

Tales out of school talk of the tribe  
the *lingua franca* of live men

speaking of what those worth hearing  
spoke to each other about

at that turn of the century  
unusual intelligences

from tea leaves of history  
exemplary characters

in whose debt we find ourselves  
obligated to the future

characters reenacting  
penny dreadful narratives

doxographic epitomes  
in cameo appearances

situations of light and love  
never quite sure which is which

or if they're one and the same  
though certain in the flesh-and-blood world

either is plausible  
*imagination a tool not a goal*



ancestors precursors  
medieval romance types

reborn as individuals  
unique within their categories

a motley enough company  
venerable in word and act

horsemen and spirited women  
poets and man's man despots

lovers — above all, lovers —  
of beauty truth the good of one

another the heat between them  
generating light: sun

and moon come up: no war:  
wise rulers: the people fed:

gods likely as not appearing  
disappearing through tricks of the trade

goddesses proffering their love  
neither causing nor suffering

jealousy or desolation  
bestiality or boredom

✱

men living and recently dead  
immortalized by name — women

almost never — imaginary  
in any case past and present

personalities on stage  
in the same conversation notable

less for what who or how  
they appear than for what good

bad or indifferent they do  
for the fold: warm bodies

costumed with artistic license  
in traditional mores

the complexion of humorous things  
reflected in a mirror held up

to nature's complex of images  
her speculum of special effects

a multiplicity of perspectives

design without a blueprint

stirring the brew as it heats up  
separating tenders from bullion



Hesiodic more than Homeric  
insofar as epic at all

precious few lines devoted  
to self-depiction *per se*

nor to interrogation of how  
perhaps in non-intellectual

non-conceptual musical  
or solely unconscious ways

*ego scriptor* relates to his text  
perhaps exposing therein masks

his better-known *personae*  
avoid acknowledging when they can

attentive as they must be  
to technicalities of verse

poetic demands of sound and sense  
aesthetic canons of judgment and taste

aeolian sensibilities  
long in thrall to the written word

starting to recall their oral fixations  
didactic matters ripe for transmittal



the tribe in question knowing its own  
on sight or in a word or two

speaking the same language whose traces  
in phrase fable song and law

through fluctuating dimensions  
generated of space and time

point to family likenesses  
the names of the father the properties

of things the proper meanings of words  
the nervous system of relatives

rectitude of familiars  
flowing in the veins of dependents

intelligent energy: pneumatic  
polychromatic sagacity:

gnostic: genital: carried  
in the fecund fertile tradition

specimens of uncommon potential  
re-emerging when the climate is right

to improve the general stock  
*this too of the process*



a trail of crumbs lustrous as gems  
lighting the way through the piebald wood

when not gone to birds mice  
ants wind who knows what

leading to a pastoral ever-after  
harmony of preoccupations

tiered by human type: each  
at the appropriate station knowing

who they are what their lot  
in the preternatural scheme of things

set down in song and text  
generation by generation

proverbs maxims anecdotes

gnomes charms apothegms

prefaced by the unstated rumor  
*people say or it's said*

wandering lyrists under the boughs  
learning from the true mastersingers

while menials do the dirty work  
with yeoman grace and gratitude



cinematic flickerings  
shortwave modulations

dead air white noise  
unpredictable static

increasingly elaborate  
sets of cultural parallels

produced not by resolving conflicts  
but by expanding contexts

persecution complicities  
paranoid intromissions

random inconsistent  
aberrant behaviors

symptomatic of something as yet  
undefined in professional circles

a fast dissolve from aesthetics to  
politics to right-wing

nationalism to populist  
corporate totality

the grave words of the boss-man  
*verbatim* in the mouths of *il popolo*



a small seldom well-disciplined  
conspiracy of intelligence

against the perpetual onslaught  
of intellectual decadence

conspiracies of ignorance  
invested in mean ends

heralded by a corrupt press  
headlining villains and fools

goods in the material sense  
to the distress of quality

that priceless property essential  
if equity is to be built

into the emerald city  
if natural capital is to

generate abundance and bear  
the weight of natural increase

and so to end on a positive note  
neither bang nor whimper

a history of a frame of mind  
a man might actually hope for



rhapsodies and tapestries  
aural threads interwoven

rhythm timbre cadence beat  
the warp and woof of melody

the bass line of the heart ticking  
within chords instrumental

in keeping the phrasing coherent  
the utterance intelligible

lovers dwelling in their honeycombs  
knowing romance is one another

insight hindsight  
vision undimmed by eyesight

history unmolested  
by knights errant taking their pleasure

where they find it *condottieri*  
unpoisoned by siblings of the church

love uninterrupted by murder  
beauty unmarred by time

the good unsullied by the true  
spindrift on the ocean of story



act one the recreation  
scene after scene agents actions

acts two and three largely  
transcription of fact after fact

largely transmitted in their own  
prose by leading characters

of a mind to stand up for  
individual freedom

the right of every human being  
to achieve themselves

such continuity as may be  
the very exploring voyaging

gathering selecting of what  
would appear to be a mind

seldom calling attention to itself  
whose properties and business

set setting incidents people  
arguments and quotations release

into the masque such purpose  
as is to be found



emotional ventriloquism  
inner demons projected onto

real people not apparitions  
out of old second-hand books

political economy  
human relations linguistics

the social sciences become  
the new metaphysics more

substantial in field theory terms  
than mechanistic materialism

or ontological idealism  
the universe an image of the human

a relativity of things  
a cosmological inconstant

held together by energies  
invisible to the naked eye

but palpable through intuition  
given direction by force of will

the same energies that inform  
art and make it matter



love in what was meant to be  
the next-to-last decad become

the universal equivalent  
*par excellence* bridging any number



of natural and metaphysical  
moral and civil mismatches

inequalities by any  
other name incoherence

the abyss between here and there  
see and perceive grasp and reach

brought into line line of vision  
line of verse the turning point

*eros* desire *cupiditas*  
*amor ren humanitas*

compassion *directio voluntatis*  
benevolence in the green world

all the eternal differences  
in love with one another



a form of history that might  
if things worked out discover

truly universal values  
constants of human experience

that might initiate the new  
renaissance a civilization

founded upon enrichment of life  
abolition of violence

diverse peoples united beyond  
their eristic deities

an abstract form to capture transcendence  
in human nature repeating itself

in a world no longer dominated  
by belligerence and greed

a history that includes the present

and so endows experience

with meaning and order an effable  
subsistence without denying

the impossibility  
of conclusion completion coherence