



2,650 Syllables of Authentic Reflection

Nicholas Syrianus Katsafanas

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Mode: >.75

2226:2647 .841

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—Preface

The following three cantos cut to the deepest parts of my life. They're basically my autobiography. Nothing else could be more important about my experience on this planet than what's expressed in these approximately 2,650 syllables.

—Canto I: The Best Pizza in the State of Rhode Island
863:1043 .827

The blunt reality of my life at the time
was that the pizza at Bettola
was more appropriate to eat
with a literal soup spoon
as opposed to your opposable thumbs,
that each slice was steeped
in an ill-advised amount of oil and cheese,
that the bread, for that matter,
was already floppy,
that even a robust crust could never
withstand the weight of the toppings
as currently constituted,
which caused the entire pizza
to avalanche down to the tips of your fingers
whenever you attempted
to pick it up,
thereby forced to consume the slice
in essentially one rushed bite,
with all the ingredients
concatenating onto each other,
leaving you with a piece
of wet bread in your palm
that constituted the quote-unquote
"rest of the slice".

It was technically Curt's idea to go,
when we were
still at the cigar bar so-called dinner,

where the copious smoke
was seeping into our skins
by the minute,
where the pasta was mush
and the garlic was burnt,
where Curt attempted to
bum a single cigarette
off the forty or so people
in attendance,
all to no avail,
neither one of us
smoking a cigar or cigarette,
the new bartender
made almost entirely of plastic,
with a Picasso like
vibe to her work—
she actually gave me a great deal
on the maybe eight
Michelob Ultras I chugged!

But Bettola was alleged
to sport the best pizza
in the state—
it was something
apparently a group
of consumers cast votes on
at some time, somewhere,
and subsequently the award was
advertised
right in front of their stoop,
so I saw no real risk

in stopping by,
as I was still up
for a bite, finding
the pasta at the bar
a bit subpar,
plus it was a straight shot
up Pontiac
in any case.

Yet while I'm
typically of the mind
to silently disparage
a restaurant's offering
then just never return
again, Curt, by contrast,
tended to vocalize
his discontent
to wait staffs,
and with a complaint
I quietly addressed
to him now buttressing
his own disgust
he called the bartender,
Reign,
over to voice his concerns
with the notion both pizzas
we ordered weren't "great",
yet Reign, for her part,
found Curt's complaint
just as contemptible
as we found the place's

pizza—she was frankly a little shocked
that a person could dislike
this luscious pie.

This food in front of us was,
to Reign, great pizza,
yet she now stood faced with
two patrons
who seemed to disagree,
judging not just the particular pies
they got to be subpar,
but the actual construction
of the pizza itself—
the underlying architecture
of the restaurant's recipe—
to be deeply flawed.

Oh no,
it's fine, I said,
entirely insincerely,
telling Reign
the food was okay,
there was really no need
for us to complain—
maybe just get me
one more Michelob
if you have a chance?

So I believe Curt and I
were both surprised
when Reign came

over some time later,
after to-go boxes
had been packed
and night caps'd
been sipped,
with a fresh pie,
saying Try this one on for size--
yet, while I of course,
had no inclination to complain,
I didn't even object
to the meat on the pizza,
I'd rather have, at that point,
breached my own veganism
before I levied a complaint
to Reign,
yet Curt wasn't of the same mind
as I.

Yeah, see, he said,
this pizza has the same
problem—proceeding to show
Reign and now another
waitress
the essential incongruence
between the thickness
of the bread
and the payload
of the multiple toppings,
how it made the pizza
really hard to eat.

What Reign still failed
to comprehend was it wasn't
the components of Bettola's
pizza that were objectionable,
it was instead the
core geometry of the pie
that was basically unacceptable—
in an entirely ill-fated attempt
to save face
Curt asked Reign
to make us
an espresso martini
but with tequila,
her idiosyncratic take
on the cocktail.

Personally I found the
tequila-based espresso martini
as geometrically off kilter
as the pizza,
all I could taste
was the damn agave,
yet I kept my mouth closed,
my to-go box ready
to take home
to my loving wife,
filled to the brim with shitty pizza
as a little Christmas gift—

—Canto II: Mineral Spring Avenue is for Lovers
743:900 .826

Sitting at The Social
by myself,
my first time back on Mineral Spring
since I'd moved from the street
after residing beside Taco Bell
for a decade plus—
the spot I drank at located
a door over from my former apartment,
a dilapidated building with
about five businesses
on the bottom floor—
and I knew for a fact this pasty bartender
was upselling me egregiously on
her shitty little mezcal glasses,
the Casamigos brand to boot,
my least favorite
by a large margin.

