

from **The Source**

International in flavor, full of high and low argot, forever restless, this departure is accompanied by certain demeaning suggestions. How are we to interpret it as a whole? All emotions bear social meanings. The world is still flat and wet and full of things that only you know. I remember sitting up half the night to read, feeling like a pirate—a thief, a marauder aided when others received nothing but frustration. It is an artifact, this dissemination of ideas, the greatest mixture of good and evil in the same act and the same person muttering by the ripple of a lake in the moonlight, or standing halfway up a mountain to turn toward the stars.

So the Source has inflicted a wound on the compact flesh of the intellect, and the only thing that can emerge from this aperture is levitating into the night sky. I shall here make no attempt to explain the enigma acquainted with the room where it is to speak.

Pressing insight into the service of a specific line of action is not far from bliss. Do your exercises and daydream about rebellion. The principles of negotiated peace remain unimpaired.

The weaving of particulars into a system need have nothing to do with the physical demise of the body, which the Source substitutes for information, an example that would have you tremble if you knew where it was taking you. An apple is an apple. This may be put as follows: there is no structure of the Source. Even reproofs from authority ought to be graves taunting you with their call to arms.

Is it really entertaining to imprison a fly under glass?

Can one really share in all the pleasures that the Source affords?

Are we placed here only to watch the growth of plants and the motion of the stars?

Does the Source rise from burning indignation to settle on snow-capped mountains?

Does it erect a perfectly justified criticism of current literary cant by bending for a long time over a low-powered microscope, then straightening up and staring forward in triumph?

Dethroned from a lofty stool by disclosure, dismissed as just a swing of the pendulum of fashion, fresh proof of the alarming increase of the effects of insanity is furnished in all languages already; terminology is what changes. Joy has no date. Is this a consequence of the siege mentality occasioned by exile for reasons of conscience? We've earned a drink, and dancing afterwards.

The rocks of the mountain pass ring like little bells around you. Does one find the Source when traveling? Is one most foreign at home? To be called up for military service in the closing months of a war is to verify that combustibility occurs by virtue of the delicate quality of matter moving around the Source. It is to ask about the attitude of different people toward the same forest. But the Source does not differentiate between itself and its environment. It hangs on the weakest branches, which easily break. It means to us a

repetition in time derived from an accumulation of space. Envy plays an important role in its libraries, which were alleged to have existed from Adam to Noah—the laissez-faire image of the strongest predators in competition for their natural prey.

News is what your city editor says it is, manifestly enjoying a phase of mythic imperialism, another Gothic Romance in which the young governess saves a child and falls in love with her father. If it includes anecdotes, songs, cartoons, poetry, essays, and comic routines, sleeps on the sand in its own swag, and awakes to what might be rain, surrounded, hampered, tangled in the mesh of what looks like a tombstone, then who's to say this manner of seeing things provides any assertion?

Whether the work requires brilliancy, intensity, musical simplicity, or the horse abruptly stops, throwing you to the ground with a thud, any conductor must endorse graphic stage directions with noisy, caricatured approximations of the audience gazing in astonishment at the scene before it.

The difference in our perception is a furnished room quite a distance away, where the Source denotes a peculiar mode of performance, as though sending us out with money to buy a more presentable suit of clothes.

These progressions are denounced as wrong, and sound like someone dressed as a fisherman dropping coins into a sailor's pocket.

The Source is not only concerned with the means of achieving certain specified ends, but also with the ends themselves. Reduced by an apparent lack of autonomy, of rational clarity, and mathematical elegance, whose derivation from impressions of sense cannot be explained or demonstrated, it finds a reasonable explanation in the concept of itself. Suppose a man left his office at noon, and were questioned about it. Suppose the assembling of an alarm clock wasn't an advanced mechanical task for a four-year old. Suppose we see points and straight lines, numbers and logical necessities in the same way we see rocks and trees. Suppose the Source's cultural importance really has gone unperceived. Suppose these are qualities we consciously or unconsciously associate with money.

The Source consists
of such propositions; such
propositions consist
of words; words are
symbols of notions. I know
only bodily things, but
knowledge has no container.

This, however, is wrong. One can bring to mind the scent of sea air, or the sound a boot makes crunching in snow. This marked alteration of intellectual environment subjects the doctrine of the Source to a test of its subjectivity, inland, midsummer, barefoot.

Imagine the cool and stubborn strength of a music note pried from its silent paper. Now post the completed image in a conspicuous place—the wall of your office or den, refrigerator, bathroom mirror, dashboard of your car, or in your personal organizer. The

total expression does in fact operate as a proper name to refer to an individual object. The blow of a hammer, for example, breaks a stone into bits. Maximum space is created in the abdomen of the image for the internal abdominal organs to settle comfortably. The problem is to become acquainted with them in a new way, quite opposite to that in which we know them already. The ordinary laws of arithmetic apply in the same manner to the Source.

