

THE DORIS



Billie Chernicoff • Clayton Eshleman •
Alex Hampshire • Robert Kelly • Krystal Languell •
Charlotte Mandell • Ashley Mayne •
Thomas Meyer • Tamas Panitz

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The Doris
28 Union Street, Apt. 3
Hudson NY, 12534

or:

thedorismagazine@gmail.com

Abdelwahab Meddeb
excerpts from *Instants Soufis* [Sufi Moments]
translated by Charlotte Mandell

18.

One of the utmost experiences of Sufi writing is unquestionably by Niffari, that stranger from Nippur, who wrote during the second half of the tenth century between the banks of the Euphrates and the Nile. Here we have an extreme text, admired by contemporary Arabic poets because of its boldness, which transfigures the word. With Niffari, language is renewed by its symbolic force and the power of its allusions. Niffari imagines God leading him from one *mawaqif* to another, placing Himself opposite him and making use of speech to instruct him. Niffari has God speak with unprecedented power. Throughout the text, it is in fact God alone who speaks. And this transfigures human language into divine language. We witness the metamorphosis of language in the dialogue of a visionary with his God. This leads to an enigmatic, polysemous text, which can only be grasped through the lens of interpretation. A dense, beautiful text, which transports the mind and heart of the reader or listener — simply because he gives speech to the unsayable, to the inexpressible. This creates a language that can only be heard by those who have a sixth sense — *basira*, that ability to grasp something not by the senses but by the heart.

Here by way of example are three fragments from Niffari that will alert your ears to the force of his speech, which shows through even in translation.

Station of Silence. “He stops me in silence and says to me: ‘I have silent servants who have seen my glory and who cannot express it; they have seen my splendor and they cannot express it in their prayers. Therefore they remain silent until I come to them and take them out of their silence. But one who persists in his silence, that one will be my silent adorer.’ And He says to me: ‘Be silent as much as you can, you will be the first who will be summoned before Me when I come.’ And he says to me: ‘My silent devotee, I go to him before he stands in front of Me, and I go with him to his house.’”

Station of Speech. “And He stopped me in speech and said to me: ‘I have servants who speak but do not address anyone. The one who speaks to me without having spoken to anyone else, that one is my adorer by speech.’ And He said to me: ‘Address Me and do not speak to anyone else as much as you can: thus I will grant you my redemption.’”

Station of Speech and Silence. “And He stopped me sometimes in speech, sometimes in silence and He said to me: ‘Here no one has stopped, neither silent nor speaking. The one who speaks and then is silent, that one belongs to the people who know me both by speech and by silence.’ And He said to me: ‘Between speech and silence, there is an isthmus that welcomes the tomb of the spirit and the tombs of things.’”

In 1244, Jalal ad-Din Rumi was a great master of esoteric knowledge. Immensely scholarly, having read all the books, at the age of thirty-seven he was the mufti of Konya, then capital of the Seljuk sultanate in Asia Minor. It was then that he met Shams ud-Din of Tabriz, a vagabond master who was sixty years old. It was an explosive meeting that completely transformed Rumi's life. The great scholar and patrician was literally shaped by the old, marginal, vagabond wanderer. It was he who revealed esoteric religion to Rumi. The representative of bookish knowledge was pulverized by one who represented non-knowledge, nescience, learned ignorance. The knowledge in experience, of fruition, was far more profound than the knowledge in libraries. This meeting gave rise to many legendary stories.

In the course of this meeting, all at once, Rumi abandoned everything — family, teaching, responsibility, public affairs — and entered into retreat for forty days with Shams. His initiation began. Rumi would say of this relationship: “I was as if raw, now I am cooked.” Shams, however, after an initial disappearance in 1246, disappeared once and for all in 1247, in as enigmatic a way as he had appeared. Rumi was inconsolable. The central pole of his life and thinking was now an empty place. It was then the mufti transformed himself into a poet. He would come to write hundreds of love *ghazals* to the glory of the vanished man. The hymns of love turn on themselves, like the wheel of eternity, as the very form of the *ghazal* dictates. Shams, the old man, becomes the very one who signs these poems, as the poetic convention of the genre wills it, calling for the poet to inscribe his name in the last line of each piece. It's as if Rumi were saying, “It's not I who am writing these poems; it's Shams who, in his absence, resides in me.” This chanted love is a platonic love that traverses the very idea of love. The old vagabond master who initiated Rumi into that metaphysics of love gathers into himself all possible human loves as well as divine love. In the old man the perfect beauty of the nubile girl is embodied, as well as that of the ephebe; he is also theophany, manifestation of the divine. This absolute love remains inconsolable, it creates disturbance, even dereliction. In it we hear sung the presence of the absolute in its very absence. And it's as heart-rending as it is violent.