The whore charged me seventeen per
drink which in North Provolone
was simply an atrocity,
even fifteen bucks per
glass was hypothetically absurd,
it was completely out of line
I thought as I begrudgingly gave
her my Discover card,
recalling just a couple months prior
at my friend Ryan's

birthday party—when this particular Social worker was, in my mind, a little slow with the Corona Light service and overheard my critique of her speed to Paul, subsequently slamming down six beers onto a table and yelling "Here you go!" to me, which I actually appreciated at the time, as I was already ready for another Corona anyway.

But now, sitting at The Social by myself, being basically mugged because of my proclivity toward mezcal, I recognized that this comment, even if not initially intended for the server to hear, had come back to bite me in my ass, as I assumed the debt for these seventeen dollar mezcals.

The waitress became the bartender in the interim, and she's now exacted her revenge with alacrity.

To the best of my recollection I was only even on the damn street because I had a dinner to attend at Il Fornello around the corner, and after handing the tab back to my cocktail executioner,

I still had some time to kill,
so I drove down the street to Rocco's
for a sole additional drink
before I hit the dinner,
as I hadn't been
in eons it seemed
and now found myself in a nostalgic
if not bitter state of mind.

I recognized the bartender
at Rocco's from past eras,
back when I
grabbed cocktails with that absolute
crumb Enzo on the regular,
but I couldn't recall the girl's name—
she greeted me amicably,
yet also refrained from using
a formal address, no doubt also
failing to recall me
fully either as
I asked for a
Johnny Black.

O, what cruel ironies
North Providence had in wait
for me that afternoon!—
the Rocco's girl gave
me a reasonable fare
for my subsequent
scotch on the rocks, and
I figured at that point it was probably

about time, now half in the bag,
to go back toward Fornello,
looping through my old parking lot,
to find the Russian guy's white truck
Tree had hated
still parked in his same
dipshit spot and letting down
my Civic's window
to hawk a loogie at the passenger door
as I drove by, ejecting the spit
far enough to clear my car but
unsure if I actually
connected with a
direct hit on the pickup,
unconvinced if I'd, like
the previous bartender,
successfully enacted a minuscule
revenge on an individual
I didn't even technically know.

—Canto III: On the Amtrak to Penn Station
620:704 .881

On the Amtrak to Penn Station
on a Friday AM
I considered my
professional investigation
into the Epstein scandal,
filled as it is with ageless enigmas
and faux hoaxes,
and also my related but aborted novel
that I at the time titled Jeffrey of Nazareth,
where I'd imagined a near future
where the kid trafficker Jeff
was re-interpreted as a Christ-like
figure, where Americans
bought for sex toys for house pets
they saw on TikTok,
but now witnessing
internet celebrities,
who still know no lows,
wearing Free Ghislaine
tees I contemplated
whether or not
my failed novel was
in fact still satirical at all,
even now,
that perhaps Jeff Epstein
would soon be seen
as a sort of second coming of Jesus,
that possibly everybody

had it all wrong
all along—
that all those silly girls
who alleged under oath
they'd been sexually violated
as little kids were simply
unprosecuted liars?

Could Jeffrey Epstein actually be Jesus,
I considered in the coach class of Amtrak—
or is every single American who votes
Democrat and Republican
basically a pedophile, I thought,
because only a C student chimpanzee
could possibly view our political
system as anything but
irreversibly corrupt?

Every election in this failed state
is basically a faux pas
kayfabe mock election obfuscating
from the true extent of our state
of corruption,
I thought on the Amtrak,
in a realm of even remote American
collective intelligence
all these politicians
would be prosecuted and
placed into prison cells
for multiple decades at minimum, because
if a so-called state can't at the very least

collectively act against
wide scale child rape
then the nation functionally
ceases to exist.

