**LIVES OF THE SAINTS**

'A saint does not dissolve the chaos;   
if he did the world would have changed   
long ago.’  
   – Leonard Cohen, *Beautiful Losers*

Saint Vulgar was known to speak   
his mind, not take advice or care   
what people said. He was often  
to be found in charity shops,  
searching for bargains. Or else  
the village pub, asleep at home.  
He didn’t like his rooms, could  
never keep on top of cooking  
and cleaning, and the phone  
had long been disconnected.  
The miracle was he never smelt  
that bad, would converse with  
anyone. The miracle was that   
he made it back home at all.

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Saint Useless was good for nothing.  
He sat in his cave writing poems  
that no-one wanted to read and  
emailing friends around the world.  
All this time staring at the screen  
made him irritable and insomniac,  
so he worked through the night  
in a circle of edits, revisions and  
attempts at the perfect rewrite.  
Endless Google searches will tell  
you nothing, he is but a shadow  
of himself, a memory, a holy relic,  
long since absorbed into light.

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Saint Norah, known to the faithful  
as Bloody Norah, had only a few  
listeners, but every jazz musician  
feared her interruptions, pleas to  
play along, borrow their instrument.  
She would take songs where they  
didn’t want to go, play ’til the bars  
were shut, the audience had left,  
bands were in despair. Sometimes   
she would rap, recite a poem,   
resort to playing a tired kazoo.

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Saint Sundown could walk on land,  
from place to place, always laying  
demons to rest. His, mostly. He  
had a love of animals and birds,  
preferably roasted (fried would do),  
thought nothing of hitching from  
café to café, bestowing blessings  
on those foolish enough to stop  
and offer rides. He was good at  
not paying tabs or bills, would  
wish you godspeed then vanish  
halfway through a night out.  
Why the name? You’d be hard  
pushed to find him in daylight,  
don’t want to see him at night.  
As the good book says, ‘Sundown   
you better take care If I find you   
bin creepin’ round my back stairs.’

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Saint Edison bided his time  
until holy men were needed,  
dirtied himself up and walked  
into town, a pious version of  
Clint Eastwood, but with the   
same swagger and attitude  
towards others. He would die   
fighting the invisible friends  
he claimed had come to steal  
his soul in the impossible grey  
city mornings. We should live   
like dreamers, meet downtown.   
There is nobody to save us now.

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