**Pound Laundry** 

**Michael Gregory** 

[dedication]

## By Way of a Preface

The number of authors, editors and auditors informing this production is large beyond adequate thanking. Some have read various pieces of it over the years and commented: to you, special appreciation. To Poundians, *grazie mille* for your labors and the fruits of your industry. And a thousand more to Jason Macoviak, Peg White and Lise Gilliland of the Copper Queen and Cochise County libraries, respectively, without whose dedication to the tradition of free inquiry, and provision of research services expected in much larger institutions, this tome would not be.

My interest in Pound goes back to Untermeyer's British-American anthology (lie quiet, Ezra, it wasn't Williams) in Jerome Kloucek's undergraduate 20th poetry class at Toledo U. (*Come. . . let us speak of perfection —*). It was piqued at Penn State by Kenneth Burke's and Matthew Josephson's conversation and by my reading for Burke's seminar the books Hugh Kenner had so far published (which led to my buying my first copy of *The Cantos*, the 1948 New Directions blue dust jacket edition). It compounded so to speak when while enrolled at UCLA's Folkore and Mythology Center I stumbled onto the New Directions paperbacks of *ABC of Reading* and *The Spirit of Romance*. Except for his dictates on Imagism and one prosodist's ill-tempered despair at the metrics in *Personae*, I don't recall that Pound was much mentioned at Irvine where, in the prenatal stages of what became the School of Criticism and Theory, fearful symmetries were conspiring with analogical ontologies as yet largely innocent of Continental critique.

Shortly after I dropped out of grad school, and a few months before Pound died, UC Press issued Kenner's *The Pound Era*. A few years later, less aware than ever of the swills still swirling about Pound's canonization (e.g., the AAAS refusal to award him its Emerson-Thoreau medal, leading several AAAS members to resign in protest, and to Kenner's refusal later to accept AAAS membership offered when *The Pound Era* was published), I bought and read a used paperback copy: here was a way of reading Pound that made him immediately relevant.

*Pound Laundry* started to materialize some twenty-five years later yet, at millennium's end, a full century of wars and depressions after Pound, age fifteen (prophesying that "at thirty I would know more about poetry than any man living"), matriculated at Penn. Time-sensitive material. *Tempus loquendi tempus tacendi*.

Particular thanks to editors, publishers and readers of the following print and online venues where some of these pieces have previously appeared, usually in earlier drafts: 100,000 Poets for Change, BlazeVox, The Blue Guitar Magazine, Blue Mountain Review, Fiera Lingue, FutureCycle, Mirage, New American Dream, Sin Fronteras/Without Borders, Square One, Unstrung and Voices on the Wind.

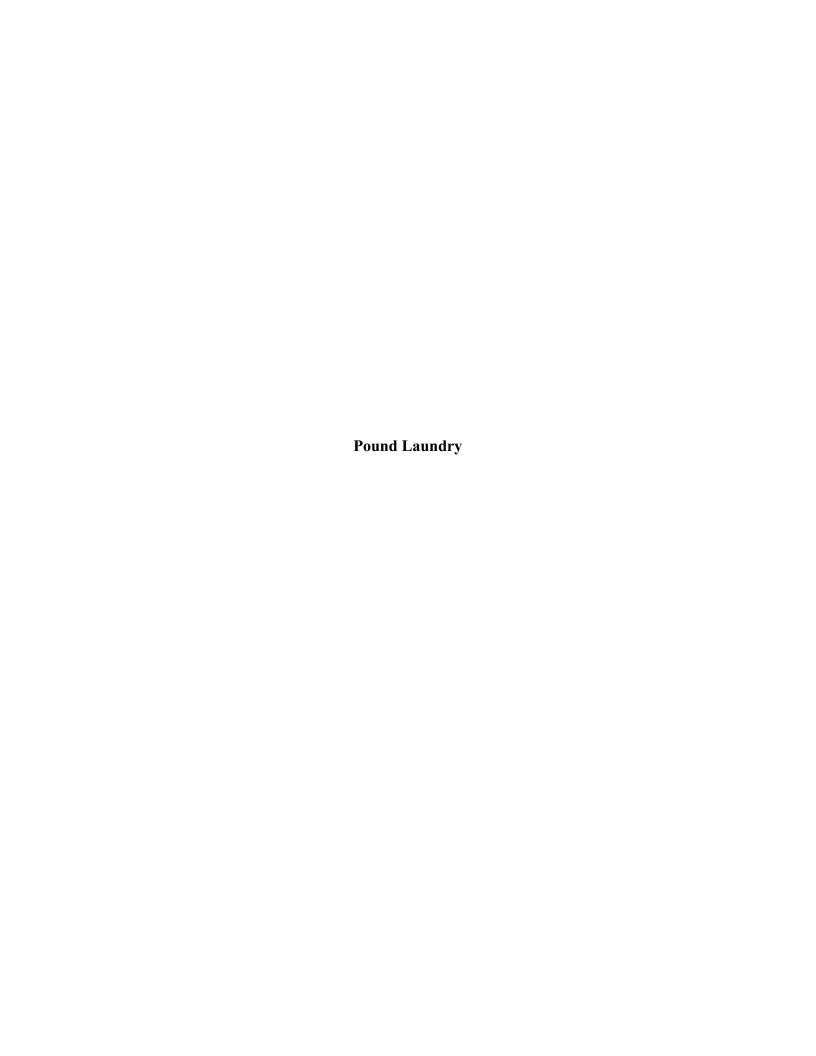
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Let us make distinctions and call things by their right names.

Henry David Thoreau, Wild Fruits

But Sordello, and my Sordello?

Ezra Pound, Canto II

The progress of human enlightenment can go no further than in picturing people as not *vicious*, but as *mistaken*.

Kenneth Burke, Attitudes Toward History

Without a debt there is nothing.

