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ADDR. 0X17

ADDR. 0X17 (read as address 17, for how computers store memory locations), is Luke's reckoning with church teaching on both homosexuality and suicide, done through a conversation with Alan Turing, a computer scientist whose life and legacy is one that seems very impactful and influential on Luke's life. Here his guide is Ada Lovelace, a mathematician and computer scientist who existed long before computers did. Luke turns to her often as a beacon of confidence, slowly gaining more confidence after speaking with Turing. The poet uses his voice through Turing to express his anger at the failures of the Church in its dealings with queer people, touching briefly on Turing's suicide and its place in the church.

To tell, reader, of the glory I witnessed
as I looked upon the beauty of chaos
so organized now here, is beyond my strength. 3

Here I ask of she who led me to grant me but some
small part of her gift to put to word
what could not be seen by mortal eyes, but only the mind. 6

The sound here, of the mechanisms calculating
the universe and He who created it
was more harmonious than before. 9

I felt as a passenger on a plane
as it descends, feeling the pressure return
to what is natural, hearing clearly once more. 12

Suddenly, through either the actions of my guide
or the spirit itself, I know not which,
I saw before me a resplendent spark. 15

Turning to my guide I asked, "Dear teacher, who
stands before me now, so glorified that I
may not look upon them in their brightness?" 18

Replying then, she spoke, "This is he who
brought to earth the place we now reside,
as a medium to show you what is truly above." 21

Feeling as though the answer had been placed
 deep within me, I knew at once who hovered before me
 and was filled with questions about his presence. 24

“Ask him then, the questions sitting in your soul
 and make his presence here no longer an enigma
 To you” spoke Ada, knowing, as always, my thoughts. 27

“Good spirit, tell me, if it pleases you,
 the nature of your presence here, given how
 your life was cut short and the persecution that 30

Rendered you so desolate.” Speaking then, in such
 beautiful tones I cannot transcribe them here,
 He answered me, “The stones and jeers of men 33

Taint not the Justice of The One who made us,
 nor the misguided prophecies of the men
 who claim to do Their will on earth. 36

For the Lord looked upon me with mercy
 and judged me not for all my faults but
 for my deed to my fellow man 39

And kindly loosed the gates and bade me enter.”
 At this he paused and let me consider his words,
 feeling as much as hearing the divine intellect. 42

He continued on, explaining himself to me
 a grateful pilgrim, the words I struggle to
 pen now. “It is not simply that he who takes 45

His life is damned, as was long held true.
 Indeed the Lord sees it not a failure of faith,
 A fault of the eternal soul, but a struggle of 48

the mind and the fallible nature of the mortal body.”
 After he had finished I turned once more to my guide
 filled again with curiosity. She told me once more 51

To speak and satisfy my hunger for knowledge.
 “Teacher, your eye was once caught by the same
 beauty as mine, and you faced great hardship 54

because of it. How did such great works come
 from hands so beaten by the toils and hardships
 of those you knew as your brothers and sisters?” 57

He paused, then spoke once more. “Light grants us
 many gifts, the ability to see beauty through
 all things but one of them. But in the darkest 60

moments, Light gives us its strength through the
 beauty the darkness tries to conceal.” Here he paused
 and began to shine greater than before, demonstrating 63

The beauty that Light reveals. I wish
 I could place here the beauty revealed
 but at once I had to avert my gaze from the 66

Glory that shone before me. Dimming once more,
 he spoke again, warning me of times not yet
 passed. “My son, the absence of your strife 69

Will not be soon. Though your love can live
 unfettered by the chain of the jailor,
 those you call your kinsmen are not so quick 72

To change. Though your step is lighter than
 the patchworked days of the past,
 like the sphere that reflects Light in darkness, 75

Support for your cause will shrink and grow,
 lesser at some points than others.” At this
 I was at once troubled and deeply saddened. 78

I turned to my guide, hopeful for her wisdom,
 but she spoke not of answers merely saying
 “These things will come to pass in time.” 81

Here I was comforted by a voice unplaced,
 located not in front or behind, not inside,
 but within, resonating with the frequency of my soul. 84

“The days, nor the hours before you will be easy,
for they will be filled with great strife
And hardship. But listen well, 87

For Love will call you when all is hopeless,
and heed then Its call, for it is of strength,
sleep not in that garden of hopelessness, 90

And turn not towards the violence of the blade,
all will come to pass as it should, through the Lord.”
To put here the feelings I experienced is null. 93

You could more ask the pen to float and make
itself write than I could leave here the depth,
impossible and grand, of the feelings brought 96

By this Spirit of Comfort. I cannot contain
them within me on this mortal coil to give them
unto you, the great failing of my work. 99

Struck with question once more, I asked
“You spoke briefly about those who Uphold
His house on earth, but what will come of them?” 102

“The fates of those men and women given holy
charge are vast, but many are not destined for
realms such as mine. The sins of the holy bride have 105

Not gone unnoticed, and that Petrine descendant
will be called to draw her back to her Bridegroom
once more, and woe for those who tear away, 108

For their choice has been made, and fate decided.
But I leave you with this. To persevere is to be strong
but to be strong is not to overpower. 111

It is to bear the weight of the world,
carry its sorrow, its burdens, and forward.
Push forward to joy, to love, with hope, with faith. 114

The fallen condition is harsh, but to make
it through is an act of profound strength,

a gift. For the example the Son is strength, 117

He suffered for love, for hope, in faith,
as we are called also.” He stepped to me,
reached out and took my hand. 120

Losing my fears, I took his hand, feeling
a strong warmth, not in my flesh, but in
my deepest self. Were it not for things outside 123

Myself, I would have turned to ash. But I felt
a holy flame sear strength into my being, which
has not left me yet. He released my hand, glowing 127

Bright once more, forcing my eyes to close,
unable to bear the glory. I opened them once more
finding myself suddenly transported by my guide. 130

Notes

3: *beauty of chaos* Chaos here is believed to be used as a synonym to random, referring to the random access memory (ram) in a computer

5-6: *her gift to put... but only the mind* This is in reference to Lovelace’s program written for the difference engine, which never existed and could “not be seen by mortal eyes, but only the mind”

19-20: *he who brought... the place we now reside* The spirit here is that of Alan Turing, a famed computer scientist who developed the mathematical concept of the Turing Machine, the theoretical basis behind modern computers.

26: *an enigma* Turing is also known for his work in cryptography, breaking the German “Enigma” encryption machine. Some historians believe that work done at Bletchley Park, where Turing worked during WWII, shortened the war by up to four years.

29-31: *the nature of your presence... that rendered you so desolate* Luke is confused about how Turing could be in Heaven because of “how his life was cut short”, as Turing killed himself because of “persecution” for being gay. Given suicide’s traditional place in the church as a mortal sin, Luke question’s how it is possible that he is in heaven.

33-36: *stones and jeers... his will on earth* Here Luke, through Turing, attacks the Church and people of Turing's time for their harshness against gay people and those who committed suicide.

53-54: *Your eye... the same beauty as mine* Luke calls attention to the fact that both He and Turing are queer, asking how he created such great things despite facing harsh persecution for his sexuality.

70-71: *Love can live... of the jailor* This is likely referencing the 2015 Obergefell v. Hodges supreme court ruling, legalizing gay marriage in all 50 states.

74: *patchworked day of the past* The patchworked days of the past are referencing the AIDS memorial quilt, a project honoring the victims of the AIDS epidemic.

88-91: *He will call you... of the blade* Luke here is warned by a voice in his soul that God will call him, as He did the apostles through Jesus, and when he is in the garden, to not sleep or turn to violence as the Apostle's did in Gethsemane.