

*Love in saeculo as God in eternity*  
on earth as in the back of romance-seeking minds  
panning for colors in centuries of turbid faith

buying into the operatic argument  
that self-obliteration makes us part of something  
unfathomably greater: a mystical transcendence

but not even they felt comfortable anymore  
with André the chaplain whose bestseller treatise on what  
seven centuries later got christianed *courtly love*

a kind of worship in which a man because he believes  
a woman exists on a higher plane than his own  
ends up in abject groveling

now seemed altogether *too serious to be funny*  
*too funny to be moral too moral*  
*to be taken seriously* a scholastic humor

in its formative adolescent years —  
dirty jokes gross puns bathroom figures  
entwined in nicely grammatical Latin tropes

*linguistica erotica* from Ovid on —  
gender-inflected ambiguous parts of speech  
joined syntactically — nouns pronouns verbs

adverbs adjectives case declension tense  
conjunctions interjections ejaculations any  
level of allegory from here to kingdom come

apt to be made a bawd by ambiguous means, wordplay  
discrete from swordplay the swordsman from the man  
with the mightier instrument by mere sibilants

the fabled *trobar clus* of the southern lyricists  
an open secret in the *beau monde* of the northern courts  
where brothers and sisters were schooled in frank lubricity.