

Exile

Volume 37 | Number 1

Article 8

1991

Zephyrs

Steve Corinth
Denison University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.denison.edu/exile>



Part of the [Creative Writing Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Corinth, Steve (1991) "Zephyrs," *Exile*: Vol. 37 : No. 1 , Article 8.

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.denison.edu/exile/vol37/iss1/8>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the English at Denison Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Exile by an authorized editor of Denison Digital Commons.

Zephyrs

If we have sinned, can we ever be good? If man has fallen, can he rise, rise again? — for surely he does. And somewhere in that is where the sin lays. Man is never finished. One act is never enough and yet we treat each one as the best. God's grace: Jesus died to extirpate our sins. Forgive us, Father, for we know not what we do.

Brian thought of God and lack-luster theology as he lay on his back on top of a rock in the tall grass sweeping over the rolling field under a full-blown azure sky sporting voluminous—

He turned dreamily, a languishing smile, to Elaine as she emerged from the tree line twenty yards away. Her skirt and long hair were attracted uncontrollably to the far end of the field; but she kept coming, towards him, pulling against her wayward clothes. Her blouse billowed out, sunk to wrap her body, on a whim. She began to sweep both her outstretched arms from high on her left down in an arc to the right, catching the tall grass bent over in her fingertips, then letting it slip through and starting the motion from the other side. Thus she reaped, and he thought she was singing, but the wind brushed over her face and left only the smiling lips and glimmering eyes.

She mounted the rock and laid down next to him in gentle exhaustion. They both looked up at the full-blown azure sky sporting voluminous...

"Zephyrs," he said.

"What?"

"The clouds are like zephyrs."

"I think you mean zeppelins. Zephyr's a wind."

"Oh." He paused, and then, "I think they should be called zephyrs anyway: it's a much better name."

"O.K., they're zephyrs."

"Yes." And so are we, he said to himself. The sky was their's, the field, this moment. She looked so beautiful, just then, walking across the field, and she was there for him, and him only. He thought the day was as fair as her eyes.

"Where do the zephyrs come from?" he asked.

"Water, I think."

"But where do they start, and where are they going? I mean, did these come from Arkansas and are heading for Europe? They don't move vertically, you know."

"Oh." Oh where, oh where, has my little dog gone? If his dog ran away, and if it was picked up by someone else, could it not live with that other person? And would that other person, that stranger, not treat it as his own — even give it a new name? How similar are dogs and people?

He placed his hand on Elaine's thigh. Was it her thigh? He couldn't tell.

He rolled his head around and looked at her face — yes, it was Elaine, and though he could not see the thigh on which his hand rested, he had to assume it was hers and no one else's. But was it his hand? She crinkled her eyebrows as if to say *What?* and he smiled to reassure her. She looked up, and he looked down at the hand — yes, it came from the arm that sprung from his shoulder; and the thigh came from those hips. Those hips. They were themselves, and he was touching her.

"I think the zephyrs form from water vapor in one spot, say Ohio, and then are carried with the wind until they evaporate somewhere else, say Maine."

"Main, mane, sounds the same, but who's to blame?"

"What?" she giggle-asked.

"Oh, nothing." Hmmm, years ago, when he was about sixteen, he was driving his girlfriend to some friend's house. Something came up about an old boyfriend, or maybe it was just someone who had had a crush on her. He said something afterwards to her which he meant, but didn't know how he meant it. What he said was this: "You know, dating you is like buying a used car." She did not take it well. The word 'used' does not carry agreeable connotations in respect to girls' reputations, and it was probably that which had insulted her. But it was forgotten before the night was lost.

He had a friend, now, who dated only bitches. He didn't think his friend was a martyr, or suffered from horrible taste in women. It was just his friend's way of making sense of the world. If they weren't bitches, he would still be going out with them. And the present girlfriend was always a queen, of sorts. And there could be only one at any given moment.

He thought about the used car lying next to him and knew it was impossible to turn back the mileage, but this was not something on which he wished to dwell. Actually, he did not try to turn back the mileage, but instead denied the length of the roads traveled. Was this fair?

He thought about Denise, with whom he had been involved before Elaine. Why wasn't he going out with her anymore? Because she was stupid. And, he didn't enjoy it when she would cuddle up next to him afterwards. Still, a year is quite a while, but Denise was definitely out of the picture.

He thought about Renee. If things did not work out with Elaine, he could date her. Or, could he? She's pretty and smart, but so are a lot of other people. They had shared seltzers and jokes a few times while waiting for the commuter train, but that was about all. There didn't seem to be much point in banking on Renee; besides, who knows what sorts of relationships she's had — she's probably seeing someone right now.

Elaine rolled over onto her side and threw a leg over Brian's, and an arm over his chest. Her head nuzzled into his shoulder. No denying this, he thought. He was going to feel really stupid if he didn't do something.

Brian had never touched the zephyrs gliding by, coalescing and evaporating, in and out of one huge pool. Exactly how did he feel about Elaine, he wondered? Man is infinite potential. He really had liked Denise, and he had liked she and him to do things to each other, The Hindenburg blew up mysteriously, oh the humanity. This was a full-blown azure sky and a sweeping field of tall grass which Elaine had so confidently stridden across. He had invited her on this picnic, he had unbuttoned her blouse. Was she confident because of him? Could he be responsible for such feelings? Oh God, this was really, really complicated.

One of the zephyrs passed overhead and a shadow fell across their bodies with a sudden chill. Elaine fidgeted closer into his body. Brian slid out from under her, jumped up and off the rock, and ran. Elaine sat up and laughing-yelled:

"Where are you going?" He didn't respond, so she sat and watched her lover run through the grass in huge circles.

Brian ran, the sharp grass whipping against his legs, the wind tearing into his eyes. He ran as fast as he could, and stumbled, falling onto his hands, cut and chafed by the stubble near the earth. He groaned and was angered by Elaine's laughter. He kept running furiously in huge circles, continuous figure-eights. He felt like a zephyr and she cheered him on. She didn't know; it made him angry. He didn't know. She didn't know, know, know, no, No, "No!" he was shouting.

"No what?" she shouted back to him. He spread his arms out like wings, and ran around the rock, spiraling inwards, closer, closer, closer, and jumped back onto the rock, collapsing and gasping, beside her. She put her hands on his heaving chest, leaned over and kissed him once. His eyes darted over her face: full lips, clear green eyes, arching eyebrows. They all belonged to her, but he had trouble seeing them all at once. Did that voice come through that mouth — the mouth that kissed him — did he like that face, that mouth? He did, but he couldn't connect that face with the body he had cleaved to his within the hour.

"You cut your hands," she said as she took up his right hand in hers and kissed it; "we ought to put something on that."

"No," he said and withdrew his hand from hers. Her hair dangled down, lightly brushing his face and then he wanted to have his arms around her, to have her weight on him. He encircled her with his arms and drew her down, kissing her.

"You taste like salt," she said.

"Then we'll just lay here basking and watch the zephyrs floating beneath Heaven's blue smile."

"My, aren't we romantic." He shrugged then held her tight, exhausted.

Steve Corinth