

Remembering Harry

by [James Como](#) (June 2019)



Artist and Friend, Béla Uitz, 1920

Having once read “Minniver Cheevy”

but being a pussy, Harry cradled his cares
—darting hither and there, round the desk,
past my chair—as though they were delicate crystal.

He moaned “whether as a three-reeler
Or snippets, revealing and concealing”—
Images were Harry’s *metier*—“memories peel
my eyeballs.” His treacheries as wheeler-dealer.

I sat cleaning and loading my pistol
and was sorry to have asked. So sorry,
as he kept on, monologically sparring.
“A *pensee*, hovering like Banquo’s ghost.

No infirmity of old age, this scorching,
but of time itself—not the same. And—listen—
I have not been a bad man. Not hugely bereft.
No matter: small evils too are deadly—”

I interrupted: had to. “Stop, you’ll get feelers.”
I remember the hustlers. “Then you’ll be back in
one fell swoop: Cuban smokes and high balls.”

A touch of oil on the muzzle

made it amenable.

“—as are mistakes”—Harry, without a breath!—

“the kind made for mulligans,

but there are none.

Worse still: evil and error corrode.

Achievements and loves and all

contentments inflame those beasties large

and small mauling at viscera with fang and claw,

desperate for a snack, scratching at doors

of denial—for these good things are *going*, those

not gone are not gone yet. Worse still, I

will not abide.” Harry panting now,

like a hound at the vet, as I spin the cylinder,

satisfied, enjoying the heft, pondering Natural Law.

But Harry: he was like to set fire to his hair:

“Nor final fruition nor celebration.

Worst? Even if as a memory I somehow linger—
be it warm, tender, comforting, and bearing
some dollop of solace for the holder—”

“*You* will not know it! Right you are, Harry.

We vanish as . . . dust? ash? Not even: a
sub-atomic particle—a gluon—spinning in its
nano-void, no *gravitas*, just gall.”

You see I was trying to join in, to share

in his craven myso-memorializing, as my finger
itched, to lighten the burden of my wordy
fucked-up player-friend, Smart Harry,
who said, with spasmodic finality, “Emily,

she heard that fly buzz when she died.”

And I said, “that much? Well, bless
your heart, with such an ending one might abide,
but not you, pal”

—now being this sticky mess.

Why? Because Harry was false.

You see, memories dance our identity,
First as jitterbug then as waltz.
And, alas, often as obscenity.

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James Como is the author, most recently, of