

Lotophagoi & Lovers No More

by [Jack D. Harvey](#) (November 2024)



Sea at Dusk (Emil Nolde)

Lotophagoi

In our dreams,
longing for nothing
wanting nothing,
waking in the same frame
are we lotus eaters all,
too lazy to desire
in the lazy curve
of days and nights

a certain point of inflection?

Lounging in the same
eternal summer seaside
is that where we really want to be?

Eat of that unforbidden fruit,
eat to your heart's content
and forget it all,
pass a life
in drowsy relief,
locked in an unmoving
fostering landscape.

Homer's lotophagoi
come to enlist us
and no Odysseus to harry us,
hurry us back
to the ship, our duty
and the hard impatient sea,
death waiting
in every passage, every plunge
of the sea-drenched bow.

Is it worth it?
Forsaking the ease
and certainty
of same day after day,
leaving the summer resort behind,
where every line is drawn
and permanently etched.

Yes, it is, by any measure.

Let's get underway,
drag the good old black boat
off the shingle,

down to the waves
ship the oars,
throw caution and safety
to the winds.

Long days, long nights await,
faraway seas and lands
we will face in a fury
of defiance, refusing
the comfort of being at rest,
remaining in the close embrace
of certain security;
not easy, but we freely pay the price
for the grace to live freely,
to enter a world
exploding with life and death,
ready and waiting for us,
ready and waiting at the drop of a hat
to murder us
or by a better fate
make us burn with life.

Lovers No More

With the pertinacity
of an English archbishop,
bulldozing his way into
God's parlor,
she hammered the fact
of regret, etcetera
(hurt feelings and remorse)
into my blunt noddle;
honey we're done, you know.

Didn't she love me anymore?

Taking off in the rain
with the steely unconcern
of a taxi driver
she left me
standing on the pavement,
my burnt heart heavily freighted,
the beginnings of a great loss,
so I thought, grounded
in prior extravagance;
I would have died for love of her
so I said one time or another
or forever mourned her going,
but was any of that
any more real
any less facile
than her parting speech
dismissing me,
her disappearing shape,
high heels clicking,
her stylish behind going
off in the distance?

So I'll find
another one twice as good
here or someplace else
and get rid of her
when the moon is full
and the gin mills are jumping.

At the end of the day
it's all the same.
The necessary will come
when you need it
and go when you don't.

Pretty and satisfying you were
and with you I spent some time

and I'm happy about it,
happy it happened.

I miss you but I don't care;
in the Janus temple of despair
close the gates of grief;
I'm done mourning your loss.

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Jack D. Harvey lives in a small town near Albany, New York and has been writing poetry since he was sixteen. His poetry has appeared in *Scrivener*, *The Comstock Review*, *Valparaiso Poetry Review*, *Typishly Literary Magazine*, *The Antioch Review*, *The Piedmont Poetry Journal* and elsewhere. Jack has been a Pushcart nominee and, over the years, has been published in several anthologies.

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