clamped and tied with silk/isn't that the truth/a fetid bayou

filled with floating cats/hands, arms, legs and feet/no way to sneak out on this/accept my kiss  
without emotion/ it's all the rage/And in the commotion of my passing.../but you said.../what  
did I say/how did I set the stage/I am on my way out now/ with nowhere left to go/

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GERARD BEIRNE is an Irish writer now living in Canada. His most recent collection of poetry is *Games of Chance: A Gambler's Manual* (Oberon, Ottawa, 2011). He has published two novels including *The Eskimo in the Net* (Marion Boyars Publishers) which was shortlisted for the Kerry Group Irish Fiction Award. A new novel is forthcoming in the Fall.