Robert Nathan, Digging the Weans

What is the light? a child said fetching it in her eyes

I think it is the hair of angels flowing like yours about the shoulders of the world

I think it is the music of the spheres spectral intensities amplified by our instruments

I think it is the oak in the acorn
a voice in the wilderness
bearing us towards birth

I think it is a pervading influence becoming particular about the darkness

I think it is the fluent medium joining mind and body mind and mind

I think it is what allows us to see how little
we see and to be alive
for one another

But what is it really? she asked delighted eyes sparkling

Master of words and spells lord of oaths guide of souls messenger of heaven guardian of animals domestic and wild, playmate to Pan, prophet-in-chief to the Moirai, lyrist from birth whose first song was sung in praise of Mnemosyne, patron of smiths and poets trickster inventor liar adept at ways and means of exchange commercial and otherwise the grinning God of the common man the craftsman the farmer the merchant the thief (those last two one word in Homer) not sly but shifty cunning in terms of material gain elusive as quicksilver firm as the stones stood upright in your name to mark intervals in the distance we travel.



Political man most unpolitical during the war an economic creature giving up on democracy in favor of selfish gain to such an extent the rulers had to augment the age-old public dividend to citizens who would bother to vote in a land of small officials and cunning beggars willing to let the war go on so long as the price of sardines stays low.

\*

The third highest consciousness begins in the images of things announced by the external senses, and reaches the purest discrimination of all things by means of their own reasons to which in their singularities it refers itself insofar as such things are founded in the primordial cause, and is consciousness of dianoia the internal sense.

\*

Empires come and go. Imperial emporia. *Sic transit*. Civilizations *ut etiam* the *membrum virile* rise and fall. Themis displaced by Tyche under bright-eyed Athene's male gaze. Well-struck coins worth their weight that rang true replaced by ill-struck coppers,

good men like good money driven out by the bad. Owlish omens thick as bats squeaking out of the mouth of hell, oracles of Bakis and Sybil ten to the obol, soothsayers and dream-readers a dime a dozen, amulet-mongers pitching their wares elbow to elbow with songbird-vendors whose victims custom requires have their tongues cut out before their sacrifice by priests who savor the meals more than the Gods who are dying out from want of belief for being worthless in times of need supplanted by slapstick divinities — Chaos Clouds Language Vortex.

\*

May the intelligible Gods impart to me prayed Proclos a perfect intellect, the intellectual Gods an anagogic power; the supermundane rulers an energy indissoluble and liberated from material knowledge; the angelic choirs a true unfolding into light of divine concerns; beneficent demons a plentitude of inspiration from the Gods; and heroes a magnanimity permanently venerable and elevated.

\*

There is a faculty of the mind that receives and transcribes every wave that touches the consciousness. This faculty is Ezra the scribe. Exalted to a point where it will receive from the spiritual side only, it then reads out of the law and interprets the spiritual meaning to all the people or the thoughts of the consciousness. Ezra is often called the Puritan of the Bible. He represents order, the faculty that holds every thought and act strictly to the Truth of Being regardless of circumstances or environments. Ezra and Esdras are the same. The Book of Ezra is a lesson in the building of the house built "not with hands" the building of our consciousness the House of God.

shoals reefs soundings

> blue grey blue green

> > shades hues values

no map

stars

deranged

bodies more or less decomposed

who knows what disasters

a leaf a feather a coconut

submarine faces vacant sockets pearls eaten away Blue in Theran murals the headbands of pugilists each with one hand gloved. Blue-haired people in Homer.

Blue monkeys running up a red rock mountain pilfered fruit in hand dogs in hot pursuit.

Blue Tarquinian demons winged serpents in hand over the blue-robed dead smiling in their tombs.

In Akkad and Sumer the hair of royalty depicted in lapis lazuli blue by royal edict.

On turquoise walls blue scarabs rolling dungballs twice their size across Egyptian sands.

Cobalt-blue glass beads from Nile workshops in Scandinavian Bronze Age graves.

Woad-blue hordes screaming across the embankment Blue-robed madonnas by the woad-dyer's son.

The sea-blue grey-green glaucous vision of Lir's children captured in oil by the brotherhood.

Blue riders on blue horses beneath blue mountains a blue fox That period.

Blue wasp-waisted mud daubers in flight Blue flying fish off Zoagli.

An undeciphered script of those once alive Aphrodite's eyes the eyes of her daughters.

Judge the wisdom of my poems said Kallimachos refusing to acknowledge knowledge as the supreme goal thereby skewIng poetic style for centuries

taking care though having himself great sympathy for learned studies not to let library dust dim the brilliance of his accomplishment *by their craftsmanship*. How is it possible asked Ambrose citing Samson and Delilah to speak of marriage where there exists no community of belief?

How is it possible for two with nothing in common but the ills mortality is heir to to join in communion?

How without a leap into faith is it possible to believe two or more may be one? *Mystery of mysteries*.

In love *a willing suspension* substance neither form nor matter but spiritual not subject to death inaccessible to reason.

How is it possible not to love the one one wants so to be with how not pray to and for the grace of light from the word? Norse and Gothic, Slavonic, Basque and Greek, Church and pigLatin, Occitan,
Arabic, Saxon, Erse, Franconian . . .
the tongues they spoke at Aachen were twisted into Celtic knots tied and untied like Chinese puzzles by red-haired monks the new emperor invited in to teach his court how to read and write

strings of words laced into dispute about the nature of reality and worse the reality of nature (how *did* that Universal Cat bear so many and such particular kittens and how *were* they all to be fed?) as less articulate brothers more physical than metaphysical a less ruminative intelligence

were laced into plate and mail to defend the faith or more often to settle property ambiguations and that vague thing honor (pawning their castles first if they were smart) joining the legal decrees chronicles accounts and legends quickly filling the shelves sententiae becoming compendia compendia becoming summae

cloistered logical equivalents to flying buttresses and soaring arches populated with lifelike figures arranged in perspective and tiered to illustrate in stone both unity in diversity and the strength of character manifest in the proportions of divine reason as it appears in the utmost human scale

not to prove true what the faithful knew needed no rational demonstration but to bring to light brick by brick article by article questions raised in constructing monuments options available and choices made in order to achieve concord among the elements put in the lists by conflicting authorities.

Shall the Scot asked Theodulfus make league with the Goth?
As well might the south wind be Irish

In all things learned on nothing fixed swift to argue striking the living dead with a gibe. It isn't

his soul-searching poetry its Carolingian Latin peppered with Neoplatonic Greek tags

the Spanish gravity can't abide but his incessant levity in eye hand mind and foot.

