***From Père Lachaise***

 ***Freud: Art and Psychoanalysis***

*My visitors come upon me,*

 *not genial, but in a fit of weeping.*

 *The Nazis now occupy Paris.*

1.

I’m sorry, but you catch me crying,

 My Dears. I’ve softening of the brain…

 Europe has once more gone insane!

Alas! It is so very trying.

Come, let us change the subject! Ask me

 My views on anything at all.

 *Can mutes swans sing*? Only in fall.

Come, Dears, don’t be afraid to task me!

2. *I am asked my opinion of*

I find them very interesting. *Freud and his disciples.*

 It sets itself a noble mission,

 But shows a Faustian ambition,

‘Analysis’. It’s a good thing

For art and for the artist that

 It is still in its infancy,

 My Dears. For curiosity

Proverbially lets the cat

 *Those of a scientific bent may be*

Out of the bag: this tends to kill *put in mind here of Schrödinger’s*

 The cat, which much prefers to stay *famously indeterminate Cat.* [Mr V]

 Hidden inside, and keep at bay

The fell ‘reality principle’.

She is a sort of inner Sphinx

 Wrapped in the magic sack of sleep

 With riddling secrets she would keep—

Or so at least the doctor thinks.

Perhaps the Sphinx has none to tell.

 The mystery of Life is surface.

 There are no shadows upon *her* face.

The social self is where we dwell.

Freud’s theory comes down to this:

 All higher forms of thought reprise

 Old infantile anxieties

*Except* Psychoanalysis.

3.

And yet, perhaps, on second thought,

 Artists need not feel so annoyed

 Or threatened by the likes of Freud

And his odd theories. Has he not

Conceded that the poets were there

 Before him? Though it’s true, he does

 Say elsewhere, too: *Where the Id was,*

*The Ego shall be*. Poets bare

The Unconscious because they themselves

 Are dreamers dreaming in the mist,

 And to the rational scientist

Seem merely childlike, gifted elves.

They only have their intuition,

 Somnambulistic divination,

 Whose truths need systematisation

And terminological precision.

There is a certain cannibalism

 Involved. Psychology, as ‘science’,

 Resents its lateness, its reliance

On Art. Ah, the antagonism

Runs deep! Poet or scientist:

 Who is master, who contains whom?

 For it appears one must subsume

The other. Who is ventriloquist

And who the wooden doll? Who plays

 The intoxicated shaman, who

 The sober interpreter of the true

Significance of what he says?

Is one the thinker, the other merely

 The dreamer? Does not Shakespeare give us

 More truth in masks than Freud delivers

In his unmaskings? Freud, too clearly,

Is but another allegorist

 Compared with the enormous Poet.

 That *is* enough! Before I know it,

*I* shall be seeing an Analyst!

 *The questioner neurotically persists.*

4.

The Oedipus Complex? Dear, it isn’t

 Complex enough, this crude, triangled

 Solution the Sphinx would have strangled

The doctor for, who should have listened

More closely to the pregnant riddle.

 Freud’s dark obsession with the phallus

 Twists with exclusionary malice

A theory tending to belittle

The protean in us, and define

 Who we are, whom and how we love,

 Based on a binarism of

The sexes, building an iron Line

Around human identity

 From which to enter any state

 Outside it is to deviate.

But science’s mission is to *free*.

(In this it much resembles Art.)

 As gifted apes and angel-devils

 And debauched martyrs in pain’s revels

And what-not spring we from the heart

Of chance and cunning, all the toils

 And ruses of identity,

 The playing pitch of fantasy

Where love and hate fight for the spoils.

We play ourselves, but we audition

 For other rôles, all versions of

 The self. A child’s mind is, above *As you can see, Dears, I prefer Jung, red-*

All, open. And not by omission *faced, ham-fisted, clumsy man though*

 *he seemed to the Joyces,* père *and* fille*.*

But by inclusion in his growing *Jung somewhat crudely labelled Joyce*

 Repertoire of selves does the child *a schizophrenic. ‘Scherzophrenic’*

 Become himself. There is a wild *would have been a more accurate term.*

Lust in the soul, a strong wind blowing,

That pushes it beyond confines

 Of any sort, past father and mother

 And spouse and nation to seek other

Worlds, to be elsewhere, as if lines

Were written to be crossed, erased,

 Turned into circle, rhomboid, riddle

 And poem. But social pressures whittle

Down childhood’s giant dreams, we waste

Into a serviceable form

 For social use, as the great oak

 Becomes the pick with which we poke

Our teeth. The hero that rides the storm,

The pirate in the looking-glass,

 The ballerina and the goddess—

 The inborn poet—yield their bodies

With their souls to the levelling mass,



Extruded through the pyramid-

 Shaped funnel of the Oedipus

 Complex. There’s so much more to us

Than ego, superego, id,

And that steam-engine pseudo-science

 Of pleasure and un-pleasure! Still,

 For what to Schopenhauer is ‘Will’,

He found new words, unleashed the lions

Of the Irrational in ways

 That bar us ever from returning

 To a denial of the burning

Desires and drives that form soul-space.