Here is one of these *ghazals* as it was admirably translated into French from the Persian by my friend Christian Jambet:

Love of the beloved has removed me from my soul.
The soul inside love has been freed of itself.

Because the soul is generated in existence but love is eternal.
Never will the soul touch the point where love exists.

Love of the beloved is like a lodestone,
It drags our soul to its proximity.

It causes the falcon of the soul to lose itself outside itself.
The soul having lost itself sees its true being.

After that, the soul comes back to itself.
The net of love rises up and envelops it.

Love gave the soul an elixir to drink, made of its own reality,
And all other allegiances fled from the soul.

That is the sign of what love starts —
No one reaches the point where it ends.

20.

Abu 'l-Hasan al-Shushtari was born in 1212 in Andalusia in Shushtar, a hamlet near Guadix. He was also called Al-Loushi because he grew up and was educated in Loja. They say he came from a princely family and left his native milieu to associate only with the poor. He was trained in the religious sciences, then followed a philosophical training, eventually opting for the way of the Sufis. They also say he was an excellent chanter of the Qur'an. He was a man of both knowledge and experience. His philosophy teacher was none other than Ibn Sab'in, who was probably the most philosophical Sufi — in the sense of having studied the Greeks. Al-Shushtari was also a great poet, mastering the forms invented in Andalusia, the *zajal* and the *muwashshah*. He was inspired by the great masters of the genre, like Tulaytuli al-'Ama, the blind man of Toledo, or Ibn Quzma. He had the virtue of transporting their profane prosody to the spiritual horizon. He was the first to use the *zajal* in Sufism — as Ibn 'Arabi was the first Sufi to use the *muwashshah*.

Al-Shushtari began his life as a peddler, a walking merchant, having traveled from Andalusia to Marrakesh before entering into the Way. He knew the circle of disciples around Sidi Abu Madyan in Bejaia. There is in fact a play of resonance between the poetry of Al-Shushtari and that of Abu Madyan, especially when it comes to Bacchic metaphor. But one event radically changed his life. It was his meeting with Ibn Sab'in in Bejaia in 1248. He was seduced by him. He was magnetized by him. He became his disciple and the propagator through poetry of his master's doctrine. He was even called *'abd Ibn Sab'in*, the "servant of Ibn Sab'in." Ibn Sab'in said to him, "If you seek paradise, go to Abu Madyan; but if you want the Lord of paradise, come to me." Ibn Sab'in asked him to travel through the souks singing. Thus he became the singer of the master's theory, the radical concept of unicity of Being. God is everywhere; one must be in perpetual awakening to detect His traces in every state, whatever it may be, in whatever realm it dwells, mineral, vegetable, or animal. His poetry illustrates the great Order that continues from Plato to Ibn 'Arabi, the great line of initiates, in philosophy as well as in Sufism or alchemy or gnosis.

THOMAS MEYER

FLORES MCGARRELL

Rome, Italy 31 August 1974 – Jacmel, Haiti 12 January 2010

What more to say?
This I imagined years ago. This silence.

A moment. This one. Passes
without trace. Invisible. Like a knife in a drawer sideways. This
will never
happen
again.

ARE YOU ON THE WAY?

To turn the page and have it be blank.

Look up. Rare blue sky
nothing has

clouded yet.

One thing done
at a time.
And never enough of it.

SITTING ACROSS FROM YOU

Watch a diamond break into flame lit by sunlight drawn down
by glare off polished glass.

Am I too close? Too far? Tomorrow will it rain.

Will I be away?

This cat is not a table.

Thank God for that.

