

FORGONE  
FORGOTTEN  
IMAGINED  
TO THE EMBLEMATIC HOURGLASS OF MY FATHER'S SKULL

The year that dies in me each day is yours  
yours the hour. I stare--trying to terra  
Firma my eye, there. Here a single hair  
theatercurtain ~~might~~ cling  
Behind ~~dreading~~ my cue, needing to hear  
Your co-hurrah. (More ~~more~~ leaves that fall  
Consummate capsules, having annaled all  
Their veins said! (Printout printemps.) And yet

(Altars our blood writes a blurb for god on)  
Can one ever envy enough his skeleton's  
Celebrity. Can any epitaph

Be adequate repartee for your laugh?  
What lives in me each night ~~less~~ than it.  
While sleep in ounces weighs me wanting.

Where  
Events  
Not the hour  
This is the hour  
In this hour  
With each hour I stare  
Each hour I stare at  
The hour I stare at  
single line  
The hour I stare at  
Days living in me each night

From  
From each  
And then  
Would be  
Lutheran  
Not know him

Meaning here.

I stare, trying to terra firma  
my eye there. If only a single hair  
were the theatercurtain I might cling  
Behind, dreading my cue, needing to hear

I stare, trying to terra Firma my  
Eye there. The year that dies in me each day  
is really yours the hour.

I stare, trying to terra firma  
my eye there. If only a single hair  
were the theatercurtain I might cling  
Behind, dreading my cue, needing to hear

## Bill Knott

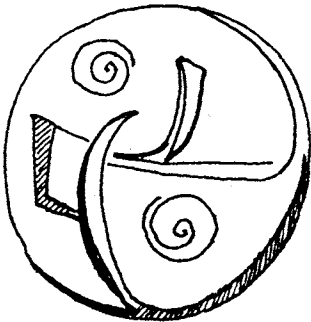
### TO THE EMBLEMATIC HOURGLASS OF MY FATHER'S SKULL

The night that dies in me each day is yours:  
As with the hour, I stare, trying to terra  
Firma my eye here. Where a single hair  
Would be a theater curtain--I'd cling

Behind, fearing my cue, aching to hear  
What co-hurrah. More, more of leaves that fall  
Consummate capsules, having annaled all  
Their veins said! Printout *printemps*. And yet

(Altars our blood writes a blurb for god on)  
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Be adequate repartee for your laugh.  
Days lived in me each night say less than it.  
While sleep in ounces weighs me wanting.



## SCANLAN

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bunch of young directors having a little difficulty getting noticed."

I could never shake the thought in the back of my mind that each meeting with Beckett could be the last: I am infrequently in Paris, and a year or more was likely to pass before my irregular returns. As a result, there was always a sense of rare privilege in having made it to another meeting. Beckett was seventy-four when I first met him, and eighty-two last year when we parted. He was not morbid, and never seemed depressed to me, but he knew exactly what was what, and the end was clearly coming. On a visit in 1987, for instance, I had had my first serious experience of the fragility of his health. On this occasion, I waited an unprecedented hour at the Petit Café of the PLM Saint-Jacques, having arrived at the appointed

hour. I spent the time re-reading my small card from Sam, in which the date and time and other particulars of the meeting were clearly spelled out, and drinking far too many double-express's. The German director, Walter Asmus, was also supposed to be there, and we were to discuss with Greg Mosher and Mike Nichols the upcoming production of *Waiting for Godot* at Lincoln Center. No one came. One feels unusually peculiar waiting for Beckett.

I went eventually to his apartment fearing the worst. Because I had come to this meeting directly from Belfast, it was clear there had been no way to contact me for what had evidently been a cancellation of the meeting. When I rang his bell I got Suzanne on the intercom. When she heard my name she called Sam, forcefully, and he spoke apologetically over the squawky box: "Please forgive me. I am unwell. I was unable to reach you. Please forgive me. My doctor doesn't want me out of the house. The meeting has been postponed. Leave me your coordinates in Paris." I wrote a note to him expressing my concern, and leaving my hotel address and phone number. Suzanne came down to collect it, and we spoke of Sam's health, which had been precarious. He was on oxygen, she told me, he was doing the best that could be expected. She seemed tired, worried, but was visibly relieved to talk about the crisis over Sam's health. She told me of the terrible fall he had had some months before.

Suzanne was a shy woman, and many rumors have swirled around everyone's fundamental ignorance of any details of her life or of her marriage to Beckett. All I can say is that Beckett always spoke with tender concern about her whenever I asked, and she was evidently at his side during this medical crisis. He told me last year that his principal concern in entering a nursing home was to relieve Suzanne of the increasing burden of his care. I never had any experience that would confirm a distance between them, and as a result, I felt her death last July must have been a terrible blow to him. I was not surprised to see they are together now under a common stone.

Walking away from this failed meeting, I had an acute sense of what his loss would mean. But it was not to be this time. Two days later, a waiter interrupted my breakfast to tell me I had a phone call from "un Monsieur Beckett." When we met the next day, he looked splendid, was nattily dressed in a neat tan summer suit, and after our coffee we strolled about his neighborhood. His stride was long, deliberate and steady: he seemed like a great ship under sail whenever he got his tall frame into its habitual walking rhythm. He spoke of the great pleasure of resuming his "calmative" walks.

Beckett's neighborhood always intrigued me. The PLM Saint-Jacques has all the charm of a parking garage, and Beckett's section of the Boulevard Saint-Jacques is noisy and unaesthetic, full of characterless high rises from the fifties and sixties. The Metro line also happens to be elevated over the street in his part of town, and on one side of his apartment building (where he has lived since 1960) there is a Peugeot dealership, complete with gas station and service shop. On the other side, the headquarters of the Christian Science Church of Paris occupies an undistinguished little building. Behind his building, there is a charming back alley, but there is also the infamous Sante prison, something which looks grimly medieval, and which the Beckett apartment looks into,

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