

Response to Andrew Marvell's *To His Coy Mistress*
by Cam Best

Your words were ones I followed with absolute certainty
particularly during dead-end nights, desperate for company
Like static hairs rising to the occasion against cold opposition

By your account, there is no time to wonder the time
nor count the fleeting hours 'til sunrise, her heat a crime
committed to vanquish passions – when we need naked inhibitions

I believed your implied remarks that words leave a man unsatisfied, bored
That the only language he speaks is the one that constricts his vocal chords:
Biblical anaconda, arching backs and biting anxiety

The manual to a boy's nirvana dictates submission to these thrills
Modesty and hesitation hexes and mountains out of molehills
Be natural, act instinctively, but ignore fight or flight impulses in their entirety

What a bore to speak of love! The nerve to say it must be earned
So I am selfish, so I am cold, so I am dead, so I was yearned
Ruby eyes squeezed shut; you've forgotten their hue

Your vegetable love withers with winter; goes limp in the cold
Insistent that I must settle for shriveled carrots, perhaps housing mold
They measure me by handfuls; compare me to melons as lips grow blue

By the hour, they pay me side-long glances,
alcoholic trances, slouching stances, rotten romances
These interactions become a chore for me to dread.

Perhaps centuries prior passions were ripening gardens
and waking up in a lover's arms did not provoke terrified hearts to harden.
I will take my own grave plot over a crowded bed