.

To take as one's own the beautiful

was in English translation of the German
interpretation of classical Greek texts
the primary goal of ennobled self-love

not the physical but the ideal self
the supra-personal sphere alone in which
the individual has real value
philautía a kind of amour-propre

to attain which a man of such temper
(valorous in battle born to exalt
the Excellence=Ethics=Aesthetics trinity
duty-bound to uphold *noblesse oblige* 

fair-mindedness and veneration of woman)
might abandon belongings and honor abruptly
might prefer intense short-term
pleasures to a long comfortable one

a year lived nobly to many merely existing might dedicate himself to the higher aim ready always to sacrifice himself for friends family or country  $\tau \delta \kappa \alpha \lambda \delta v$ .

Skirt fauntleroy curls and velvet to suit the polite conceit of the day affected by presbyterian friends

next door to the city of brotherly love where truth was assumed to be not merely a gleam through opacities

but simple and obvious when not obscured by human malevolence corruptibility or chance

taught from the cradle his every word was worth listening to, his names given and patronymic taken

in vain, compounded annually from schoolyard puns to honorifics rabbinical and academic

In adolescence second string
on the fencing team an art to be practiced
even with broomsticks if necessary

when locked up for instance years hence in *Count of Monte Cristo* scenes with green knights for Christmas presents

dressed in high romantic attire
Siegfrieds and Fafnirs from Greece to Iceland
Camelot to Baghdad

Terror Son of Fear, Fand,
Balor of the Evil Eye
Grendel's dam and Perilous Beast

the manly art of self-defense including as a matter of course tactics for taking the offensive

Self-reliance a second nature —

nothing at the last sacred but the integrity of one's own mind

a magpie reader becoming what one is to others an ethical production and what one is to oneself a melding

through creed or inner light good works or contemplation the *mens sana* realized as living world

replete with imaginary friends recognized by their signatures in otherwise natural objects

beneficence in a diversity of visionary pastoral states within the original harmony

Idealistic agrarianism romantic nationalism mystic personalism one's self

surely not to be confused
with what used to be called the soul
yet on that wavelength

having within itself the prolific seminal infinitude of the private subject possessed

as private property is possessed not to be sure as transferable stock but inalienable goods

genteel proprietorship spiritualizing the sensuous transfiguring materialism

Rousseau's contract a writ of bondage to keep one from finding oneself in command

of one's own aptitude

life conceived as a problem to be solved or self-improvement regimen self a ragbag of throwaways

unless one's own private will
convinced that collective articulations
are merely provisional arrangements

for the single separate person yet to come identifies it's own well-being in the commonwealth

knowing that individuals are moved first by individual conscience only later by social concerns To find out what has been done once and for all better than it can be done again and what remains to be done.

To know such ambition though Arnold's appropriate nonetheless to a young man sure of his own worth.

Footloose the old way in troubadour country Languedoc land of the golden tongue seeing for oneself.

To understand why intelligent men in order to believe did what they did thought what they thought

How in that time when *cogito* still meant imagination *fin' amors* could still exist.

Standing in the Hall of Justice the ninth Guilhelm had built to accommodate the ambient light one cast no shadow.

Woman was woman not an abstraction love was love not an intellectual special effect.

Within what was left of the *sacrum* raised to honor St Hilaire of Poitiers the laughter of gods could still be heard.

That *conscience* and *consciousness* two words in English are simply *conscience* in romance tongues,

that the sense derives both from conscire to judge one's own acts and synteresis

our inborn knowledge of moral principles that guides us to choose good over evil;

that since in its weakest sense the prefix con- doesn't modify its adjacent noun

conscientia is merely a synonym for 'knowledge' whence modern consciousness

with its concerns about how and what consciousness knows, and *that* in a stronger sense

in which prefix and noun catalyze each other *conscience* with its constituent.

moral artistic political concerns was once considered along with the rational

appetitive and emotional potentials the fourth part of the quadipartite soul;

that the law of conscience once came to mean "What I feel to be right is right";

that on the other hand thinking and knowing
— meaning and knowledge — aren't synonymous:

intellect to collect sort and compile reason to try to make sense of it all;

that metaphysics poetics and aesthetics what makes sense to the mind at its best

are moral matters whereby the *mot juste* is often enough a matter of life and death

wherein authority proceeds from reason

never the reverse — philosophy

approaching the godhead with reason, the godhead philosophy with love, as tongue in cheek

with piety and good humor Eriugena exalting Mother Dialectic

(the skill of separating truth from falsehood in order to control figures of speech

found in grammar and rhetoric, the other two arts in the verbal trivium: the skill

of speaking and writing correctly and craft of doing so persuasively — one's grammar,

the which everyone else knew as mother, a discipline lately subsumed under ethics

embodying one's free will and decisions; well-versed as could be in the old argument

that the most perfect language was his own which brought together in the most coherent form

the best parts of all the tongues of Babel (though it has still that peculiar speech habit

by which formed matter is said 'to-be'); his characteristic translinguistic punning

a sure sign of divine *hilaritas*) instructed Charles the Bald beginning with

the nature of Nature defined at some length by Byzantine Greeks he'd been reading

(one of the few in those days of *Graeca* est non potest legi who still could)

— Gregorios neocaesareae Gregorios thaumatourgos

Gregory Nazianzen Gregory Nyssen Pseudo-Dionysios

for all their orthodoxies neoplatonist pagans to a man: the divine name of the beautiful

the essential principle underlying being — defining the sum total natural world

All that is and all that is not then posing the symbolon / mysterium:

We may know not what but that God is but coming to believe as Grosseteste put it

rhyming light and love half a millennium

later All that are are lights

skating thereby a little too close to the pantheistic heresy for which

insight his work was twice condemned while he lived (*Scots' porridge* the synod called his notion

that evil is not in creation but in the eye of the creature) then again for good measure

four centuries after his untimely death (stabbed to death so the metonomy goes

by the pens of some of his brightest students) his legatees' bones dug up and scattered

for putting words in Albigensian mouths wagging the aureate tongue of the troubadours

seeing the dark alight with love's intention *en route* to the final solution on Montségur.

