

## Hermeneutics

The work: to get the job done: in the absence of light  
from Orphic *nox* to pseudo-Dionysian darkness  
to see clearly: for *magic*, as Marsilio said,  
far from being a matter of mere efficiency  
or familiarity with exoterica,  
*consists in love: a drawing of one thing to another  
in natural similitude*. The sympathy  
between, the *symbolon* of, for instance, words and creation;  
the stone falling of its own will back to earth.  
And by the numbers, said Pico, adding cabalistic  
chicken scratches to the brew. Thus Giordano,  
who called himself the Nolan, a legend in his own  
mind: instructing those with eyes to see to paint  
their walls and ceilings with *mappamundi* figures,  
turning habitations into mnemonic devices  
in order to remember the way back, for unlike  
Dante's angels, men have memory, will and hope:  
that the very stones and statues may speak again  
in the fury of love the secret names of God.

And Campanella, the last in that line of heretic  
Dominicans insisting Copernicus (in part  
at least, though wholly for the wrong reasons) was right;  
and Hermes taught Moses a thing or two; and light is love —  
that luminous beatitude Thomas supposed  
and more: a longing, *desiderans*, eyes mortal  
and immortal alike reaching out to each other.  
Escaped the stake but not the rack, pincers and screw:  
twenty-seven years locked up writing with maimed  
hands as the wizening sun drew closer his *Canticle*  
of love poems and drawing up plans for a city of light  
so wonderful one might learn all the sciences  
by just looking at it. Caught red-handed  
and red-faced, he confessed the conspiracy  
that would have crowned him Philosopher-King of the Spanish toe,  
but never recanted the charge that their most sainted brother  
turned the study of language from spirit to letter thereby  
making Aristotle a mere grammarian  
setting the doctors dancing on the heads of pins  
inserted into abstract specimens  
looking for ontological solace in parts of speech  
their hearts set against the living sentient actual world

where an English Adam born of ironmongers  
to a faith in things wound up and set free  
was about to show how pins manipulated  
at a distance by means of an invisible hand  
could be transmuted efficiently from base metals  
into cheap commodities by a practical  
though less sympathetic magic using women and men  
unlikely in the simple division of their labor  
to ever look up from the assembly line to read  
the hieroglyphic of the stars (*the stars within*,  
said Paracelsus) or to contemplate the world  
as a lover will the image of a beloved.