**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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