We live instead in a state of static anarchy
actually, I considered—
any notion of a nation
is purely illusory,
just like Zeno's proofs on
the fictitious nature of The Many,
America is equally if not more
imaginary—

People
despise Stephen Miller
and his muppet wife
for incredibly good reason,
I thought,
as they're both basically
treasonous idiots,
but they're actually
a relatively minor symptom
of an even more serious disease,
as when people
like Misses Miller
appear on television programs
to endorse American fascism
while interpreting any criticism
of her own Nazi-adjacent opinions
as a racist attack on her

so-called Jewish identity
it's unavoidably repulsive
to everyone,
yet even that egregious imbecility
is still an at best
minor symptom in the
larger scheme of a
fundamentally imaginary
America—

—Diagrams

—Canto I: Diagrams

863:1043 .827

The [b][l]unt rea[l]ity of m[y] [l][i]fe at the t[i]me
was [th]at [th]e [p][i]zza at [B]etto[l]a
was more a[pp][r]o[p][r][i]ate to [ea]t
with a [l]ite[r]al [s][ou][p] [s][p][oo]n
as [o][pp][o]sed to your [o][pp][o]sa[b]le [th]umbs,
[th]at [ea]ch [s]li[c]e was [s]t[ee][p]ed
[i]n [a]n [i]ll-[a]dvised a[m]ount of oil [a]nd ch[ee]se,
[th]at [th]e b[r][ea]d, [f]or th[a]t [m][a]tter,
was al[r][ea]d[y] [f][i][o][pp][y],
that [e]ven a [r]ob[u][s]t c[r][u][s]t [c]ould ne[v]er
[w]ithstand the [w]eight of the [t][o][pp]ings
as [c]u[rr]ently [c][o]n[s][t]i[t]uted,
which [c]aused the en[t]ire [p]izza
[t]o [a]val[a]nche down [t]o the [t][i]ps of your f[i]ngers
wh[e]n[e]ver you a[tt][e]m[p][t]ed
to [p][i]ck [i]t u[p],
thereb[y] forced to [c]on[s]ume the [s][l][i][c]e
in e[ss]entia[l]ly [o]ne r[u]shed b[i]te,
with all the ingr[e]d[i]ents
[c]on[c]a[t]enating on[t]o [ea]ch other,
[l]ea]ving you [w]ith a [p][ie]ce
of [w][e]t br[ea]d in your [p]alm
that [c]on[s]tituted the [q]u[o]te-[u]n[q]u[o]te
"re[s]t [o]f the [s]li[c]e".

143:189 .757

It was [t]e[c]hni[c]ally [C][ur]t's idea [t]o go,
[w]hen [w]e [w]er]e
[s]t[i]ll at the [c][i]gar b[a]r [s][o]-c[a]lled d[i]nner,
where the [c][o][p]ious [s]m[o][k]e
was [s][ee][p][i]ng [i]nto our [s][k][i]ns
[b]y the [m][i]n[u]te,
where the [p][a]st[a] [w]as [m]ush
and the g[a]rlie [w]as [b][ur]nt,
where C[ur]t a[tt]emp[t]ed [t]o
[b]um a [s][i]ngle [c][i]gar[e]tte
o[ff] the [f]orty or [s][o] [p]eo[p]le
in [a]tt[e]nd[a]nce,
[a]ll to [n][o] [a]vail,
[n]either [o]ne [o]f [u]s
[s][m][o]king a [c]i[g]ar or [c]i[g]arette,
the [n]ew bartender
[m]ade al[m][o]st ent[i]re[ly] of [p][l][a][s]t[i][c],
[w]ith a [P][i][c]a[s]so [l][i][k]e
v[i]be to h[er] [w][or][k],
sh[e] [a][c]tua[l][y] [g][a]ve [m]e a [g]r[ea]t deal
on the [m][ay]be [e]ight
[M]i[c]helob [U]ltras I ch[u]gged!

122:144 .847

[B]ut [B][e]tto[l][a] was [a][l][e]ged
to [s][p]ort the [b][e][s]t [p]izza
in the [s]tate,
it w[a]s [s][o]mething
[a][pp]a[r]ently [a] g[r][ou][p]
of [c]on[s][u]mers [c]a[s]t votes on
at [s][o]me time, [s][o]mewhere,

[a]nd [s][u]b[s][e][q]u[e]ntly the a[w]ard [w]as
[a]dvert[i]sed
[r][i]ght in f[r]ont of their [s]toop,
[s][o] I [s]aw n[o] [r]eal [r]isk
in [s]to[p]ping b[y],
as [I] was [s]till u[p]
[f]or a [b][i]te, [f][i]nding
the [p][a][s]t[a] at the [b][ar]
a [b]it [s]ub[p][ar],
[p]lus it was a [s]tr[ai]ght [s]hot
u[p] [P]onti[a][c]
in [a]ny [c][a][s]e.