ALEX HAMPSHIRE

MALNUTRITION

Who do I drive around the most?
Who is the most random?
I have chilled, patiently
I thought it would be cool
to place a tiny disposable camera
over the right side of my dashboard,
next to the balloons, I'm sure
you vibe innocent with favoritism
for entertaining purposes,
so just to be clear
I won't be doing this forever
I have no driver's license
I never learned how to drive

OBEDIENCE

The pictures aren't turning out so well
but it is essential to document everything

then wicked good-times ensue
assorted silly little antics
without going too far

in our correspondence
we discussed a surprise,

I'm growing increasingly frustrated
thinking about what *that* means

I anticipated an easygoing experience
just having moved, or just moving into

somewhere looser, stupider,
that takes you to the edge
slowly, again and again

PRUSSIAN BLUE

The short answer is often “no”
I watch from the conservatory
they are referred to as “they”
we are referred to as “old faithful”

we don't have to like each other
if we like the same things

I will place a call to my assistant
he is in an office above the geraniums
he is new, I am testing him
he is referred to as “The Snake”

when I put on my red cap you must exit
when he spills a Malbec on your purse
I will laugh from my observatory

a perennial fog atop every exit

ASHLEY MAYNE

STAG

I

When he thinks of Paradise he considers it blind, not a place or state but a quality of motion turned inward, an identity. A matter of focus, as all identity is a matter of gesture and focus. He has been taught to fall into himself. Rather than attitudes of rapture lifting upward, he considers the furrows of his own back, stepping down along them to the pelvic bones and femurs, down into loss of sight, sensation, air. Paradise, to him, has been a thing of blood and bone, then weight, then nothing. It's sinking indifferently away from his body, gaze to the bright sun. The hem of the Divine is out of reach; he contemplates the baser things, in these walking meditations; the habit won't die. Modes of knowing, physical at first. The proximity of frost or fire. He sinks away from all these, until it's cool, dense earth he feels, its heavy walls on every side of him. And after that, nothing. He has a right to nothing. Does not think it arrogant to assume nothing, whatever he calls himself now, outlaw or apostate, or simply another man walking away. One who holds his place in the realm of base objects, keeping life in a gateway of bones. Carrying the heavy crown of his head.

Never was he a good priest, he thinks. His only virtue has been to keep out of the hands of his enemies, tough and functional as a scythe. Not a good priest, and now, not even that. He wishes the quality of what he's lost would make the lack of it easier. But he has only ever had a tenuous hold on things outside the world, and the fact remains that once, before he ran, he had felt the invisible presence nearer. He thinks in pictures now.

Left with nothing, in earnest. His boots are cracked, his feet beneath them blistered, hard as hooves. How many miles has he walked, without repenting? Does he remember how?

A woman whose husband was gone from the house gave him dried apples and a bit of salt pork, but was too afraid to hide him. A woman put her baby in his arms, and asked him to bless the child before turning him away.

He stands at the edge of the plowed land on the day of rest. Where do these country people go, he wonders, if not to Mass? Black ruts, planted high in corn. *For wheat ill land where water doth stand, sow peas or dredge below in that redge.* But there is only black earth in the low places here. Richer people than elsewhere in the north country. They don't have to worry about land. The runrigs have been turned with an iron plow, tame animals to pull it, not men and women as the poorest folk do; he can see the pocks of hoof prints, old and filled with rain, some of them cloven. A horse and an ox, chained side by side at the helve. He can smell the rain coming.

The field is deserted now. No one to see him. No one to cast a stone. They have not even left a boy to throw stones at the crows. His mouth is dry, and he tongues the gap at the back of his jaw where the two teeth were knocked loose. Crows turn in black ropes over the field. The sky shimmers with moisture, with the slow heat of afternoon. Beyond the corn, a rill of smoke twists off into the blue. The smell of the fire, of the broken earth, makes him afraid. The scent of people, indistinct, makes him afraid.

On hands and knees he holds a print and drinks from it. His face is a streak of darkness on the water, something long, unformed and without mercy.

It might be the joyful mysteries. It might be the first day.

2

They took God, and they put him into the common bread and ate him. They put him into English words, and spoke him. They put him into a blade; it was an easy thing to do, making something wild something else. They named him Security, and Obedience. They put him into a stone, and drove the animal from among themselves into the night.