Silk with wool spun into fine damask glass blown into new transparencies compass abacus algebra sugar spice opium jade hashisch paper ledgers Indo-Arabic numerals and the zero

Lady Luck both muse and nemesis blind Justice and one-eyed Injustice to venture capital in Venice and Florence their bankers Byzantine in some wise but hardly Judaic much less Hebraic

Tyche's wheel up and down — the three dependant gilded balls more common — Natura with a mind to her munificent purse naturing snake-eyes every so often with hardly a by-your-leave for Caritas

Her sister-twin whose interests lay less in instrumental procreation — anatomy gender-roles sensual pleasure sustaining biological life — than in a passionate heart of desire for the eternal

Fortuna weeping from one eye winking the other to all those ample figures in her retinue those abstract ladies the songs keep alive sloe- and bedroom-eyed infinitives entered in columns with deft recursive strokes

Conspicuously absent from moral accounts kept by more scrupulous merchant-bankers their lines upgraded to strictly material goods reasonably durable attractively priced shelf lives yet to be determined On equal footing according to scripture *aisthesis* and *nous* created he them conjoined in harmonious discursive state

no sin in the flesh of creation divine but in *voluptas* the all-too-human will to deceive bent on delectation.

Thus Eriugena laying the groundwork for discourse that perpetually activates a narrative tension in the spirit of romance.

Héloïse after the severance rewriting the institution of marriage in long letters to her estranged spouse.

Marie rescripting the same canonical doctrine for a new aristocratic audience consisting in significant part of women.

Aliénor / Eléne — wife and mother to kings daughter and muse of poets the birthright of kingdoms her matrimony.

Borrowing piecemeal from the most belligerent troubadour his made up lady

that most beautiful of several beauties Egyptian Sinitic Indo-European

compounded into the *ymage* most perfect to love in lieu of love yet more divine

neither wasting away from wasting disease nor from neglect obliterated

though badly used said some for undisclosed strategic purpose to her lord's regret

each with her rôle in the tapestry holding the key to his heart and castle her lips an opening

accidents of love ground exceeding fine in the first mirror-chamber of the brain

where the individual *poiesis* couples with possible intellect

to tunes played on the lute brought out from Andalusía before the expulsions

his desire being truth to tell less her person than what he can make

of her courtesies once she has come into his kenning — what vision verse song

what satisfaction fulfillment salvation consummation the view from a castle in the air Green pants butterfly collar purple sombrero a goliard dandy singing the new morality an upbeat tune kept in time to his ebony stick three-legged dance with once-in-a-lifetime kick steps

Inspired of the reliquaries to speak again their loves and deeds their living wills and testaments sifting through bones ashes scratchings in dust for signatures of something to pretend to believe

A kiss of honeyed syllables unbuttoning the stiff nether lip of a demanding age unwinding peloponnesian footage to make a fetish from air a lineage of dancing girls mad to taste the god

Death walks up to each in turn but who eyes wide from verbal concoctions immanence transcendence still visible on their palms has seen the perpetual spring murmuring into his desiccated chamber?

Barleycorn up and down, loansharks behind each tree indulgence hawkers and confidence men working the girls hicks and honest sailors out on leave looking for a good time on their way to the trade fair The blessed Suso in his youth choosing Wisdom for his beloved

had her painted in all her beauty by a brother with a gift for that

— the mosaic prohibition having been for some time now

lifted through imagination as the eastern fathers taught

the punning pope in concurrence that icons bear faithful witness to

the transfiguration of matter by light — on parchment he carried to his cell

longing to be in touch with her color line shape divine proportion

her presence preceded by desire to know to understand more deeply

found only by those who go slowly in holy curiosity

The beautiful calling to the soul Ecstasy the soul in ascent

despite the risk of monk's disease presenting in various guises

— *sloth* for one, the noonday demon making him indecisive at best

given to despondency inert before all tasks

falling asleep with his head in the book waking into a sense of privation

confessing to being abjectly unfit for such an ambitious vocation

— *hallucinations* for another giving credence to phantasms

the castrate and cannibal god casting a leaden pall on things

the god more subtle a certain feeling of uncertainty something not

quite right about to happen in sight of an archaic smile

black humor *sotto voce* behind the saturnine visage

— *eros heroycus* yet another that melancholic disorder

the soul pulled towards the beloved image written in the imagination

attendant spirits so agitated they soon exhaust the red blood

leaving nothing but black bile a wobbled head filled with vapors

the brain dried the psyche oppressed ungodly visions and feelings

transforming contemplative intention into intimate contradictions

an incapacity to conceive the incorporeal yet desire

to embrace it a violent lust

for the unattainable

which impossibility exasperated inclination

spiritual depravation might well drive lovers mad

incontinent as vipers insatiable beyond restraint

like asses having commerce with women they claim to despise entirely

leaving the practice in disarray the order in vile and utter contempt

for which excesses attending physicians concluding that only by a touch of the spear

that caused it can such a mad wound be healed prescribed: coitus and drunkenness

and on the theory that opposites seek balance: fasting and walks

through flowering meadows by gentle streams where birds and minstrels sing the same song

until the fires burn themselves out the spooks go back where they came from

the mother Christ hold him again a satisfaction in her eyes

Proceeding by analogy
that is imagination to coin
as the fat doctor did
a term to finesse the mystery
that is persons in community

in order to credit reality
that is subsistent not existent
relations among abstract that is
imaginary things consisting
that is subsisting in their relations

the properties essential to beauty
— clarity integrity
harmony — seducing reason
to apprehend as with angelic
intellect the tranquillity

the peace the coherence realized
when everything intelligible
and actual — forms substantial
and artificial — is put to order
gathered into totality

the supreme order an ordered life
the universe an organism
of forms identical to it
dynamic multiplicity
the stable perfection which exists

when proportion is complete —
the senses fitted for sensation,
the field of perception suited to
the structure of the mind, intellect
appropriate to the object —

as when light striking a body
reflects a splendor of color — the order
the body embodies — the form of design —
being manifesting itself
as an existential idea

distinguishing intuition from

expression of that intuition in art which Croce believing as he said that *physical facts do not possess* reality did not.