88:101 .871

Yet wh[i]le [I]'m
t[y][p][i]ca[l][y] of the m[i]nd
to [s][i][l]ent[l][y] di[s][p]arage
a [r][e][s]tau[r][a]nt's [o]ffe[r]ing
th[e]n just n[e]ver [r][e][t]urn
ag[ai]n, [C]urt, b[y] [c]on[t][r]ast,
[t][e]n[d]ed to vo[c]al[i]ze
h[i]s [d][i][s][c]on[t][e]nt
to [w][ai]t st[a]ffs,
[a]nd [w]ith a [c]omp[l][ai]nt
[I] [q]u[i]et[l]y a[dd][r][e][ss]ed
to him n[ow] [b][u]tt[r][e][ss][i]ng
h[i]s [ow]n [d][i][s]g[u]st
he [c]alled the [b]artender,
R[ei]gn,
o[v]er to [v]oice his [c]oncerns
with the n[o]tion b[o]th [p]izzas

[w]e ord[er]ed [w][er]en't "g[r][ea]t",
yet [R][ei]gn, [f]or her [p]art,
[f]ound [C]urt's [c][o]m[p][ai]nt
just as [c][o]ntem[p]tible
as we [f]ound the [p][a][c]e's
[p]izz[a]—she w[a]s [f]ran[k][l]y a [l]ittle sho[c]ked
that a [p]er[s]on [c]ould [d]is[l][i][k]e
th[i]s lusc[i]ous [p][i]e.

125:138 .906

Th[i]s [f]ood [i]n [f]r[o]nt of [u]s w[a]s,
to [R][ei]gn, g[r][ea]t [p]izza,
yet she now [s]tood [f][a][c]ed w[i]th
two [p][a]t[r][o]ns
who [s][ee]med to di[s]ag[r][ee],
[j][u]dging n[ot] [j][u]st the [p]articular [p][i]es
they g[o]t to [b]e s[u]b[pl]ar,
[b][u]t the a[c]tual [c]onstr[u][c]tion
of the [p]izza it[s][e]lf,
the un[d]erlying ar[c]hit[e][c]ture
of the [r][e][s]tau[r]ant's [r][e][c][i][p][e]
to b[e] [d][ee][p][l][y] [f][l]awed.

68:79 .861

[O]h n[o],
it's f[i]ne, [I] said,
en[t][i]re[l][y] [i]n[s][i]n[c][e]re[l][y],
[t]ell[ing] R[ei]gn
the food was o[k][ay],
there was [r][ea][l][y] [n][o] [n][ee]d
for us to [c]omp[l][ai]n—

[m][ay]b[e] j[u]st get [m][e]
[o]ne [m]ore [M][i]che[l][o]b
[i]f you h[a]ve a ch[a]nce?

46:47 .979

So [I] [b]elieve [C][ur]t and [I]
were [b][o]th [s][ur]p[r][i]sed
when [R][ei]gn [c][a]me
[o]ver [s]ome [t]ime l[a]ter,
[a]fter [t]o-g[o] [b]oxes
h[a]d [b]een [p][a][c]ked
and night [c][a][p]s'd
[b]een [s]i[p]ped,
with a [f][r]esh [p][i],
[s]aying T[r][y] this one on [f]or [s][i]ze—
yet, wh[i]le [I] of [c]ourse,
had [n]o [i]n[c][l][i][n][a]tion to [c]om[p][l][ai]n,
I [d]i[d]n't even object
to the m[ea]t on the [p][i]zza,
I'd r[a]ther h[a]ve, [a]t th[a]t [p]oint,
[b]r[ea]ched my own [v][e]ganism
[b]efore I [l]e[v][ie]d a [c]om[p][l][ai]nt
to R[ei]gn,
yet [C]urt wasn't of the [s][a]me m[i]nd
as [I].

