

*Nurture strength of spirit to shield you in sudden misfortune.
But do not distress yourself with dark imaginings.
Many fears are born of fatigue and loneliness.*

-- From Max Ehrmann's "Desiderata"

Questioning my depth of character,
I started questing to find feelings.
Only to find I'm a barren tundra.
It's all my heart made time for.

Some simple sins I've committed, One:
I've left grocery carts in parking spots -
When a cart-kennel was easily found.
I can't simply be forgiven.

Come forth child of light:
Teach me how to be pure,
Instead of just purely being.

I ground my soul to dust on years of small concessions:
It was the little fabrications,
The little promises,
That brought me down -
Made worse because they were entirely made with myself.

Some simple sins I've committed, Two:
I've caught checkout errors in my favor and left -
Momentarily richer monetarily,
This is not a matter of mere forgiveness.

Come forth child of light:
Let me study you,
Let me study -
Beneath your guiding hand
We examine my past.

I'm hunted by countless mistakes,
Haunted by memories I barely remember.

Michael Beatty

Iniquitous Peccadilloes (cont.)

Minor misdeeds and terrible transgressions,
 Merging into a quilt sewn from patches of guilt.
 I'm trapped in a life I can't atone for.

Some simple sins I've committed, Three:
 I've acted inappropriately with women -
 I've handled their emotions flippantly,
 And I've been careless and cruel in love.
 I can't be forgiven.

Come forth child of light:
 Wash away the darkest shadows of my life.
 Amidst your purifying splendor
 My lies
 My shame

I deserve what I get.
 I deserve what I've got.
 I'm not wallowing in loneliness:
 I'm not.
 I'm seeking purity.
 I'm seeking the flame.
 I'm searching for some meaning that means something.

Some simple sins I've committed,
 Four, Five, Six, Seven, Eight, and Nine:
 I have donated too little of both my time and money.
 I have, at times, been a burden on others.
 I have, consistently, been envious of others.
 I've been envious of others' money.
 Money, of course, deserves its own line.
 I've sold a new car...
 At sticker price!
 I've taken my life for granted.

Come forth child of light:
 Show me that it won't always be night.
 Please swaddle me in forgiveness,

For the myriad sins I've committed.
Then cradle me till the sun finally arrives.

What of the times I gathered carts,
Returning every one in my row?
What of the times I went back to the store,
To pay what was owed?
What of the times I tried to love absolutely and completely,
And, looking back, I can only be hopeful that I gave some small measure
of the happiness I found?

Is this how a life is measured?
Good deeds balanced against bad,
Carry the remainder, like some sorta karma-based, afterlife pension?
What happens when I am weighed in the balances and found wanting,
Is it off to debtor's prison?

Come forth beautiful, golden child of light, but
Bring your spreadsheet, so we can balance my life.
Let us put every deed in its place,
Marking each as either right or wrong.
Let us make a tally of what is owed.
I won't merely be forgiven these debts I've sowed.