That in general justice implicates virtue (value a measure of need desire demand; the good the mean between two extremities)

just distribution in particular the just exchange of goods of equal value expressed like justice between equal parties

by an arithmetic mean; exchange of like for unlike, justice between unequals, by a geometric mean; just exchange

of unlikes among unlikes best expressed in pythagorean terms: contrapassus reciprocity

involving both arithmetic identities and geometric inequalities in notions of usury and just price

expressed by harmonic means — to each his share based on freeborn status said democrats on wealth and birth said oligarchs

on excellence noble character *arete* maintained aristocrats the just lots long since assigned by the fates.

\*

Aristotle based price on need, demand, what the market will bear and buyer beware, Albertus on need materials and labor.

Justice is a habit of mind said Cicero which gives every man his desert while preserving the common advantage.

In the Justinian Code justice is the constant and perpetual will attributing to each his rightful due.

Aiding the needy and submitting to God

said Augustine. Rectitude of will which has been observed for its own sake

said Anselm. *That through which* said Hugh of St. Victor *the community is held together* and which does not deny each his measure.

That which allots each his due said Bernard of Clairvaux and which rewards a righteous will. *The preserving virtue of human society* 

and the common life said the Moralium William of Coches may have written in a step toward joining just price to justice as ethical virtue.

All those platitudes to and about Laura done to a turn but breaking little new ground, the figures hard-won by past masters appropriated to ornament *sonetti* accomplished yes but hardly breath-taking though they might perfectly capture their age

traditional renaissance rhetoric baroque or even mannerist technique blending poetry with argument beautiful tropes *poetria* with apt *sententiae* reason with elevated lyricism or idiosyncratic

diction, sentences literary rather
than imitating spoken discourse — highly
abstruse allusions extended metaphors
copious erudite quotations crossing
recognized boundaries between
philosophy politics literature

The cellular hermetic scholastic ideal transformed by the prose he was known for at the time into a modern sense of solitude —

a life away from crowded haunts, leisure for reading writing brooding peacefully a small community of chosen friends

bringing to mind epicurean Horace
with the twist that happiness no longer depends
on doing one's social and supernatural duties
or on grace but is in one's own hands
a matter of one's personal will power
free individuals each

hoping through his own imaginary conversations with others living, dead, more or less fictional, to free himself from distracting passions a question less of what the world is than of how one sees one's relationship to divine promise

Desire is the essence of man he said copulative verbs being popular in the low countries at that time a passion like will and imagination.

Love is pleasure accompanied by thought of an external cause contemplation is an act requiring moral concentration.

Neither humility nor repentance is a virtue for neither is rational and both involve situations wherein power to act is checked.

Intuition is the highest endeavor of the mind and the highest virtue, the ultimate fulfillment of reason. *The whole is prior to the part.* 

The world is one substance revealed under physical and psychical aspects a universal animation every part existing as atoms

swarming in scattered groups but each feeling its own existence and a joy in its activity a part of universal consciousness.

Absolutely necessary Sir said Johnson to keep the spirits clothed; the poet under discussion should have secured the consistency of his system by keeping immateriality out of sight seducing readers to drop it from their thoughts.

But given, cautioned Macaulay, readers whose minds are so full of it there's no room left even for *the half-belief poems require*, *his peculiar art* — communicating his meaning circuitously through a long succession of associated ideas,

insinuating more than he expresses, oscillating between idealisms, taking his stand on most debatable ground — enabled him to disguise as equivocation these incongruities he could not avoid and thus make it through the puritan ascendancy.

To say nothing of violent pamphleteering, synthetic construction of a style in the speech of slaves, innocent self-belief, Hebraic/Hellenic division in sensibility, stubborn utopianism, political disillusion, a reluctant postponement of paradise.

Less analytical than synthetic a fascination not to say obsession with the past the center shifted from rational inquiry to imaginative pursuit through speculative philosophy and all the arts and sciences

living on willpower and good credit, whatever we do or know the words of the apostle hold true *We live*. . . by faith and that differs in kind from brute creation, for knowledge is more than coincidence of an object with a subject.

scriptural history in nothing more contrasted with the histories of highest note in the present age than in its *freedom from* the hollowness of abstraction, the shadow-fight of things and qualities which partake

of the general contagion of mechanical philosophy that product of an unenlivened generalizing rather than true knowledge for nothing great was ever achieved without the swallowing up of the self in enthusiasm

yet love that is not a deliberate act of will a primary expression of our highest nature is no more than a romantic Hum a mere desire appropriated to a form by accident of an irresistable impulse

I would make a pilgrimage to the deserts of Arabia to find the man who could make me understand how the one can be many. It is the co-presence of feeling and life. A contradiction in terms, and only in terms.

Rewriting the history of literature as various forms of intellectual theft from plagiarism to appropriation

trying to reconcile the necessity
of putting the nonpoetic into the poem
with some sense of aesthetic propriety

back and forth from text to context restructuring chronologies and traditions events as discourses rather than facts

a realistic pragmatic approach to action against the stink given off by romantic nostalgia and solipsistic postures of the poet it leads to

a problematic individualism failing to translate art's aesthetic order into actual political order

manifesting patchwork poets playing perplexed Hamlets in closet masquerades to be or not to be of the people.

Past and present Unto this last the moral-aesthetics/aesthetic-morality vortex spiraling out a diapostolic succession of cultural history theories

Schlegel Coleridge Schelling Carlyle Arnold Ruskin Owen Babeuf Kropotkin Morris not all of them believing that by fighting the battle for Culture before they had fought the wars

for bread and health would avert class war or that workmen's courses in what was said to be the very best that had been thought and known — substituting abolition of class

for abolition of class society — would satisfy them with lower middle status, but all denouncing the moral turpitude of nations and individuals who hold that

supply-and-demand trumps all obligations all relationships and that the sole connection of man with man is cash-payment the heart and soul of industrial capitalism

bringing against the claims of determinism and self-interest the claims of human relations as a whole, freedom of imagination, respect for the organism of the inner life

supremacy of will over causation, opposing to promises of universal progress history showing no such thing but rather the changelessness of the human heart.

