

## Early Requiem for the Children of God

*"In cases where union with the Son is pursued too exclusively —where attention is centered upon the humanity of the historical mediator—religion tends to become an affair, outwardly of 'works' and inwardly of imaginings, visions, and self-induced emotions."*

Aldous Huxley  
*The Devils of Loudun*

*Excuse me,  
are you happy?*  
This greeting I've heard  
from London to Kathmandu.  
Now hear me,  
Children of God!  
Vivekananda  
was speaking to you  
when he said, 'Stay out  
of India.'

But listening  
is not your trip,  
except to detect  
a note of discontent  
in the voice of some hapless  
victim  
you hope to snare in the Devil's  
grip.

I am not disarmed  
by your nauseating charms;  
unfortunately, others are.

You invoke the Son,  
and when an answer  
comes instead  
from Satan  
sheepishly  
you let yourselves be led  
to slaughter;  
to baptism neither of fire  
nor water,  
but of dread.

You talk peace and  
love  
but you make war:  
in your hands  
the sword of Jesus  
loses power daily;  
in your mouths  
Christ's truth  
grows smaller  
than a mustard seed  
in the mind of Buddha.

'A miracle,'  
said Bernard Shaw,  
'is whatever creates faith.'  
Your transparent hate  
has only spawned  
belief:  
useful perhaps  
as a lame man's crutch,  
but hardly valuable  
as a guiding light  
to Heaven.

Dogma is not God,  
only his faded shadow;  
just as the pointing  
finger  
of a Zen monk  
is not the moon:  
your tragic song and dance  
routine  
plays like the Great Way  
in reverse.

It hurt less  
watching my sentimental  
daddy,  
tears streaming down his  
face  
    singing "Mammy,"  
than hearing you  
distort Christ's teachings.

You are only reaching  
emotional cripples,  
the blind leading the  
blind  
through Christianity's double  
bind:

    now you see God,  
now you don't.

A dear friend  
(Jesuit priest in Ceylon)  
blamed this on St. Paul;  
while I reckon  
it was folks like you,  
misreading the erstwhile Saul,  
who turned so many religious pursuits  
into a shell game.

Sorry, my friends,  
but the last thing  
this world needs  
is another cult of magic.

Okay, your late leader,  
Mo David, was no magician  
(as likewise he wasn't a prophet);  
but somewhere among you  
there must be one:  
collectively  
you are a first-class  
vampire coven.

I do not fear magic,  
whether black or white:  
how else could I accept  
the wisdom of Buddhism  
and still worship Maha Kali,  
or get spiritually stoned  
on Rangda's eyes  
in Bali?

But black magicians  
who think they are white  
can give my sense of

history  
a most peculiar fright;  
even though I know  
there's nothing wrong:  
somehow, beyond my ken,  
you belong.

We have journeyed far:  
lived more lifetimes  
than we ever need recall;  
suffered defeat/enjoyed victory  
in more battles than we need recite;  
lived in more nations than need be told.  
Somewhere  
you sold your mind  
to Jesus;  
                    somewhere  
he gave my heart to Man.

God's plan  
is the dream of angels,  
your waking slumber  
is a fiendish nightmare.

I care very much  
that you might heed me,  
knowing full well you will not.

Jesus wept for our sins,  
then died for his own:  
you still roam  
in Jerusalem's gardens  
seeking the bones  
of his final temptation.

Our home  
is in the world,  
the footpath to the  
Father;  
yet you search abroad  
for the Other Shore.

Denying that God  
abides in animals,

you slay them;  
not beholding Christ  
in all your brothers,  
you insult their hearts;  
failing to find love  
on your sisters' lips,  
you refuse to kiss them:  
their whoring for converts  
notwithstanding.

But the mother  
is the child's daughter,  
the father  
the infant's son:  
people thirst  
and you offer them salt,  
pouring the nectar of salvation  
into a stagnant lake of hopelessness.

Even Jesus  
cannot save fools:  
you play in his carpentry  
shop,  
breaking good boards  
with tools  
you cannot handle.

*Except ye be born again  
ye shall not enter,*  
saith the Christ;  
speaking in tongues  
you do not understand.

In the cemetery  
of your hearts  
not even the living  
can bury sorrow;  
like Kali's demons  
they grow fresh  
heads  
from each drop of fallen  
blood:  
gorging bread  
you forgot the wine.

In your sad superior way  
you say I am not ready  
for what you offer.  
I'm not ready  
because I've already gone  
beyond it.

I went beyond it  
the day I stopped selling  
encyclopedias,  
since which time  
I've kept right on trucking.

If we are martyred,  
you and I,  
it will be  
for much the same  
reason;  
nor will our passing  
bring us closer together.

Hearing you,  
gazing long into your  
crazed eyes,  
something very deep  
is awakened;  
and I wonder:  
how differs this  
compassion  
from whatever it is  
you feel for me?

T.S. Eliot spoke for himself,  
and for me, in his *Four Quartets*:  
you, however, have long since  
ceased from exploration,  
mistaking the desert  
for the steps of the  
Kingdom.

Some, like the Master Jesus,  
have pierced the maya  
of sleepy mirages:  
for you

the Dark Night is yet to come.

You are not mad  
because you are happy,  
you act happy  
because you are mad.  
And all I do is smile  
and say: too bad.

As in D.H. Lawrence's  
*The Man Who Died*,  
I am learning  
how the Buddha nature  
also resides in sleeping dogs.

But still I talk,  
a dialogue with myself  
in your clothing;  
exploring for all of us,  
alone.

Let us not  
discuss our miracles,  
let us rather live them.

EDDIE WOODS