86:109 .789

Yeah, [s][ee], he [s]aid,
this [p][i]zza has the [s]ame
[p][r]o[b]lem—[p][r]o[c][ee]ding to show
[R][ei]gn and [n]ow a[n]other

w[ai]t[r][e][s]s
the [e][ss][e]ntial in[c]ongru[e]nce
[b]etween [th]e [th][i][c]kn[e]ss
of the [b]read
and the [p][ay]load
of the [m]ul[t]i[p]le [t]o[pp]lings,
how it [m][a]de the [p][i]zza
[r][ea]ll[y] hard to [ea]t.

48:64 .75

What [R][ei]gn still f[ai]led
to [c][o]m[p]rehend [w][a]s it [w][a]sn't
the [c][o]m[p]o[n][e]nts of [B][e]ttola's
pizza that were obj[e][c]tio[n]a[b]le,
it was in[s]t[ea]d the
[c]ore geometr[y] of the [p]ie
that was [b][a][s]i[c]all[y] una[cc][e][p]ta[b]le—
in [a]n [e]n[t]irel[y] ill-[f][a]ted a[tt]em[p]t
to [s][a]ve [f][a][c]e
[C]urt asked [R][ei]gn
to [m][a]ke us
an [e][s]p[r][e][ss][o] [m]art[i]n[i]
but with [t]e[q]uila, [i]lla,
her id[i][o][s]yn[c]ratic [t][a][k]
[o]n the [c][o][c]k[t][ai]l.

78:95 .821

[P]er[s]onally I [f]ound the
[t]e[q]uila-b[a][s]ed [e][s][p]r[e][ss][o] [m]ar[t][i]n[i]
as ge[o][m][e]tri[c]all[y] o[ff] [k]ilter
as the [p][i]zza,

all I [c]ould [t][a][s]te
was the damn agav[e],
y[e]t I [k][e]pt [m]y [m]outh [c][o]sed,
my [t]o-g[o] box ready
[t]o [t]a[k]e h[o]me
to my [l]oving wi[f]e,
[f][i]led to the b[r][i]m w[i]th sh[i]tty pizza
as a [l][i]ttle [C]hr[i]stm[a]s g[i][f]t—
59:77 .766

—Canto II: Diagrams

743:900 .826

[S][i]tt[i]ng at The [S]ocial
[b][y] [m][y][s]elf,
[m]y [f]irst t[i]me [b]ack on [M]ine[r]al [S]p[r]ing
[s]ince [I]’d [m]oved [f]rom the [s]t[r]eet
a[f]ter [r]es[i]ding [b]e[s][i]de Ta[c]o [B]ell
[f]or a [d]e[c][a]de [p][l]u[s]—
the [s][p]ot I [d][r][a]nk [a]t [l][o][c][a]ted
[a] [d]oor [o]ver [f]rom my [f][o][m]er [a][p]art[m]ent,
[a] [d]ila[p]i[d]ated [b]u[i][d][i]ng w[i]th
[a][b]out [f]ive [b][u]sin[e]sses
[o]n the [b][o]ttom [f]loor—
and I knew [f]or a [f]act this [p]asty [b]artender
was u[p]se[ll]ing [m][e] egr[e]gious[l][y] on
her sh[i]tty [l][i]ttle [m]ez[c][a]l g[l][a]ss]es,
the [C][a][s][a][m][i]gos [b]rand to [b]oot,
m[y] [l][ea]st favorite
b[y] a [l][ar]ge m[ar]gin.
114:128 .891

The whore charged m[e] [s]e[v]ent[ee]n per
d[r][i]nk wh[i]ch [i]n North [P][r][o][v]o[l][o]ne
was [s][i]m[p]l[y] an atro[c][i]t[y],
[e]ven [f]i[f]t[ee]n bucks [p][er]
g[l][a]ss was hy[p]otheti[c]a[l]l[y] [a]b[s][ur]d,
it was [c]om[p][i][e]te[l][y] out of [l][i]ne
[I] thought as [I] be[g][r]udgingly [g]ave
h[er] my Dis[c]lov[er] [c]ard,
re[c]alling j[u]st a [c][ou][p]le [m][o]nths [p][r][i]or
at [m][y] f[r]iend [R][y]an's
birthday [p][ar]ty—when this [p][ar]ti[c]ular
[S][o]cial [w][or][k]er [w]as,
in [m][y] [m][i]nd, a [l]ittle [s][l][o]w with
the [C]or[o]na [L]ight [s][er][v]ice
and [o][v]er[h][ear]d my [c]rit[i][q]ue of [h][er] [s][p][ee]d
to [P]aul, [s]ub[s]e[q]uent[l]y [s][l]jamming down [s]ix
[b]leers
on[t]o a [t]a[b]le and yelling "Here you go!" to m[e],
which I [a]ctuall[y] appr[e]c[i]ated [a]t the t[i]me,
[a]s [I] was [a][l][r][ea]d[y] [r][ea]d[y] for [a][n]other
Coro[n]a a[n]yway.

