

August 4<sup>th</sup> 2014

Letter 5: Knight of the Sorrowful Face

Dear Don Quixote,

Chapter V: *In which the account of our knight's misfortune continues.* So many misfortunes! I think of you a bit like an ascetic, or like Job, the famous disciple of God's who befell all the world's misfortune only to learn that God did/does exist. You believe so steadfastly, so stridently, and yet you are beaten, tricked, and humiliated over and over again. The validity own existence is even called into question.

The Duchess and Duke of some province, I cannot remember which, enlist you, basically, to humiliate yourself on their stage. *You*, in your naïveté, feel obligated to serve the Duchess and feel grateful for what appears to be their great generosity towards you. You feel honored to sit at their table, get fat on their food, and regale them with your stories of adventure. What you don't know, is that you mine as well be their court jester in perpetual performance. And for poor Sancho, it is even worse.

The Duchess has *read* the first book of your adventures and believes in the fiction within you live. She uses this to her advantage when luring you into her castle to create some kind of live theater at your expense.

It appears as if the Duchess takes Sancho into her confidence and he tells her many stories of your woe behind closed doors. Did you know he betrayed you in this way? Well, of course, he pays for his frivolity with words when he is forced to lash *himself* 3300 times to disenchant poor Dulcinea.

But Don Quixote—do you believe this was all real? I felt in this epoch that you were a rubberband, being pulled this way and snapping back that. (Rubber band—a strap made from a stretchy material derived from oil, called rubber). It snaps. I saw you being taken advantage of, here and in other places. I felt so much empathy towards you. First Sancho is betraying you, then the Duchess!

You were given the name the Knight of the Sorrowful Face because you have a long, old, and tired visage. But I think it is more. I think there is some lost wisdom in that title—like you live, in a sense, forlorn. You live tied to an ideology that is perceived as foolish, and you are thus, made the fool.

I love that you wear a barber's basin for a helmet. You are forced to return it eventually, or pay for it, I can't remember. Once you don it, it is transformed! I believe it was a helmet, if not the exact right shape. I believe also that your horse, Rocinante, had faith in you, though you angered and scared him time and time again.

Where does the sorrow come from for you? Was it always there? Has it left you? Was it in your searching?

I wish you were here to ask.

Yours truly,

Cara