
THE SMALL WORLD OF MIROSLAV MARSALEK

Essay by James Brett



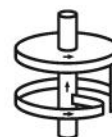
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MIROSLAV MARSALEK

“The Small World of Miroslav Marsalek” An essay by James Brett

I should have written this text already. Moments after our end-button blipped, I could have caged my instinct, lifted that pen and flicked on-off between the red and black balls. Emotional enlightenment is a capricious sod. It flourishes in bad-timely bursts. My profound connection to this writing and drawing was as evanescent then as its transcription remains. I, the unprepared.

Let me tell no more than I experienced during the call. The shadow operator patches the line. It rises and falls like darker times. On the far end, audio-vision. The artist's scraggly foreground scrub, telling, re-telling, un-telling history. Beside him, some sit, some stand, the both are one. This is our mutual glue and cultural commandant, a man who looks like a man with insight.

The insight duly comes. As it speaks, these sudden schoolboys excite their tale to expletion. Miroslav, the discovery, grins across the canal. Andreas, the discoverer, unfolds favourite leaves in succession. The lifetime illuminations duly step away from introversion and into unexpected brilliance. Quite nude, quite flat, they await assessment, as pages lap, the one, the next. A dozen inaccurate diaries whisper strangenesses. Their beings are unfettered by what ought to be.

There are words, too many words, some writ thin, some wide and thick, the curling caps and horizontals hide and seek across the white. Slow-flow streams, they trick the eye and seem to offer guidance. Beware, for they do no such thing. This maker's missives circle and betray the way: a child's learning loose on life, with questions to be known by none. What do they mean, and why, and if, and do they even mean to mean? I read the words, the histories, the theories, but stop, abrupt, my throat too dry, now fearing I'll fall privy to a very particular perception.

Too late, too late. Pure-beef reveries criss/cross-section, circumvent and resurrect the cow. Ronald McDonald rises above an immaculate cursive script. The hamburger, its diametric unity unbound, kneels me converted. The pseudo sado-masochist is no fiction. His comic, neo-cosmic garb remembers embryonic nights, an actual past inside the station's cage, string tied tight against fast pin-prick air. The maestro laughs in commemoration. I am like Hannibal Lecter.

The discoverer is in full flight. He elevates pages, auto-shoots, another, another, until they form an absolute proof. The discoveree glances up, scratches his scraggle, grins ever across the canal. Cross-hatched faces and ruminations, his eternal solitary transit. In our chatter now, as in that ancient subway travelogue, Miroslav is the third man and person, a partially-observed, checking in and out. I grow itchy, uncomforted. He is here, with us. His calligraphic privacies infer connects. This was love, I am sure of it. I probe the draughtsman, poke and scrape, he will not say. It was a game between friends, it's over now. The commute is unseen, save by the unseen.

Miroslav meanders, no more, no less, than his mythologies. His is a tender soft-spoke texture, in whose eyes our outer selves look in. The digital image offers no warmth. I grasp instead at the elusive facts: a family, fragmented; a journalist dad, black-listed; studies, up-ended; life, itinerant and unfolding; a decade of night-school, graphic, embracing; and a limbo of jobs, on/off shitty student jobs, with beds on trains and long black tunnels, leading into an impossible darkness.

The three of us wait, for air and breath. Inside such singularity, a friendly resistance revives. This is not how it was, what you read, what you see. We know, we know. Nothing is how it actually was. There is nothing to say. These books are not very interesting. It's just my small world.