

## Bad Buddhist

I am a bad Buddhist  
as I was a bad Catholic  
    indulging in sins of questioning  
    asking if the Pope's hat weighs on his brain.  
I have no patience for deprivation,  
    see no sense in Lent's longings.  
Orgasms unleash Nirvana  
    with or without propagating the faith with progeny.  
I imagine Paradise draped in vineyards.

I am a bad Buddhist—  
as I was a bad Christian  
    encouraging Jesus to forego my soul  
    enjoying life as his father intended.  
replacing macabre crucifixes with color—  
    knowing parables are like rubber bands  
    of value only to stretch and bundle ideas  
    into bite-size half truths,  
fighting fear's grip because it is the one true source of evil.

As I'd be a bad Muslim  
    opening to non-believers  
    breaking Ramadan with mid-day feasts  
    balking at rituals  
    that hinder springing from the moment.  
    not fasting, chanting or rising  
    to meditate in dawn's lemonade.  
My soul flushes nonsense  
    In night's solemn solitude.

As I might be a bad Jew  
    waving pork on a fork,  
    suggesting Palestine be shared,  
    requesting cremation.  
    passing up pilgrimages to holy lands,  
to seek out "plain" people  
    whose lives tell their own bible stories.

I am a bad Buddhist  
    wearing the label as philosophical shorthand  
to reveal leanings, however fragile.  
Inward journeys trample paths  
where I greet flaws,  
commend virtues  
and know they can be interchangeable.

Sensei's wisdom mingles with poets and artists  
    whose work is also divinely inspired.  
Reaching, I tap energy some call "god"  
Enlightenment flickers,  
    Feeds love and openness.

My prayers are born in moments for gratitude and desire.

I follow peacemakers and curse warriors  
for there is nothing so divine as love,  
nothing so sacred as smiles  
and no stronger victor than truth  
—which is owned by no one.

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