His breath made a damp patch on a girl's skirt. He ran, but he remembers the mark. His hands made furrows. He, or someone, sharpening the points of branches while torches ranged the margin of the woods; white splits in the bark of trees. The line of force that held, then threw him wide. Long scratches in the earth, when he was gone.

In his dream he went inside the deer, went to sleep again, four legs bent weary by the corn rigs, dreamed again within his dream that he was a hunted man.

3

He has never seen Alizon so still, an inner quality of stillness, descended through her body and into the ground. She sits at field's edge holding an egg in her hand. He comes upon her at a break in the path where the woods grow thick and the corn has yellowed with rain, comes upon her suddenly and pulls up short. But it is only Alizon.

She doesn't look as he remembers, though he has seen her by daylight only one other time before this. Smaller, thinner. A general impression of dirtiness, lank hair and skinny legs. Ruddy aspect, unclear, pebbly in texture. Sleepy in the eyes. But self-contained. Her legs are drawn up underneath her; he can just see the sole of a bare foot, under her hip and the folds of a coarse, undyed skirt. The egg is brown. There are more in the basket at her side. She must have gathered them from among the rigs, he thinks, where the hens tried to hide them. She's cushioned them with torn grass for the gathering, with thistle flowers. Her fingers are strong and blunt and black with dirt at the tips. He doesn't bother to search the field for other eyes, knowing she is alone; she always is alone.

A light pattering of rain. He looks at her, and she at him, from opposite sides of the path, knowing the things they know. The corn arcs over her, runrigs at her back, a tunnel of green darkening to nothing as it goes.

The egg, held palm-up between her thighs, is plastered with damp grass.

She demands nothing, forgives nothing. She watches, observing from a remote place inside herself. And it doesn't seem she minds his presence one way or the other. It might be that she sees him as something other than a man, now; a sheaf of grain. A deer.

He doesn't understand how she can be so empty, no shame and no reproach. He doesn't understand how she can be so unaltered by him.

Crows call out, circling the field over their heads.

And then, though no visible change occurs, it seems Alizon laughs at him.

He stares at her face, hard and stern, thinking to shame her. But there is nothing he can take from her by looking, and his frown breaks by degrees, becomes a leer, then

mirth, then twists further into something he doesn't know, something demented, ugly, animal, part of the forest behind him. His head dips forward under the weight. She is unchanged. She cradles the egg, resting it at the channel of her lap. She watches him with no attachment, watches him transfigure, bend, even his rage faltering. In the end, he is the one who drops his eye.

CLAYTON ESHLEMAN

THE LAVENDER FATHERS

I am one of the lavender fathers.

We want to find that Stone of Division
set as the corner of the human wall.
Our shoulders placed against it we would set in motion
the transformation of temporality into great time.

Who you may ask are the lavender fathers?

We are the why & pale of anti-know.
We move inside the word wards of an original wetness,
measure veils stretched over bones.

Each word, riddled with corridors,
a capstone capping *sunyata*.

We once lived in the glyph balloons inhabiting Maya imagination.
Now we play, as if it were a cello, the Grunewald Isenheim Altarpiece,
drawing out its mole tones, its Sadean larvae...

Alas, we fathers are a mess. We've lost, out of our penises,
so much blood. Our ladies, from doing the thorn-pull,
speak to us only in shred-tongue, & while we are under all that occurs
we are weakened by non-existence.
We have lost our cohesive zap as sidereal gremlins,
we now only act up in metaphor...

And what does it mean to be lavender and not,
to be something emanating from an ancient moose,
the antler motion of a father, neck pouch as a bell,
an image of existence prior to being,
slicing lakes of light turning into green hives, shadowed armatures,
hydromedusae sutra-stroking through world mind evolving.

SIDEWINDER

Lights disappear into the parking lot
before Tricho Salon. A gander is feeding in the bushes below the plate glass.
It is drizzling. I sit here waiting for Caryl to have a pedicure,
still awed by the miracle of discovering Bud Powell in 1952 Indianapolis,
& Vallejo on a seppuku platform in 1963 Kyoto—
titbits of the perspiration of paradise, its spagyric dew,
they are under what you've accomplished with the holy-dreadful lich gate of your
mouth,
the lightning of your father's switch cut,
as it were, from Hart Crane's behind.

