1966

Monk

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ascetic Monk
as old as earth
of all ages drunk —
no sign of mirth.

so cold the breath
breathing death
through naked limbs
singing hymns:
shameless cant
by a sterile Pharisee
stealing the sun
into your grace froze sea!
where a Holland tulip’s yawn
and a forgotten summer’s dawn
lay dead ’fore their prime
in the tomb-womb of time.

Monk

Ashen-White One

By Ray Pavelsky

they had screamed their throats into the chalk of ash-gray violence, their
eyes into deserts dry with click of salt-mad teeth. a stink in the room of
total chaos. in midword he had gasped his eyes apart, gripping his statued
self, fossilized with the pain that it was she, this well of craze before him,
whom he had touched once, and by whom, he.

his hand flinched toward her, but she beyond the space of any inch, beneath
forgotten morningfuls of time. he out the handworn whimperdoor, away,
leaving her in curls of antique anguish, aimless in her islanding.

not any sound. and it is he carried by the flower in a stem-strange grasp
(carried, back to the prodigal porch saging with the wait of bastard black
night. and always it was plasticclimax of heroon that put the lie to mist-
dressed mistressed mornings.) ache eager he enters, greeding toward hoped
sight of her, yet she is on the finalness of floor, alone, complete.

the flower gone and in the swift ebbs of dawnwind past the handworn door
a small pulp of blood and bud drinks into petaltarnished table where knuckle
has mixed clustered tears. the room smells of sacrifice.

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