137:173 .792

[B]ut [n]ow, [s][i]tt[i]ng at The [S]ocial
[b][y] m[y][s]elf, [b][e]ing [b][a][s]i[c]al[l][y] [m][u]gg[ed]
[b][e][c][au]se of [m]y p[r]o[c][i]l[i]v[i]t[y] toward [m]ez[c]al,
I [r][e][c][o]gnized [th]at [th]is [c]o[m]m]ent,
even [i]f [n]ot [i]n[i]t[i]ally [i]ntended for
the [s][er]v[er] to [h]ear,
[h]ad [c]ome [b][a][c]k to [b]ite [m]e in

[m]y [a]ss, [a]s I a[ss]umed the [d]ebt
for th[e]se [s]event[ee]n [d]ollar mez[c][a]ls.
65:79 .823

The w[ai]t[r][e]ss [b]e[c][a]me the [b]ar[t]ender
[i]n the [i]n[t]e[r][i]m, [a]nd she's now
[e]x[a]cted her [r][e]v[e]nge with al[a][c][r][i]ty.
23:28 .821

To the b[e]st of m[y] r[e][c]o[l][e][c]tion
[I] was on[1][y] [e]ven on the [d]amn str[ee]t
be[c]ause I had a [d][i][nn]er [t]o [a][tt]end
at [I]l [F]or[n]ello [a]round the [c]orner,
[a]nd [a][f]ter h[a]nding the [t][a]b
b[a][c]k to my [c]o[c]k[t]ail exe[c]utioner,
[I] [s]t[i]ll had [s]ome t[i]me to [k][i]ll,
[s][o] I [d][r][o]ve [d]own the [s]t[r]eet to [R]occ[o]'s
[f]or a [s][o]le a[dd][i]t[i]onal [d][r][i]nk
[b]e[f]ore I h[i]t the [d][i]nner,
[a]s I h[a]dn't [b][ee]n
[i]n [e]ons it [s][ee]med
and [n][ow] [f][ou]nd my[s]el[f] in a [n]o[s]talgic
[i]f [n]ot [b][i]tter [s]tate of m[i]nd.
90:114 .789

[I] [r]e[c]og[n][i]zed the [b]artender
at [R]o[cc]o's f[r]om p[a]st e[r]as,
[b][a][c]k when I
g[r][a]bbed [c]o[c]ktails with th[a]t [a]bso[l]ute
[c][r]umb [E]nzo on the [r][e]gu[l]ar,
[b]ut I [c]ouldn't [r]e[c]all the [g]irl's n[a]me—

sh[e] [g][r][ee]ted [m][e] a[m]i[c]a[b]l[y],
yet also [r]e[f][r][ai]ned [f][r]om using
[a] [f]ormal [a][dd][r]ess, n[o] [d]oubt als[o]
[f]ai[l]ing to [r]e[c]all m[e]
[f]u[l][y] [ei]ther [a]s
I [a]sked [f]or a
Johnnny Bl[a]c[k].

71:87 .816

[F]u[c]k a mez[c][a]l,
I [th]ought,
re[f]le[c]ting [th][a]t
the g[a]s station [a]t the
[c]or[n]er of Mi[n]e[r]al
and [D][ou]gl[as] w[a]s
[c]omp[l][e]tel[l][y] [r]e[d]one,
it s[ee]med [l]i[k]e [d]e[c]ades
[s]in[c]e I'd [b]een u[p] North
b[u]t it w[a]s j[u]st a c[ou][p]le [m][o]onths
at [m]ost [s]in[c]e the [m][o]ve—
the [f]u[c]king [K]orean [B]ar[b]e[q][ue]
[s][p]ot [f]inally o[plene]d t[oo],
after [r]e[m][ai]ning in a [s]t[a]te
of [l]imbo for the [l]a[s]t
[s][i]x [m]onths w[e]'d
[l][i]ved a[c][r]oss the [s]tr[ee]t.