Glintings of the sword play under Gemini,
lunge & parry, sidwinder through the self,
one's massive, corroded, serpentine, Babel-looted self.
Step into this fluorescent hive of mystery's gyre
where rebellion is contoured with ripped compassion.
Om of the dyadic foil looping through paradise relentlessly unveiling
whirlpools of multiple axes
rhizomic to their metaphoric dreamstock
where mirrors micturate mirrors
& the phantom of poetry speaks through Anna Akhmatova:

"The miraculous comes so close to the ruined, dirty houses,
something not known to anyone at all
but wild in our breast for centuries." And:

"Night of stone," yes, "whose bright enormous star

stares me straight in the eyes”

That star was the primordial Medusa,
stone the Upper Paleolithic cave walls lit solely by hand lamps,
Medusa whose ferocious, subtle, omen-perforated, & magical blindness
Cro-Magnon transformed into imagination.

The Greek Medusa subordinates animal parts to a basically human head.
The dots on her forehead may indicate the lion’s superciliary
tufts of hair above the eyes.

Imagine the snakes encircling the face as the winding corridors of a cave,
& the tusks or fangs as the ghosts of those dreadful encounters
where in total blackness & at times far from the cave entrance
a human met a lion or a large cave bear.

Wild in our breasts, yes, but even more tempestuous in our minds:
The bending of the mind about animal staves
to create a cask for appetitional elixir.

Snake-wreathed slaughter face embedded in the wall.

In the Paleo-Pegasean gate of art there is to this night a carnivore mouth.

TAMAS PANITZ

DEFINITIONS II (White Jacket)

*

If you're here to hoard up the pleroma: steal the sweet sound of mule-bells, and the high arches of Rio; do you give all that away, to reach the end of the sentence?

*

The cold of Cape Horn, and its grim silent telling: where does it go if all you notice is the warm coming in; did it go anywhere?

*

They think I ascend the rigging to be nearer the stars: but is it not the business of stars to ascend, and did they know I had my eyes closed; or that someone's been writing in my journal?

*

What brings a bird to this songless place: to the slush and swab of one's mouth around its sea-mantra; what's that albatross doing up there in the crow's nest? How short can a symphony be?

*

I arrived on a Peruvian man-of-war, with all the trappings: we cling to substance, you hold onto the mast and I come; hold onto your ship and white sail on the horizon I come from elsewhere, so what is a ship, really? Can you steer by why instead of where?

*

You thought my jacket was a bird, then a shark: you saw the prince with a white feather from the toucan in his crown; is there an omnivorous color?

*

The captain is an axiom of sliver-keyed flutes and flageolots: the sea is a little girl, a redundancy of her own sea; but did you ever dream you were a wave, eager with sharks or cod, with gifts that wake you from the other side of this hull?

KRYSTAL LANGUELL

BOOK WITH GREEN COVER

A book shows up unannounced
It is not my book I have written
A mystery book that travels to reach me

A man backs his Volvo up the street
to pick up a measuring tape
He takes it and drives on

I already had a figure to freeze me
to contain me in place, to scare me
It's taken years to correct my posture

I look for the figure that denies
that withholds, and I find it easily
It holds up my report card
to laugh about it, says I am disruptive
I talk too much, I might be a bad kid

A book I need comes to me
It is hard and plain
Green and the color means something
It's got a message from the future

Open it
Drive on

NO ONE GOES FADING THAT FAST

House and factory sanitized to provide
avoidance zone. The known spaces

that however fucked are familiar.
When you decide, I hope you find the negation

leaving feels like. Surviving
looks like bailing. Here all busy

with the looking, bumming around.
Around what? An opening. I'm attempting

to model function, so threats loom
near. Venue has value too, but does not

count on absence. See what age looks like
on a face regionally. We don't argue

about family anymore. Nice how home remains
useful for healing wounds. Take the busy

schedule to the clinic with the other
symptoms. Reminded not to waste. No—

warned against it though my expenses
are no longer on their worry radar.

