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Easy Wednesday

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Easy Wednesday

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Easy Wednesday

*You'll probably go through your whole life . . .
reading and writing poetry and wanting to be
good.*

—CROSS WHYTE

*. . . "che è costui, che senza morte
va per lo regno della morta gente?"*

—THE INFERNO

I am not old
I am not young
An ancient novelty at best
A modern antique at worst
At the time when youth is gone
But death not yet at hand
Without passion and dread
Between evil and good
Too old to seek redress
Too young to seek forgiveness
At the age of indifference
Half wise in middle age.
Too old
Not to have heard
An hungry hollow laugh
Not to have known
Ash and smoke and death
Not to have known
Sand and wind and earth
Not to have heard
The pearl bewail the oyster
Too old, to old
Not to have suffered the question
Too young to have suffered the answer
Too young
To have solved the death of the talisman
To have solved the puzzle of symbol
To have solved the carrousel riddle
Too young, too young to have much hope
Too old to have despaired
My calm middle age questioning
In my leisure moments.

How many
How many broken fragments
How many lost dreams
Broken phrases, lost words
How many dead poems

The women in pink
The perfumed women with cigarettes
The smiles of perfumed girls
The girls with half open eyes
The wiles of cellophane dolls
The sweated dolls and their cigarettes
The smoking swung by polished fingers
The polished pink and plastic coded colors
Pink in perfumed beauty
Small tweed breasts
And lipstick breaths
And latex lust
And nylon lushed
By plastic sunglow.
A wreath of innocence
Welcomed at the carnival
To sing the song of night
To play the games of nakedness
Naked with the harlequins
Naked on the night lawn
The sickness unto dawn
The night in pining amour
The smoking by the hour
The season of cigarette ends
The season of rainbowed gods
The season of the beauty of the dead.
Once was I
Too young to long to taste
The madness of the circus
Its cotton candy lust
Its twirling gypsy dust
The lurking virgins, their love songs of tin.

How many
How many broken fragments
How many lost dreams
Broken phrases, lost words
How many dead poems

In the terror of Sunday morning
In the terror of a Sunday noon
In the terror of moderate suffering
In the terror of casual boredom
In the terror of indifferent love
In the terror of half belief
From the drunken sobriety of Saturday night
Credoed by the arms of convenient dogma
I have watched us men.
I have watched us men
Multiply our gods.
Watching I have heard
The murmur of the land
Burning at my ear
Masked in the heated silver
Of the dismal tinsel sun
Watching have examined
The tickings of the watchmaker god
Rejecting my hereditary sin
I still remained a man
Watching I have seen
The tempting of the clown
The white clown lives at dawn
I have watched the band of half lost people
Lame from agony of half held hope
Have watched the crippled life
Of the sinking sharks in the pool hall
Have watched the pinwheel petaler
Limp lonely after the parade
(Old men creep in the shade)
Have watched the echoing cigarette
Thrown from the racing Chevrolet
Passionless as a diamond
I have watched the second rate poets
(Always the first rate lovers)

Have watched the forgotten poets
Who watched the weeping children
Who watched and wept upon the stairs
Have watched the forgotten poets
Wander with the ocean of words
Cling to the green of the liquid grace
I have watched their brows
Long to jump to the conclusion
Decay shall bloom again
In alabaster moments.

No.

My religion is an Alpine dream
No dark night can claim my soul
No blazing sun my fervor
No hope my adoration
I am not Don Quixote
Nor was meant to be
Let the mannequins laugh from the windows
Let them laugh among themselves
Let them throw off their knowing smiles
Let them dance their mute dance
In dumb time.

I can bear to bare the jokes of time
Time is for those who wait
Time is for those who wait
Time is for the sorrows of summer
Not for the nerves of spring
Time is for the joys of autumn
Not for the bones of winter
Time is for those who wait
Time is for those who watch.

How many
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Broken phrases, lost words
How many dead poems

A wounded suit of armor
I have melted through the dusk
Through the ancient dust
Through the silent horror
Of the shrouded museum
The great glass god
The display case god
The glass cage god
Has laughed
(I failed to wedge eternity
Into the accordian of years).
Still not by choice
Did I join
The crackerjack parade
Still not by chance
Have I been dying still
Still dying in my aging
With the crumbling of my years
One who has not seen
The beauty of the ancient days
One who has not opened
The sacred guarded tome
(And so not found it empty)
One who has not sorted
Through the living gifts
Left by the dead
Seeking their dark riddles
With the restlessness
Of the trembling scholar
Yet, still, with the restlessness
Of one who has hung around
For a late after lunch martini.

How many
How many broken fragments
How many lost dreams
Broken phrases, lost words
How many dead poems

The night streams muted
The streets have had their music
The lonely organ grinder turns
His notes silent.
Yet before the final fall of night
And the autumn of my organ
Before the dying of my organ
Before the weeping before my coughing
Before the watching before my clutching
Before the whispering before my coffin
Before the decaying behind my waxing
Before the silence behind my shadow
Before my cavalcade behind the cycle
Before the words upon my words
Before the dirt upon my dirt
And before
Before the dust upon my dust
There shall be longing years
A difficult number of wounded tomorrows
There shall be longing years
Years submerged in easy morality
Half living, half fearing, half living, half fearing
I shall dream white dreams
Sprung from memory of things to be
I shall dream sky castles
There for the Prince of the Air
And I shall prepare
Oh how I shall prepare
For Divinity
To come to the suburbs
By the economic ritual of the installment plan
On an easy Wednesday's afternoon

—THE CORNMAN