77:92 .837

O, what [c][r]uel i[r]onies
[N]orth P[r]ovidence h[a]d in w[ai]t
[f]or me th[a]t [a][f]ter[n]oon!—

the [R]occo's [g]irl [g][a]ve
m[e] a [r][ea]sonable [f]are
[f]or my [s]ub[s]e[q]uent
[s][c][o]tch [o]n the r[o][c]ks, and
I [f]igured [a]t th[a]t [p]oint it was [p]ro[b][a][b]ly
[a][b]out time, now h[a][f] in the [b][a]g,
[t]o go [b][a][c]k [t][o]ward [F][o]rne[ll]o,
[l][oo][p]ing thr[ou]gh my old [p]ar[k]ing [l]ot,
to f[i]nd the R[u]ssian g[ul]y's wh[i]te [t][r][u]ck
[T][r]ee [h]ad [h]ated
[s]till [p]ar[k]ed [i]n h[i]s [s]ame
[d][i][p]sh[i]t [s][p]ot and [l]etting [d]own
my [C][i]v[i][c]'s w[i]n[d]ow
to haw[k] a [l]oogie [a]t the [p][a][ss]enger [d]oor
[a]s I [d]rove by, [e]jecting the [s][p]it
[f]ar [e]n[ou][gh] to [c][l][ea]r my [c]ar b[u]t
[u]nsure if I a[c]tua[ll][y]
[c]onn[e][c]ted w[i]th a
dir[e][c]t h[i]t on the [p][i][c]ku[p],
un[c]onv[i]nced [i]f [I]'d, l[i][k]
the [p][r][e][v][i]ous bartender,
[s]u[c]c[e][ss]fully [e][n]a[c]ted a m[i][n]u[s][c]ule
[r]e[v]enge on an [i]n[d][i][v][i]dual
I [d][i][d]n't [e]ven t[e][c]h[n]i[c]all[y] k[n]ow.
166:199 .834

—Canto III: Diagrams

620:704 .881

[O]n the [A]mtr[a]k to [P]enn [S]t[a]tion
[o]n a [F][r]id[ay] [A]M

I [c]on[s]idered my
[p][r]o[f][e]ss[i]onal [i]nv[e][s]t[i]g[a]tion
[i]n[t]o the [E][p][s][t]ein [s][c]andal,
[f][i]lled as [i]t [i]s w[i]th [a]ge[l]ess en[i]gmas
[a]nd [f][au]x h[oa]xes,
[a]nd als[o] my [r]e[l][a]ted [b]ut a[b]orted [n]ovel
th[a]t [I] [a]t the [t][i]me [t][i]tled Jeff[r]ey of
[N][a]za[r]eth,
[w]here I'd im[a]gined a [n]ear [f]uture
[w]here the [k]id [t][r]a[ff][i][c]ker Je[ff]
[w]as [r]e-in[t]er[r]eted as a [C]h[r][i]st-l[i]ke
[f]igure, wh[er]e Am[e][r]i[c]ans
[b]ought for [s]ex [t]oys [f]or house pets
they [s]aw on [T]i[k][T]o[k],
[b]ut [n]ow wit[n]e[ss][i]ng
[i]nter[n][e]lt [c][e][l][e][b][r]ities,
who [s]till k[n][o]w [n][o] [l][o]ws,
wea[r]ing F[r][ee] Ghis[l][a]ine
[t][ee]s I con[t][e]mp[l][a]ted
wh[e]ther or [n][o]t
my [f][ai]led [n][o]vel was
in [f][a][c]t [s][t]ill [s]a[t]iri[c]al [a]t all,
even [n]ow,
that [p]erh[a][p]s J[e]ff [E]p[s]t[ei]n
would [s]oon b[e] [s][ee]n
as a [s]ort of [s]e[c]ond [c]oming of J[e]sus,
that po[ss]i[b]ly eve[r][y][b]od[y]
had it [a]ll w[r][o]ng
[a]ll [a][o]ng—
that [a]ll th[o]se [s]i[l]y girls
who [a][l]eged under [o]ath

they'd b[ee]n [s][e]xua[ll]y v[i]o[l]ated
as [l][i]ttle [k][i]ds were [s][i]m[p][l]y
un[p]ro[s]e[c]uted [l][i]ars?