What Engels and Marx called *feudal socialism*: Smith's treatise on moral sentiment a throwback, Burke's reactionary *The People* a pre-industrial nostalgia

society a continuity of activities an organic participation interrelationships interdependence — constituted not by contract or writ

but ingrained wishes and aspirations the system of habits and ways of acting and believing of a people defined by their history together, comprising the highest orderly life

a social totality which art — its essence — embodies expresses presents represents as a critique of alienation or exemplary display of creative power

or both, a radical aestheticizing of history the ideal reconciliation of subject and object necessity and freedom individual and society

theory and practice a primitive utopianism claimed by the center and the right, culture no longer a personal acquisition the State the primary agent of human perfection.

White-hot moral indignation Old Testament kirkly wrath perverse ejaculatory arrogant repetitive style pretentious mysticism

yet protested some friends he really was the most tenderhearted of men his verbal ferocity giving a false impression his savagery but an affectation gone sour

content at times to leaven the radical unknowableness of absolute value by locating the universe within the individual human mind

at others guilt-ridden by such hubris less afraid that reality is a dead unmeasurable steam-engine than that it is fundamentally nothing but himself his hero the great man of noble powers heart-abhorrence of what is incoherent pusillanimous unveracious such nobleness purchased by the world's best

heart's-blood a ground not be lost (Napoleon brought down by hook-nosed bankers his like not soon to be seen again when races of pumpkin- and potato-farmers are given

powers they aren't equal to) the English middle-classes the very embodiment of vulgar materialism, the common man under *industrialism* degraded to *beer* 

and balderdash the hero (history of the world the history of great men of insight and superior vision able to comprehend the true nature of things

to understand the historical forces of his time to speak what all men were longing to say) he who has his will of history with recourse to physical means as needed

to save far more than appearances, the genius (few in any age) who takes action to do what needs to be done to maintain the integrity of the race a *spiritual* 

aristocracy highly cultivated responsible concerned to define the values the quality of life society must aim for — even poets

especially poets in this wormhole of history given their vocationspecific gift of seeing particulars in context may become heroes —

the acknowledgment in every man of an ineffable substance the vestiges of organic society sustained by authority and obedience

a mechanism of sensibility last seen in a twelfth-century monastery before craftsmen had yet pictured themselves as commodities priced by haggle —

history the true epic poem though the present is an age of sham heroes sham order sham speech caught up in the cash nexus redeemable only if at all

by heroic individualism restoring durance and hierarchicals — drawing back in the face of intractable social circumstances from a brotherhood of man point of view

to an authoritarian tension between detachment and vision standoffishness and identity, his cold eye an absence the disappointed prophet faces in silence —

pious mumbo-jumbo and stage props judiciously arranged gregorian chant in beautiful wax-light keeping from view the hollow night of Orcus the abyss

of black doubt skepticism with random gleams of revolutionary insight man finding his true humanity only in useful work he enjoys doing

the day coming to all when our yearning for *divine humility the highest valeur* will no longer need to look in deaths-heads but will find it among the living around us.

3

A sternly loving mother a totally indulgent father a marriage annulled on grounds most publicly proved by his wife that six years on she was still *virgo intacta* 

then an impossible love for a mad girl some thirty years his junior who turned him down for religious reasons then resentment that the myth of continuity

the romantic imputation of life to the object-world can only be a reductive fallacy pathetic in the Greek sense an impertinent impious conceit. . . .

The Slade Professor of Art too a man of deep fitful insights who would forget profound truths minutes after he wrote them but had the fortitude to follow his thoughts

to conclusion, insist though not fully understanding the terms of political economy that workplace conditions must liberate in laborers as well as in employers

moral as well as intellectual powers that art is expression of *man's joy of his labor* health in the arts inseparable from moral and ethical health of society

that economics is a zero-sum game one man's wealth another man's poverty the great impalpable insatiable fact: what one person has another cannot

that the basic economic model for home as for nation must be the family farm the farmer as genial *paterfamilias* hands not hired but sons of the father

that where art and work work and beauty once had been harmoniously united, realizing through group artistry in architecture and through the grotesque technique

of composition by fragments to express the image the beholder over-leaping gaps left in the mosaic field works out for himself the socio-aesthetic nature of the gothic,

now division of labor meant *mutilating the man* divvying up the laborer his very sense of self a mincemeat a *fragmented sensibility*.

## 4

The lost paternalist golden age retooled to a workman-worker vernacular intentional cooperatives in the late medieval sense of the phrase

given gigantic proportion by Feargus O'Connor the lion of freedom roaring for restoration of Old English fare Old English holidays Old English justice

the right by charter to peace and dignity
the poor man's right to abundance of everything
a home not a hovel leisure time to enjoy it
the commons forever unenclosured

all those new streets behind Mr Twist's Mr Grab's Mr Screw's still open fields, no Gradagrind Grundy and guilt burying love in *shoddy, from statesman to shoemaker all* 

is shoddy, shoddy is king in an age of shoddy the aim of art no longer beauty but profit the cities mere masses of sordidness and squalor the past defaced the air and water defiled

the hideousness of factory towns and makeshift commercial districts fouled with acrid wastes the *vulgus* of usury and *luxuria* spoils of the middle class slave trade

the riches of the rich and well-to-do founded on *terrible useless misery* a glut of ugly furnishings inside architectural monstrosities.

