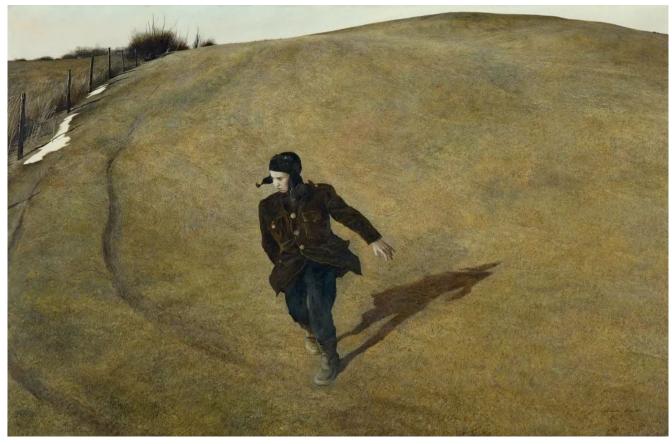
Longitudes, Old Habits, & Shu

by Lawrence Cottrell (August 2022)



Winter, Andrew Wyeth, 1946

Longitudes

- We discuss such things now ... what I'd do should she die ... my days without her by-and-by ...
- Almost like speaking of the weather, or when I'll mow next,

or what ought be on a grocery list.

- But still (and mostly), I sigh and move on, unable to bear the unbearable,
- Having found late in life that familiarity, even thirty years of it,
- Doesn't breed scorn perforce but can be a homecoming, a

getting used to another's tale as one's own story … Gives-and-takes switched for the worn away wills of early years together,

like spacklings of holes in plaster.

When magics have undone, each veil's lifted, abatises

wrecked

(strewn onto time's tender mercies),

- Love of a whatsoever quiet kind may drift longitudes of fissuring selves,
- Souls that weave discarnate threads 'to pied batistes of dawn

on fortune's dusking fells...

Old ordinary tells transmuted by our need for heartening dearlings of the holy—

Old Habits

- Swallows gyre beneath the bridge, rote sense ranged north to rendezvous with June,
- Chase fugitive life above a river as new flock of old habits, pennies for prodigal mind...
- To spend when bitter winds pry hasps of autumn, rime's stormed the last blue bonny inch of asters;
- Buy fractions of a once upon a waking, nest airy gambols of mind with yester's making ...
- Corrupt the culprit, death, with undertows to take the taking,
- Visions flitting through green gush of summer in December...
- Memory's hymns forsaking angles, the grim inclemencies

of winter, Tongues of fire that speak to shadowlands accrued within the faded vigor of a sun,

cause to blow 'mid snow pink mists of eglantine-

Shu

Shu (imaginary God of the real wind) Pries Shingles, Whips Signs Along The Avenue, Is Treble Shackled То Bass, Stitched То Wail; Hollo through cracks wild songs То The Bric-a-brac. I would furl canvas on spars, Run No More То Heaven's blow,

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Abjure
Earth's toss of mane against the manses and the jakes ...
Denounce
That
Cannonade
0f
Sky
Like
Saint
Α
Heresy ...
    burrow into hush on some concavity of time ...
Minuet
With
Eddies
0f
The
Easy, ambling gestures
0f
Α
Serpentine-
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Table of Contents

Lawrence Cottrell has lived in West Virginia, mostly, preferring to dwell among good people, in a place where change is an unloved orphan. He has a BA from West Virginia State University and attended several graduate schools, leaving each finally to walk mist-hewn hollers and prowl wind-blasted ridges, to be where valleys can be spanned by two arms and a broom handle, and noons aren't quite sure of themselves. His poems have appeared in *The Lyric*, *Appalachian Heritage*, *Good Foot* and *Grab-a-Nickel*, among others. His work is in the celebrated anthology *Wild Sweet Notes: Fifty Years of West Virginia Poetry 1950-1999*. He blooms presently at a bend of Elk River's meander.

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