The fade of deprivation. When I've
accepted as much as I can, I cross over

to a movement called Occupy Time.
A girly girl misunderstood, thought it was

idleness. The structure will have
to return and return and continue.

It will have to pierce as it loops,
make an alloy. I have a new weapon

called a cracked mirror, or I forget
what. A list of demands, a prior

engagement. Rings on a tree stump.
A pocketful of beautiful vitamins.

BILLIE CHERNICOFF

from A DROP

*

Worlds dangling from the tips.

Sometimes a thing trembles
falls before you can say.

Streets, houses, beds flooded
tables, teacups, bills afloat.

*

All our lies and a crystal necklace
slipped from Prague downriver

but the crystals on my tongue
our shadows on the wall are true.

We are creatures, we close our eyes.

Rich mixture of air and addiction
swelling with mythologies, emergencies

I know better than to wander.

*

The ambivalence of love.

An erotic dream in which
your enemy pours the tea.

Would you memorize weather?
I asked with a new pen.
A violet smudge for weather.

What does a word mean by salt?
A page by silence?

You don't know till you lick it.
Every poem a kiss from the enemy.

*

Rain, rain
wakes on the hour
a cuckoo saying her name.

Nothing but rain
hushes crow.

Drunk or prophet, dark
as ink among the roses
he helps me talk loud enough to.

*

There are days
that are your own mother
head covered, hands
herding smoke

but there are sounds
we don't ask to hear
and no help for that
blameless music

that fills the stem of the spine
and cup of the head
so we never think of home.

*

Where synonyms for a river
are worn like jewels in the hair
most men and many women
dream at least once
of a great flood,
many able to save themselves.
The wife, the child, a lemon tree.

*

Reader, sweetheart, passerby
the tendency of things to happen
worries every bone to the bone.

Let's walk a little in this rain
as if revelation comes easy.
Maybe there's only one of us.

Let's ask that one.

*

La folia, a word like rain
comes listening for itself

a restless text a lover lost
love's other Latin pressed from leaves.

There Where You Do Not Think To Be Thinking, by Charles Stein (Spuyten Duyvil: 2015)

Charles Stein's poem is a drill, unwinding— after all it is book 12 of *Views from Tornado Island*— a volatile, generous force nexal to the generative powers of Being itself. How drill? See similes:

My Heredity, I say,
is like a Black Box —
a Crystal
in a cloud
above Tornado Island,
a volatile flux of sentient particulates
compressed in such a cloud as such a Crystal.

(First stanza)

Simile here is equation (perhaps the longest in affect since Achilles' Shield): the characters size each other up, put on each other's meanings and strut out from their bewildering differences, each simile incisively made; linked shadow-chains winched up skyward, up from readerly down. We spend the poem in a kind of continuously skewed or screwed up, quasi-celestial (though often chthonic) paradise; or else must become *babes of the abyss*, surrendered to the sheer experience of cognitive vertigo (the first ten pages are sufficient to baffle all computing power, if *sentient* particulates wasn't enough to dissuade that sort of thing) so one can *view* the "productive generosity, as it were, of Being," as the blurb puts it.

In other words, this poem demands to be read as if by Poetry itself.

The poem "literally scries or conjures itself into existence" (to continue to quote from the blurb) via a Cryptographic Matrix. As Stein writes in the appendix: "One surely does not need to be familiar in detail with the 'system' to undergo the poem. [C]orresponding to the twenty-six letters of the English alphabet," there is "a word for an object, for an abstraction, for a proper name; in short, a 'signifier.' In addition to this there is "a transposition code, where the substitution code is subjected to a further process under which each signifier is changed systematically [...] the signifier for the letter 'A' in one section is substituted for the letter 'B' in the next."

"The structure facilitates the invocation of connections between these things, beings, and notions, but also to interrupt the flow of thought or narrative that may have been developing at any given point and to allow for, as it were, thaumaturgic transformations at practically all levels of structure."¹

¹ The phrases these coded letters spell out, the burning letters in a Kabbalist's God-name!

Thaumaturgic transformations wherein positively every particulate performs a metonymic function,² vide this cameo from pg.II:

No stability licit
but that it
reflect Black Lake.

Hammerhead's aflame
with his own Volatility.

He likes it.

Not illicit, He.