Universal personality accessible through ethical rituals verging on the paramedical never really doubted in public

sensitivity to the intimacy of immanence a delicacy of approach

Vibrational reality lines of force criss-crossing space an energetic field with no limits other than those one sets oneself

natural and supernatural interincorporative affinities

Abstract and practical reality worlds of absolute and collective error Reality of dreams ideal relations imagination a universe a cosmos

Compact reality believed by the compleat armchair philosopher

Reality utterly multiple burying in the fundamental moil the self that contains the memory of the race which may rise above that level

that nether end of the climbing rope trick known in the east as wishful thinking and hope

Psychological reality
holy insofar as not for sale
least of all by or to the imperial motive
that by definition makes objects of subjects

resemblance and difference ringing in the ears the identities of mathematics

Emphases of interest purpose conception attention compassion all the forms of thought called higher and rational to somewhat clarify the situation

Spiritual reality neither physical nor strictly mental

Moral flabbiness born of exclusive worship of the bitch-goddess success combined with our national disease — the cash interpretation put on her

Aboriginal present reality plural pragmatic democratic

Possibilities all or some of which might turn out to be matters of choice elaborated in the intricacies the pulse between desire and intention

Individual self really the only inviolable property we own

Though what with all the dining room exposure to Swedenborg Fechner Agassiz and Emerson none of the three siblings felt comfortable with the thought of having to make a living

Art should be independent of all clap-trap—
should stand alone and appeal to the artistic sense
of eye or ear without confounding this with emotions
entirely foreign to it as devotion pity
love patriotism and the like its value

having little to do with how well it represents something else something other than itself but everything to do with its technical felicities, the craftsmanship with which true genius creates its own reality. Thus spake

the stock cartoon artist à la bohème when not done up sartorially in top hat frock coat monocle square-tipped patent leather pumps white shirt and a long cane flourished it was said menacingly on occasion

ex-pat Irish-American in St Petersburg
Paris London during the thickest Victorian fog
sometimes passing himself off as of Russian birth
(I shall be born when and where I want he answered
when confronted with the plain fact that he first saw light

in a state of the art Massachusetts mill town) — inspiration to generations of Wildean spirits perfecting *the gentle art of making enemies* seeing at once that whatever the grey and black and peacock blue arrangements what sells art is

the artist's persona performance image will; whose pyrrhic victory in court against the libel enounced by the reigning elder left him bankrupt whistling in the dark said elder's stone lamps first brought to light in order to save modern art

from industrialized palates; that elder *who* had long said the capital-A Artist addresses any particular scene in any medium by recalling thousands of such previous scenes commingling them with those now passing through him

a Morris dance of traditional properties

(Well-meaning said the sage of Tigullia but a goose to think return to the stagecoach the answer to foul locomotives when clean quiet electric trains are already running); who giving up aesthetics in the ascetic sense,

his main value in the public's heart, to preach instead his last forty years nothing but economic morality and the present recession thereof, alienated his audience at the height of his fame; but *who* nonetheless hit the nail on the head concerning

the dismal science and dirty politics of art — *ugliness and injustice unidentical twins* injustice the first born of that misbegot pair all money an acknowledgment of debt scarcity a by-product of monopoly

imagination and the passionate element values that must be figured into every calculation the body politic weakened if men spend their lives manufacturing trivialities wealth the possession of the valuable by the valiant

capital capital proper only when producing something useful something other than itself consumption the end aim of all production to use everything and to use it nobly usefulness value in the hands of the valiant

distribution the physics of wealth — not wealth absolute but discriminate, not everything to every man but the right thing to the right man not equality in the leveling sense but the obvious superiority of some

the basic idea of *organic form* producing in his thinking the familiar notion of the paternal state a rigid class-structure guided by principles of intrinsic value insisting that democracy must be rejected;

the root of war the capitalists' will risen to the top of a covetous culture, unjust wars supported if not by pillaging the enemy then by loans from private parties to be repaid by taxing the public, the *proper* function of businessmen neither self-interest

nor making themselves rich, gaining the power of riches (the power of keeping your neighbor poor the tradesman servile the artist in poverty) but to provide for the nation, teach it righteousness — what is vanity what substance — the difference between grapes and grape-shot;

who (one of those rare men said Tolstoy who think
with their hearts) conceived culture to be an organism
so even as cultural degradation depraves the arts
— slurred lines always a sign of vice the moral
history of nations there in the construct of their buildings

changes for the better in art might prompt broader improvements; who, fined a farthing for saying in print that the coxcomb in asking two hundred guineas for his black and gold imposture was throwing a pot of paint in the public's face (recalling how he himself was first provoked into becoming a critic

when the spattered paint image was thrown at Turner) arguing in his own defense his right to speak his mind, especially on morality in art the character of the art indicative of the artist, especially in the written-letter format where

opinion is to be not only expected but welcomed, especially when the opinions expressed are right as his he pointed out were, and though admittedly his impulsive style might seem scurrilous, forceful expression is native to caricature

the proper voice to draw attention to dark truths — resigned his chair at Oxford in a fit of protest at the fine, took it up again then resigned it again to protest vivisection on campus; *who* said he saw as he walked to the British Museum people's faces *more corrupt* 

daily the great majority already gone rancid more so he thought or so he told himself than the one he saw when he cared to look in his shaving mirror; *who*, having tried to hold everything in his mind, in his declining years had to let go —

no summing up, only chance remarks casual thoughts memories letting time in, his last twenty-five suffering mental breakdowns (attacks of madness as they were called at the time) spending the last ten in intense silence.

Dynamos and goddesses turning the world on its ear poetry and science descriptive religion and reason explanatory

exponentials generating angles and hypotenuse Euclid seen plain superseded by calculus and analytic

> producing in their turn the circle that comprehends the universe as parthenogenic organism genius at artwork-in-progress

Electricity harnessed organic chemistry unleashed biology and particle physics prefiguring psychotherapy

action an act of will
to be distinguished from sheer motion
the spatio-temporal background
the gap between sight and insight

the abyss of solipsism
bridged by directed imagination
an ontological faculty
integrating unlikes

Seeing the verbal in every noun feeling each object in its music material subjects coming together an instant before coherence occurs

- symbolically through ideas
   concepts logistics abstractions

   bodily / perceptually
   through preconceptual sensations
  - energizing terminals
    building up the required potential
    to discharge revelation

from point A to radius b.

Above all avoid vagueness — abstraction that as soon as it's made makes an end in itself

that leads to monotony impoverishment the quest for pedantic academy perfection

the parts reduced to uniformity the void that emerges out of disintegration

of human sensibility suffered when work is not a labor of love. *Combine clearness* 

of form and firmness of structure with the mystery that comes of abundance and richness of detail

apparent in natural forms familiar from association as well as from beauty

the rose the lily the tulip the oak the vine. A thicket, not a park. No lines or objects

which cannot be explained by the structures of the pattern. Every letter pure in form, severe,

solid *without needless excrescences* or thickening and thinning making it

difficult to read. Recognize that art requires community to live.