200:239 .837

[C]ould J[e]ffr[ey] [E]p[s]t[e]in a[c]tua[ll][y] b[e] J[e]sus,
I [c]on[s][i]dered [i]n the [c]oach [c][l][a][s]s of
[A]mtr[a][k]—
or [i]s [e]ve[r]y [s][i]ngle A[m][e][r][i][c]an who votes
[D]e[m]o[c][r][a]t [a]nd [R]e[p]u[b][l]i[c]an
[b]a[s]i[c]a[ll][y] a [p]e[d]oph[i]le, [I] thought,
[b]e[c]ause on[l][y] a [C] [s]tudent chim[p]anz[ee]
[c]ould [p]o[ss]i[b][l][y] view our [p]o[l][i]t[i][c]al
[s][y][s]tem [a]s [a]nything [b][u]t
i[r]ever[s]i[b][l][y] [c]o[rr][u][p]t?—

87:88 .989

[E]very [e][l][e]ction [i]n th[i]s [f][ai]led [s]t[a]te
is b[a][s]i[c]a[ll]y a [f]aux pas
[k][a]y[f][a]be m[o][c]k [e][e][c]tion [o]b[f]u[s][c][a]ting
[f]rom the [t][r]ue ex[t]ent of our [s]t[a]te
[o]f [c]o[rr][u]ption,
I th[o]ught [o]n the [A]mt[r][a][k],
in a [r][ea]lm of even [r][e][m]ote A[m][e][r][i][c]an
[c]o[ll][e][c]t[i]ve int[e][ll][i]gence
all th[e]se [p]o[l][i]t[i]c[i]ans
would b[e] [p][r]o[s]e[c]uted and
[p][l]aced [i]n[t]o [p][r][i]s[o]n [c]ells
for [m]ul[t]i[p]le de[c][a]des at [m][i]n[i][m][u]m,
be[c][au]se
if a [s]o-[c]alled [s]t[a]te [c][a]n't [a]t the ver[y] [l][ea]st

[c]o[ll]e[c]tive[l][y] a[c]t against
w[i]de [s][c][a]le ch[i]ld r[a]pe
[th]en [th]e [n][a]tion functio[n]all[y]
[c][ea][s]es to exi[s]t.

126:129 .978

We [l][i]ve [i]n[s]tead [i]n a [s][t]ate of [s][t][a]tic
[a]nar[c]h[y]
[a][c]tua[l][y], I [c]on[s]idered—
a[n][y] [n][o][t]ion of a [n]a[ti]on
is [p]ure[l][y] i[ll]uso[r][y],
just [l]ike Ze[n][o]’s [p][r]oofs on
the [f][i][c]t[i]t[i]ous [n]ature of The [M]a[n][y],
A[m]e[r]i[c]a is [e][q]uall[y] [i]f [n]ot [m]ore
i[m]agi[n]a[r][y]—
59:68 .868

[P][e]o[p]le
[d]e[s][p]ise [S]t[e]phen [M]iller
and his [m]u[pp]et wi[f]e
[f]or in[c][r]e[d]i[b][y] good [r][ea]son,
I thought,
as they’re [b]oth [b]a[s]i[c]all[y]
t[r][ea]s[o][n]ous [i]d[i]ots,
[b]ut they’re actua[l][y]
a [r]e[l]ative[l][y] [m]i[n]or [s]ym[p]tom
of an [e]ven [m]ore [s]e[r][i]ous dis[ea]se,
as when [p][e]o[p]le
[l]ike [M][i][s][e]s [M][i]ller
a[pp]ear on [t][e][l][e]v[i]s[i]on [p][r]og[r]ams
[t]o endorse A[m][e][r][i][c]an fa[s]c[i]sm

while in[t]er[p][r]eting a[n]y [c][r][i]t[i][c][i]sm
of her own [N][a]zi-[a]dj[a][c][e]nt opinions
as a [r][a][c][i]st atta[c]k on her
[s]o-[c]alled Jewish i[d]entit[y]
it's [u]n[a]voi[d]abl[y] [r]epul[s]ive
to [e][v]e[r]yone,
yet [e][v][e]n that [e]gr[e]g[i]ous [i]m[b]e[c][i]l[i]t[y]
[i]s [s]t[i]ll [a]n [a]t [b]est
minor [s][y]mpt[o]m [i]n the
[l]arger [s][c]heme of a
fund[a][m]enta[ll][y] i[m][a]gin[a][r][y]
[A][m]e[r]i[c]a—

148:180 .822