My waywardness was surely an over-

 Determination; I forgot

 Displacement. How it froze my thought,

The riddle of a hateful lover!

And, true, Freud briefly flirted with

 The ‘polymorphously perverse’,

 But then drew back, and laid the curse

On us of a pernicious myth,

That ‘homosexuals’ are failed

 ‘Heterosexuals’, somehow ploughed

 At the Oedipal exam, too cowed

To ‘phallicise’, be fully ‘maled’.

5. *Wit and the Unconscious*

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Freud speaks of wit as socially

 Acceptable aggression, ‘fair’

 Because expressed with verbal flair.

When violence itself is free

To make the social rules, destroyed

 Is the economy of wit

 That renders a society fit

To be called civilised, as Freud



Learned. All those witty Jews are gone.

 Einstein has fled. So there can be

 No wit in Nazi Germany.

Aggression’s naked, raging on

The surface: Göring hears the word

 *Culture* and reaches for his ‘Browning’.

 Book-burning, homicidal clowning

Of Brownshirts, monstrous and absurd:

*That* is the culture and *esprit*

 Of the Third Reich. The Führer is,

 As he must be, the *humourless*

Director of this dark travesty.

[*Three Waffen-SS officers pass my tomb, making certain…remarks…*]

Yes, it *is* humid. Strange, the Colonel

 Pronounced *schwül* ‘*schwul’*, to rhyme with ‘fool’. *Schwül* = *humid*; ‘*schwul’ is a de-*

 It’s much like a free Berlitz school. *rogatory term meaning ‘homosexual’.*

And they said something quite fraternal: *‘Warmer Bruder’ (‘warm brother’) is a*

 *slang term for a homosexual male*.—[Mr V]

They called me *warmer Bruder*: warm

 Brother. Yes, on these long July

 Days we are all quite warm. How I

Admire these Nazis’ sense of form!

6. *The Graffiti on my Tomb is Discussed*

I feel it every time it scrapes

 Across the walls, the crayon or

 The charcoal pencil, as they score

In stone the crude and hasty shapes

Of their graffiti, spelling words

 Of love (I wear each like a badge),

 Or sometimes hate, a nasty scratch

(But music needs its dissonant chords),

Like one a fellow we would call

 A ‘hardy’ bothered to indite

 Just yesterday. The spelling’s quite

Vague, though the sentiment is all

Too clear. Perhaps you can enlighten

 Me: Did he call me ‘Queen’ or ‘Queer’?

 In either case it would appear

There are still those whom I can frighten

Into illegible ecstasies

 Of loathing, or what Freud would term

 ‘Projection’. I still make them squirm.

They ease their sexual unease

By giving it the name of Wilde,

 In turn a name for disease, or

 For sin. I really should ignore

Them as one does a tedious child.

7. *The Immolated Angel*

Fetishists do such damage! Damn

 The lot, they kill the thing they love!

 Look at that Sphinx, the Angel of

My Doom. Perhaps I’m in, and *am*,

That angel. Step closer. Look o’er me

 Carefully: note what is not there… *Castration anxiety is now*

 Isis has it, I hope, somewhere… *mourning and melancholia.*

With it may she one day restore me!

Why must we murder to collect?

 Why do we trade in broken parts

 Of God? Osiris in our hearts

Is the One we must resurrect.

8. *Brocken Spectre and Glory*

*I looked down from a promontory*

 *And with a nameless sense of awe*

 *Stretched far across the clouds I saw*

*A shadow tall and crowned with glory.*

*He was the shadow my own light*

 *Cast on the outer darkness like*

 *The blessing of a match you strike*

*To spark the daylight out of night.*

*A dweller apart, in secret sector,*

 *He seemed to my self, ego-ridden:*

 *An unknown god in an egg hidden.*

*To him I seemed, and was, the Spectre.*

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