After every consideration is given, as it should be, to the Source in terms of its consequences for letters, politics, and conduct, the kernel of its appeal is still not reached. It is no matter if one masters a rhetorical, vigorous, aggressive eloquence, full of picturesque phrases, conceits, elaborate flights of the imagination, since it is enough to repeat that the fine intelligence, either as agent or as object of actions or as both, is at the heart of the Source; there, the dark elements of solitude, grotesqueness, and ignorance combine to form the perfection of the hideous in counterpoint to horror. Let us never bow and apologize more.

Think of an event which marks the apogee of classical culture as a reptile's den full of decaying meat.

Whatever in the phenomenal world becomes beautiful in the exercise of its normal function is the only thing I'm interested in eating.

In all the past there was nothing to draw us into essential or lasting alliance save the moment diaries were brought into use.

True, it's *always* been work cutting down the length of words and splitting their meanings, throwing a side-light upon manners of the day, triumphing over trappings of office, political or priestly. The italics speak the tune. They visit friends, attend concerts, plays, and public dinners, subtly falling back on the position of the practical—a greedy sort of sturdy idleness represented as dissolute to the last degree.

A new house in the piney woods.

The lovely quiet of the dunes.

A neatly folded studding-sail.

Such images abound in the Source, but plain statement is better, as if a telephone call causes anger to abate, leaving only a brief description of the course itinerary, followed by a detailed one of precisely what you sought—some indication of what your own vocabulary might one day be:

a crowded afternoon of insect life
in ditches and swamps.

Shaping an idea out of the Source is always difficult. It betrays our nostalgia for a desire to know the best way to capture its atmosphere, sitting in a rocking chair with your feet on the railing, ready to dive into a story of romantic love against a backdrop of grimly realistic comedy. Does the reader feel as though made to push decanters of port clockwise around a dining table? Is the prevailing impression still one of monotony and repetition? Is the

prevailing impression still? Is the prevailing impression? However distressing the results, I shall try neither to fake my awareness nor to evade elementary questions.

The Source assumes no character, but accommodates itself to the scene before it without struggle for distinction, without Rome rising on its seven hills, without pumping amiably from a bottomless well of anecdote and reminiscence. What good is a tightened purse string when there is nothing left to preserve?

We may call it the comic vision of life, in contrast to the tragic vision, which sees the Source in the form of its ordained cycle, as though it were a lodging inhabited by bohemian writers and artists—a royal antidote against all kinds of infection save creating some sort of shock of moral awareness. Doesn't any event, by its very nature, promise to be a homecoming of sorts? A series of correspondences? Does the Source fall outside the things one can imagine, and the things, also, one cannot?

Other examples can be chosen at random, developing from a seminal personification to a fully fledged allegorical monster, something perfect, noble, disentangled, without alteration, knit together, having great and few parts, bold and harmonious colors. Perhaps this still seems like a paradox. Perhaps merely for its loneliness.

Shall we rise to a lyric immolation of self before the Source?

Shall we allow planning and shaping entry into the element of random opportunity?

Shall we allow the exposition which follows perfect orthodoxy to be equally concerned about the *what* as well as the *when*?

Picture if you will the first record we have of our relationship with the Source. Now, haunt the Museum of Modern Art and the few foreign-film revival houses dotted with an authoritative voiceover telling you times and dates and motivations. It may be that we must needs renounce our desire to know exactly where a gloss of realism, alternating between images of a blackout and those of a block party, becomes the recipient of divine revelation.

Is it not true that for most of us there is no real experience? Does one admire an opera singer without an opera? Why isn't there anything to click on outside? We strain the imagination if we suppose that the idea is frequently entertained. It's arduous work to strip away illusions, even more so to accept with genuine interest the different moods that pass over one's face. Each action is a pattern of infirmity found difficult to get over the trauma of being weaned.

A back-story locates the turning point between innocence and experience, steering us away from the scene of our destruction. Commercial impulses are to be found elsewhere.

A coil of clay bites its own tale.

A boy with a book becomes a woman with her lover.

And so it goes:

the Source is always a result, indefinable, foreboding in appearance, blunt in manners, and utterly contemptuous of gallantry. A man aspiring to be a pro bowler loses to his young daughter. Were the subjects being treated really “good” after all? Examples come readily to mind simply from the way we sometimes talk about them. This, at least, is my recollection.

Just as a streetlamp attracting a moth on a starless night is more than the demystification of the vision of the beloved, so the sun, we may say, is by no means too bright for the Source to discharge its inquisitorial office from attentive observation of inexhaustible nature.

