

This piece was originally posted in a blog that chronicled an ongoing art project that my best friend and I were engaged in years ago. Though the blog has been defunct for some time now, at its height, the blog had followers from several countries around the world. [Note: "PSLIs" refers to the "Patron Saints of Lost Items," the name we were using during this project; because I am writing on behalf of the project, I write in the plural, but I am the sole author of these posts.]

Art Lives for our Sins

And how does one get to be a Patron Saint, anyway? Well, first, there is the small matter of becoming a saint--some of this has been covered elsewhere, but basically you need the Pope to approve some miracles. Also, you need to be dead. And it doesn't hurt one bit to have been martyred, especially for your Christian beliefs. Once that's all taken care of, you wait around a while--generally centuries--until a Pope decides to assign you to something you've become associated with over time. A king or some such can ask the Pope to make you the Patron Saint of a country, too. It's a lengthy application process.

Of course, it takes a monumental act of hubris to simply *declare* oneself a Patron Saint--but the PSLIs are well-endowed with many virtues, including hubris. The Church of Black Vinyl, our church of record, does not require miracles of us and does not require our deaths or martyrdoms--simply that our half-assed efforts be inspired by authentic and sufficient life experience to allow us to feel genuine empathy with said "Lost Items."

And baby, let me tell you.

"Items." The Patron Saints of Lost Items. One supposes that a strict definition of the word summons visions of material objects, not lost cities, lost people, lost time. Fight reductionism!

We have been lost for months, as you know. Sorry. Kudos, and thank you, to the champions among you (33!) who've hung in long enough to keep checking in each and every month just to see. And we understand why the rest of you have gone away--we hope you'll be back, but understand if not, why not. This is the most unreliable of unreliable blogs. No promises this time--*mensch tracht un Gott lacht*.

Everything gets lost sometimes. Big things, like civilizations and islands, small things like socks. Practical things like incomes. Abstract things like dignity and sanity. And quasi-fictional things, too--like notions of self.

Detroit got lost for a while. Although Detroit's Catholic population has already been provided with a Patroness in the form of Saint Anne, the PSLIs respectfully submit that there is not much that is particularly apropos in this selection. Saint Anne is the mother of the mother of Christ. That's it. No offense, but big friggin whoop.

Detroit, on the other hand, the D, the 313, is a monster. It is a sprawling, brawling, dysfunctional, glorious, awe-inspiring, wonder-filled caravan of disaster and delight, a storied-wonderland that, read right, tells the whole story of America. Pay attention to who is drawn to the Motor City and who flinches away from its name. Pay attention to how its story is told. This will tell you nothing about Detroit but everything about the person you are speaking to. Because remember that narrative constructs the past, not the other way around.

During these lost months, one of the lost PSLIs has been spending a great deal of time in the lost city of the D. Watching a resurrection. A slow, painful resurrection that could still go horribly awry--because, as I might have mentioned, *mensch tracht un Gott lacht*. Also, because Michigan's government is filled with steaming turds.

But the point here--and as usual, I have been, slowly, circuitously, working my way toward a point--is that a significant part of Detroit's resurrection is being fueled with an infusion from the veins of the Bitch Goddess Art. Art has great power. Words, images, movement, voice, sound--these lines of transmission snake the hooks of that power down, down into your soul. It doesn't matter how beaten down, how calloused, how lost you are. Art can find that living, hoping, beautiful thing inside you and bring it out, show it to you, make you confront it.

If you don't believe that, you haven't found the right lines of communion yet.

Or you have no soul.