Yet Hammerhead hammers on
with distracted Presence,
Black Lake but a blur to Hammerhead;
Volatility a metaphysical conundrum
fascinating to Hammerhead.

Or Hammerhead, later, pg. 46:

Hammerhead rattled his Aftermath,
wretched, and scattered his spittle,
assembled the little darts
he'd collected in his wrists
in the twilight,
roamed through the tents.

And the people sickened
and the people healed.

The hammerheads sat in a broken circle
discussing assaults and abuses.

Hammerhead sang and sucked,
gurgled and wretched
across the jungle tangle.
Hammerhead sang and sucked.

And the people sickened
and the people healed.

² Meaning the members of said encoded alphabet, "which I imagine as wildly heterological metonyms to display the emergence of all that comes to Appear."

Such were the avatars of Hammerhead
arrayed across Soul Valley,

tornadoes swirling leftward,
swirling right,

over a single point.

Stein gives us tools not toys, a distinction much in need, these days, of reification. This poem is an answer for how to deal with it all: its sense of the particular is not as datum but as something intimate with (one of the poem's coding "signifiers") Happenstance—

Happenstance is, perhaps,
inalienably Volatile
but metastable;
and if you take into account its higher register,
functionally Ubiquitous.

It doesn't become something else:
it is already, at every point and nexus,
precisely by virtue of being only *here*,
indomitably Elsewhere.

(p.181)

– and as such Stein presents us, by the ruse of its apparency, with the actual. This is effectively an assertion: subjects are mediated by objects. The act of Stein's scrying is a *metempsychosis through a plurality of worlds and their eternity*³, divulging fragile ontologies along with their discovery. Is this not why they burned Giordano Bruno alive one February day in 1600?

Incomprehensibility
tautologically
fails to comprehend
its own incomprehensibility.

Such matters
batter
Hammerhead
and set him obsessing about Crystal.

“How can I work my Opal?” he worries.
“It's all a Black Box to me.
But to hell with the Incomprehensible.

³ I borrow the language in italics from Luigi Firpo's lists charging Bruno by the Roman Inquisition.

My business is with this Nation
and the rapid degeneration of Happenstance,
oblique to its own Syzygy.

Now,

[...] (p.260)

For another view: any given vantage occludes another (C.S. will verify this in conversation). Yet all the vantages are here, are in–formation: the manifest poem portends a double-axe of analogy that is the un-clothed being of a thaumaturgical need.

“He who is truly a musician [] by nature, not only producing harmony in song but also providing the rhythm of the music appropriate to each instrument, this tireless musician is god, for it does not befit god to tire.”⁴

It is as if such a god and Stein’s creatures form a syzygetical if problematical communion by means of this poem, in the sense (among others) that the god called Language– “who else could know so much”⁵– is clothed in language. This is the way Stein (apparently) views the emergence of his bare “being”: “functionally ubiquitous/indomitably Elsewhere.”

The magical disposition considers desires and wants and needs as the root of an ontology; before the down-peerings of ideology: and *views* their shifting manifestations because that’s precisely what appearance is, and Stein gives it to you: “information” qua ontology is not IT, “it is reality that solicits the meaning of poetry, not the other way round. Reality subsumes the very intuitions that it fosters, projecting itself– and the writer and reader together–onto an intransitive itinerary of pondering, the exit from which can only be — Discovery Itself.” (Blurb again.)

[...]

Tamas Panitz

⁴ –Pg. 63, *Corpus Hermeticum*, trans. Brian P. Copenhaver, (Cambridge University Press:NY; 1992)

⁵ Robert Kelly, from somewhere in *Shame*, with *Birgit Kempker* (McPherson &co.)

ROBERT KELLY

HYLONOETIC MANIFESTO

against timid cosmologists

It doesn't matter how matter
got here, we've got to hear
what it has to say.

Loathsome binary: alive or lifeless—
all is animate
objects are subjects.

This world so intricately
tenderly personed,
statues strolling through the park.

.....

Poetry is the science of hearing things speak.

Billie Chernicoff
Clayton Eshleman
Alex Hampshire
Robert Kelly
Krystal Languell
Charlotte Mandell
Ashley Mayne
Thomas Meyer
Tamas Panitz

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