

Burial Song for Heracles

I

I have not slept tonight, as you have and are, while walking the streets of Philadelphia before Christmas, with its distracted televisions turned toward the pavement's metropolis of newborn forgottens,
as the regarded canvass might turn to be unignored by those who know nothing of brushstroke, a statue of mythical significance in a museum of school children apathetic to your form,
as you have found yourself in your several marriages night after night to be ever unwanted, an exhibition in divorce, turned to meet radial eyes and followed in museums, museums that dream of this self portrait and what comes after
with the thought of god ringing in the ears of Old City, and while the holy light of local TV crews interrogates the prayer I taught myself in the pews of a rich man's pawn shop, and hum now wildly in the store-front dark as a summation of America well into its Third Age, I call to you:
as you were in my absolute youth; as you were in a relative state of living; or you as you are now, alone, togaed phantom Greek tragedy, lipsticked slick-haired sewn-mouth pursuer of blue tongued women and a foggy cool place to lie,
as I am followed in this museum of an American city you swore you were born in, yet do not recognize in the immediacy of death, as I am not the self-portrait either of us had a vision clear enough to finish, nor version cared for enough to want, robbed as you were of your own folklore, I talk and I shake and I talk and I pass by only listeners
on Baltimore Avenue while I read your life in couplets, the strange rhythm of your biography to the corner of Clark Park in the Highest Tone of Milton,
toward the seven golden lampstands, knowledge of your works and labor, remembrance of your first love, departure from your higher state and repentance as you become agricultural once again, happy now to be farmer, grow, seed and sewn back into the earth that is now the greater part of your flesh,
toward driveway front yards I become more the selves you have given me, I am now the unending task of mothers and shopping carts, aisles of coupons and fresh children to pick from, the ideological project of American Express, the end-user of the industrial feed trough,
bed turner in Temple Hospital, house musician in the ICU with the beeps, meter of digital clock tick the rhythm between bed piss and blood cough, while I bang Mozart on the radiator, Coda while you code blue, I code amber;
head south in the direction of chinatown and caught off guard by apartment buildings, tall glass orchard born to look like catholic children stood straight, reflective, trembling my likeness in its spinning door, apartment building made to look like other
apartment buildings, on the corner an apartment building made of the sun it punctuates, all are each other, translucent reactions of empty bedrooms at day, mothers sleeping in kitchens and drinking generously even the cooking wine, fathers stacked away in other glass monoliths downtown and don't come home but to low concrete motels, pens of mistresses, then to brick stables for the endless drink;
near the likeness of Ben Franklin, I turn and see a complete likeness of you, of a fraction of your self, a portion of your many selves one, that is now wholer than even the you that I knew before either of us became apparent nearnesses of our selves,

before cancer, before death, before the song, before a magazine of bleak nude women, before, even, my own silly, selfish disasters, and still hesitant to look you head on, I'll sing that song.

II

Praise to you, for the lion was the form of a woman, sexy to you and you alone, and you're promise to return monthly with the bones of man the beast swallowed in ecstasy and spat out in hell you had to know you'd never keep;

For using the arsenic blood of the nine headed widow to kill your next lover, while we are left on to breed earth's monsters yet;

For the leathery skin of the androgynous hind you called sexy, gild clad and quick to leave your arms, the leathery skin you embraced us with, suffocating at times;

Praise to you for making death wish he was never born, so much so he gladly traded his immortality for your eyes, saw a vision of you and was quick to sell them to me;

Praise to your miracle of cleaning the infinite shit of the stables of government and giving the cattle to the poor;

Praise to you for scaring the birds of the cold rains of December with my baby rattle;

For keeping all inadequacies genetic and passing on only weakness out of nostalgia or convenience;

For taking on the roles of the fast talking lawyer; the shining boy with the half of his life behind him; the blond whore with half her life left; the terrible son with a mad diet of human flesh; and sewing each of their mouths to their palms;

Praise to you for teaching me to take the underwear of wild women, without a single fight, or making wives of them;

For coming to terms with the two armed, three-bodied, six-legged ambitions of your single mind;

For tricking us into planting apples; spreading fruit to lovers and despair, each with the same courtesy;

Praise to you for standing with me while we both looked into the very empty soul of our first Christmas apart, turning to me with a sly wink, telling me you had a three-headed dog to pet, and that you'd come home with puppies for your tiny sons.