Elegy For Ezra Pound

James R. Hall Jr.

St. John Fisher College
Elegy For Ezra Pound

Cover Page Footnote
Appeared in the issue: 1968.

This poem is available in The Angle: http://fisherpub.sjfc.edu/angle/vol1968/iss1/20
ELEGY FOR EZRA POUND

Who is there now for me to share a joke with?
Upon hearing of Elgot’s death

Youth has flickered from youthful words
And self-sprung extrasures of rhythm
Have waned and wired and autumned a self
So danced and dawned and forming (like Plato)
And bleeding on an act of oblivion.
The time in thy throat
The breath on thy hands
The sad hours secretly move.

Like Herod, an old woman who
With knowing eyes
Wept, wept for beauty lost
And feared tomorrow’s face

Silent as curtain and sunbeam
Your flames have wended the wind.
But retina-poised in nighted skies
One tear shall hear from listening eyes
Shall hear and shall stare, shall flicker and stir
Shall bid and shall buy, shall quench and try
The self-conceiving Epipheta of ashes
In the melting hearth of words.

My words are flames—you are a told old tail of a comet
My words are waves—you are a rinsed old skull of a sound
My words are coins—you are a crumpled old bill of a poet
You are the lost Odyssey
You are the re-occurring weariness
Of your own pain

Where children looted over broken walls
To wind themselves through labyrinths of pleasure
You saw the bondage of action
The heritage of pain, the corpse of time.
Your community of years starved
The ribboned voice of afternoon thought
The legacy of weary-eyed love
And stared the ghost by inches.

Your aging is a redemptive act:
The minutes are splinters of pillars
You are your own omens:
The bred, spred Babylonaus tongues

You had beautiful things to say
From the tale of your minted force—humble chapel words
You had beautiful things to say
From your starred martyrdom of glances—stern rubic lines
You had beautiful things to say
You were the instant prophet in this chant of dust
Your poems extolled—your words our relics
Your staff the wand of our wonder.

Bishop of Tradition
An evoking god
You are the plastic Christ
The Wandering vision of your antique world

The flash of a Chinese lantern tongued the prisms of music
A violin low across your nerves.
The flutes of viola exale the lyric of your hair
Within your disent of horns.
The trumpet sounds scarlet no more.
Along the notus, across the seacoasts, out of the West coasts
The swan goddess: There for you to share a joke with.

Through my formation of metaphor, false labor pains of meter
I tremble paint and stumble probe your sheer white song of mind
And blind I find I know thee
And I, too, participate in thy dying

JIM HALL

Published by Fisher Digital Publications, 1968