Cassandra

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ONCE WITHIN A THISTLE LOVE

GERALD IVAN LOCKLIN

She stirs across the motion of my mind
Through shadow loves, a spark of prosody
Through love love loves, a thistle briar thorn
Scratching bloody the poetry wind
From my lips, the tasteless threnody.

O yes succinct within my Eden-borne
Soul I jealousy a goldenrodding goddess
But now again unto my catnip sense
O sinews taut and sore elated madness
Wafts the distal draught. So, shorne

Of grace, I christen servitude and in
Her apyretic grotto, I immolate my verse
And when I dare converse
With her, as though from Venus' frozen warmth
I heard the odes of Sappho ring, I sing in silence.

And do I squawk with febrile rasping throat?
If I possess the bluebird love
Within my blackbird loins
Will I e'er sound a perfect note
While reaching to stroke the turtledove?

Especially now: spirits travelling incognito.
Personality, a generation's labor, discounted
Continually by a word: phoney or eccentric or beat,
We're always another's mass. The neon serenade
And the mechanical larynx all agree:
Hallucinated emotion is the only good.

CASSANDRA

J. W. MILLER

Reason and the tempered intensity.
Vision clarified by hindsight passion.
Are mocked by the cerebral proletariat who,
Educated, is marshalling beatitudes of sensuality,
And regimented depression, and subliminal tingods,
And moneytheistic myths, for peers.
Salute the new myth of irrationality,
A graphic system of curves and hollows
Like a ravenous boneless fleshskull.
True as a submerged iceberg.
Hell, we swear anachronistically,
It is too much to contemplate
Of souls and Satan and the misty Stranger
In the skies; wine and cake and human bodies
Are a finer intoxicant. Their imagery
Is joyfully and empirically verified
In a land of feckless euphonians;
Old gods are eaten every Sunday and life is empty,
Like a doughnut with its message of nada—
Just one big hole in the vicious circle of eternity.
Cain, too, whose brow was marked with the insight of genius,
Harkened to no commands without a reason.
Arguing rather that the poor first peoples of earth
Should reap the benefit of his harvest—
Cain who reappears as the Publican and the Prodigal Son
And the man who stared at God from a fig tree.
(Literary or religious, in the myths there is drama:
The hoary bombast and the swollen phrases of damnation
Give life to death and joy to suffering).
With wonder and doubt they looked; and so we too
Keep seeking eclectic heroes in the arid complex
Of a thousand creeds, and watch for Doubting Thomas

Straddling a church steeple, swinging his aluminum sword.
Heroes are not dead: Antichrist is stirring in the womb!
Lend an ear to the terrifying private visions of the
Psychoanalysts and the churches and the artists.
Will we ever feel the superego or the beatific vision
Or the apocalyptic organism? The dark improbable Father
Might know, but who are we to carry on
A dialogue with Him? To ask is an end:
It never was in fashion to give answers.
The quick-tongued Pilate greeted only silence.

Hyphenate the world into literati and ignoranti
Then join a monastery. Prefer silent self pity
To abusive vanity or abjure both and be a saint.
Why did we lose God in the fifteenth century?
On the vacant-minded bodies of old Schoolmen
We harken for the mushroom thunder in the skies.
As once we listened with a prophet’s ear
For the cryptic explosion in the womb
When He was conceived:
How we watched with jaundiced atheistic eyes
The carpenter’s Son being wedded to His wood.
The old myths slip like radioactive sand
Through our fingers, and the pollution marks eternity.
True as a submerged iceberg.
Hell, we swear anachronistically,
It is too much to contemplate
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