If only to be a disillusioned comment on life, a fusion of history, psychology, sociology, and poetry—the tendency to abate resentment against the idle elite or tillers of the soil diminishes in the simplest lines of common streets.

Omnipresent mystery?

The information of a perfect orator?

No, the Source has no need for the bitter anguish that bloody triumph costs. Brave pioneers bringing brooms and buckets of paint.

All these centuries later, just to sit under a shade tree, certain that the main character has always been a king.

Whatever in the phenomenal world becomes beautiful in the exercise of its normal function is to us foul. It’s like we’re looking for the same movies: *The Bell Jar*, *Happy Days*, *Life Among the Savages*. The boundary is not always clearly marked, and I would say that on this patch of moving grass there is something like music, something like an old name on a new map.

One day, in the middle of a bright afternoon, I looked up at everything ready for installation, the faint yet certain signs of a storm in the sky exploiting the satiric possibilities of evolutionary thought: we want all the Renaissance stuff we can get. The official, public world where appearances belie reality as a grafting operation—some laughter, and some rebuke.

These principles do not exist in isolation. My shame at having wandered from the course kept me from understanding the accusation. Other subjects recede. An old radiator. The hill taking someone in a yellow shirt. A wedge of lime drying into early afternoon. You cannot present an accurate likeness of an object if the Source is absent. To sink forever into animal innocence is to free one’s self from its weight. What’s the weather data for today? Autobiographical statements of unrestrained self-aggrandizement? The fly perching on the edge of your plate is looking back at you.

A child lies on his belly and draws in the dirt with his finger. In the oak shrubs to the North are grand pianos and more than money enough to turn a deaf ear to anything that might contradict it.

Like anyone, the Source loves a good story.

Who failed to develop a philosophy of constructive conquest? Isn't this failure now marked by a monument? Illustrated by the content of its graves? It is, after all, rather difficult to get emotional over the digging up of a root or the picking of a berry in spite of the canon of ethics to which the Source theoretically subscribes; ethics which, as a rule, are better inculcated in rustic retreats than in the centers of population. There is no refuge from listening to your own silence.

How should we respond to the prospect? Shall we lay down this law for the Source: do not do anything improper. Are these objects of knowledge still forms? Should we not exaggerate their degree of resemblance? Don't the same bodies appear differently colored by candlelight than they do in the open day? Can the Source call great historical movements the product of its achievements alone? Aren't the speeches and writings attributed to it notable for the appeal to experience, as much as, or more than, to principle? Life is short and anxious for those who forget the past, neglect the present, and fear the future.

If anyone asks you what the Source is send them to their own senses, because anything written can seem like straw.

The Source's stories or episodes are not simply added to each other, or juxtaposed with each other, but constitute a cumulative and organic development, one where customs and social arrangements, like a dog barking in the backyard, account for the phenomenon of consciousness. The materialism as well as the mythology outside of the Source deserves respect, not that it presents an accurate account of the origin of things, rather that it is a reminder of our dependence upon them.

No one can formulate it into greater observations, axioms, and aphorisms because human error divides that which is simple and indivisible, and thus turns its truth and perfection into untruth and imperfection.

How can so literary a thing be so against literature?

How often one hears it said, and said, too, with some plausibility, that to present it as an event within some isolated sphere of life labeled 'conscience' is to become a stickler for the indissolubility of form and content. Sure, something is true, but no two people can agree as to what it is, just as something is known, but no two people are sure if they know it. A snow shovel can't dig through compacted soil. It can't pose a skeptical challenge to conventional ethics. There is nothing wrong, in principle, even in guesswork. There were not always past inquiries to consult. There were not always ceremonies to mark the major events in life: birth, coming of age, marriage, and death. Was there ever really the promotion of social righteousness? What is a luminous thing?

There, under the shade of those solid oaks, the burden of resettlement may stir up difficulties.

The Source is respectful of tradition, yet grounded in the assertion that it speaks many vows with many voices, turning an actual image into an illusory one by thinking to assist the sun in performing its daily journey across the sky.

When the Source is formed and expressed in words, writing, it is true, has shaped it, but the spirit of the Source—the creative urge it represents, the feeling it expresses and evokes, and even in large part its subject matter, comes from only two words: ‘is’ and ‘are.’

Thus, our solar system spirals into a higher orbital frequency, and there is no more of the babble we’ve loved and counted among our blessings.

By the fact that some can and do sometimes pursue the Source for its own sake, we know that it is an object of desire, hence a good of some sort. We support one another’s napping behavior, at least we think we do, for every thought impresses itself upon the plastic elemental essence generating a temporary living entity, the duration of whose life depends upon the energy of the thought-impulse given to it. In other words, the Source has always been alive. It can feel that slight tremble in another when shaking hands. It makes one exclaim with utter acceptance:

“I was applauded, but no further interest was taken in me.”