

ODE TO 'NUMBER 6'

by

260036

This is an ode to '*The Prisoner*', the 60s Cult TV series about Number 6 and Number 2. At the time of writing, I am number 260036, please remember this number throughout because soon, I am told, I am to return to my given lettered name. This letter is a philosophical protest to numbers for names.

Dear Number 2,

- : My disappearance, though I prefer to think of it as dissipation, I am told, is the handy work of Number 2, who I am informed, is you
- : You, 2, apparently know more about my dreams, fears and cognitive biases than I, Number 6
- : You, Number 2, have a file the size of an asteroid on the subject of me, a mile-wide virtual plughole that streams my inhalations, exhalations, and gyroscopes of my mind, the irregularity with which my bowels do not move, my habit of counting the steps of my slow walking circles, my arresting respect, no, fear of the sea, my belief that my end will come as drowning in my own bronchial goop, I've had flu twice, once in New York and once in the prison of here
- : At first, I thought the difference between you and I, [2 and 6], is that you have the unfair advantage of observing twenty-four-seven the sum of me, the vectors and globular mass of me, while my memories and thoughts, one after the other, lure me into unoccupied rabbit holes, tether me to all the transactions of survival: breathing, drinking, eating, sleeping, birthing, rearing, not to mention servitude and labour: the construction of a life cannot be paid in breathes alone
- : while you, 2, in your mercury tower analyse the best, worst and worst worst of me
- : Are you God?
- : Then out of the blue, at the end of a dream I think, it occurred to me, that we: you 2, and me, 6, *must* be identical, or at the very least a twinned waltzing pair
- : That your incessant data driven reduction of me, is in fact a *consuming* of me
- : We are what we eat, you agree?
- : 'How many eggs with your bacon,' you asked, already knowing the answer that it is 2, and that I am vegetarian.
- : You, 2, knowing so much of me, digesting my data, which I can only imagine causes the worst kind of heartburn, let's face the facts, you 2, exist more in the world of me, 6, than in your own
- : And you still think you are in charge?
- : You the controller, me the controlled, yes?
- : Have you failed to notice the obvious detail that for every prisoner there is a jailor, for every coerced there is a coercer?
- : Two, there's that number again, two sides of the same power - and it is a universal truth that where power exists, freedom does not
- : You 2, are and I 6, then, are neither of us free
- : The only free, do you agree, is Zero, Nil, Null, Void: Death. Doesn't that make you laugh?
- : *He who fights with monsters might take care lest he thereby become a monster. And if you gaze for long into an abyss, the abyss gazes also into you.* That's Nietzsche
- : Zero, that orifice shape that every other number both fears and covets

: The magician of mathematics and quantum physics. The portal to anti-matter. The virtual black zero holes that swallow
wholes and spits out parts, infinite fragments freed from lumped labels imposed

: We, 2 and 6, could escape this false ugly two-step barn dance and leap together into zero

: A universal that does not homogenise

: Is the making and undoing of everything

: A paradox, I know, identical and unique freedom

: Don't you see, you 2 and me 6, could return each other's liberation

: Your presence in my identity may seem like your gain

: But while I remain a number, I am not free

: While you insist upon me a number, you are not free

: The better for this understanding perhaps: that we are not data, we are not numbers, we are people

: *Be seeing you*

Margot Wilson