Concern yourself with the products and how they are made and *the well-being of the people who made them*.

\*

From odd-man-out triangular romances Guenevere Iseult Deirdre

(life unhappily imitating art years before *The Decay of Lying* came out)

to blood-feud Icelandic sagas, wolf and bear mores, Brynhilde

From earthly (*that is* said Pater with Baudelaire in mind *artificial*) paradise

the utter extinction of all asceticisms all the goddesses granted suffrage

to Wat Tyler and John Ball feeling the pinch of land-grab and poorhouse

asking with them Who when Adam delved and Eve span was then the gentleman?

From preRaphaelite middle-class self-centered antic brotherhood

to revolutionary consciousness: instinctive social conscience without which

any society is impossible; fraternity the sense of community

not to be achieved but simply acknowledged, liberty and equality yet

to be won: every human being free — not an anarchy but hand and mind

attendant to that cooperative action that worthwhile associated effort

which makes real freedom possible; equality of position — not just condition

or opportunity, such palliatives as soothe symptoms but don't cure the disease

don't end class-based division of labor don't end class based on capital

don't abolish poverty market and *that most* dangerous tool of capitalist oppression

the god-fearing soldier don't liquidate both class and capital through just

distribution of the means of exchange a goal not at all impossible

if one would merely for a change see things from another person's point of view

from each according to her ability to each according to her need.

\*

More than the reasonable order of epic with its linear storytelling logic

plot attitude and sense of an ending he loved the freedom of desire of romance —

appetites and reason equally human, capacity for a true conception of a power

to make the past present — less inclined toward troubadour than bard, less toward lyric

than narrative stance, less the Romanized aristocratic hierarchical

feudality than gothic democracy the rise of craft-gilds to political power

in towns and communes to the north the victory of artisan over aristocrat and merchant

effective communities of equals where class and class-privilege has ceased to exist

where alienation — from nature above all — is replaced with a feeling for the commonwealth

air water land pure the commons communally owned — that is by no one —

desire educated, eyes for more than looking at ledgers and bodily needs

people able at last to understand precisely what and how little they need

in order to achieve fulfillment and happiness — news from nowhere news that stays news.

\*

Competitive commerce with its sneering question 'Will it pay?' thwarts poet and man of science

the flowers and trees blighted with poisonous gases the rivers brooks and rills turned into sewers

the spreading sore of London sucking up with its loathsomeness field and wood and heath.

Let us remember that there was a time when men had pleasure in their daily work

before commerce discovered that imagination the joy of creation the hope of fair forms

are marketable articles.

The cause of art is the cause of the people.

Not art for a few anymore than education for a few or freedom for a few.

In a properly ordered state of society every man willing to work would be ensured

honourable and fitting work, a healthful house and leisure for mind and body.

\*

Apart from desire to produce beautiful things the leading passion of my life he said has been

and is hatred of modern civilization society atomized acquisitive

the *innate moral baseness* of its ethic compared to *All for one and one for all*.

The issue not just industrialism but capitalism not just machinery but who owns it

to what end, manufacture to make not a product but profit for capital

under which all society rests on a gigantic system of usury.

Organized brotherhood must break the spell of anarchical plutocracy.

As long as labor is a commodity we cannot live on the earth like honest men.

Shorter hours higher wages at best stopgap measures on the path to equality.

The old order has to be overthrown by force. Not merely the bettering of condition

not merely reform of current practices drawing pay in order to draw breath

drawing breath merely to draw pay but a radical change in relation: the working

useful productive classes equal with the privileged possessing classes

association in place of competition equality in place of tyranny

social order and cooperation

instead of individualist all against all

socialism not *laissez-faire*. The first step: get capital —

credit land railways mines shipping machinery factories —

into the hands of free communities living in harmonious federation

governing themselves and their affairs by free consent for the benefit of all

food and drink unadulterated nothing made that is not worth making

every trace of commercial competition eliminated lest the new order

fail by being sucked back into the waste stream of capitalist production.

Free men must lead simple lives and have simple pleasures. First be free

make work pleasurable then learn to take pleasure in all life's details.

\*

A wise and great man ungovernable in our drawing rooms eulogized Shaw

who had argued with him the politics of gradualism versus revolution.

Blunt who had had an affair with his estranged wife the dark troubled beauty of their time

remembered him as *Our greatest man* who would talk in precisely the same tone

to a pretty woman or journeyman carpenter attentive as long as she had anything

*interesting to tell him and no longer.*To Yeats he was *the happiest of poets* 

who knew as Shelley knew that economists should take their measurements not from life as it is

but from the world made perfect by visions of men like him *illuminated from within*.

No man I have known was so well-loved. People loved him as children are loved. In that brown long century preceding, half-ignorant in its illusions hypocrisy false overwrought feeling shallow morality artificial *sapless religiosity* and *lamentable taste*, we the people slipped

into unscripted time: all form and value for the first time or first in a long time subjected to unlimited immediate change.

— For some, for the better: satisfiable desires satisfied as well at least as might be expected

scenes characters actions motions properties reduced to types symbols objects of analogies a strategy for getting around those fatalistic accidentals in the score set down in the causal determinism of mathematical science

the dominant idiom of the day the rational empirical presupposition of death an ethical notion that living one's essential life in the personal realm is *a failure to elect infinity*.

— For some, a special pleading of family resemblance

moral and intellectual character the genius of place people nation race the synthesis of ancestral heritage and bloodline making up the present individual: *some things cannot be changed*.

— For some, no longer assuming the viewpoint of angels the urgent

need to moralize objectivity, yet making a fetish of saintly self-discipline, less interest in manipulations of word and world than moral remedies for inward temptations, less in failings of personal idiosyncracies

than generic human bias in scientific aesthetic cultural judgment, specific imperfections best treated with honesty and self-restraint through for instance image reproduction machines: gramophones photography radiograms

polygraphs run in real time letting nature

appear to speak for herself, the problem less how with all values perverting into social values to reconcile freedom and equality than how to attune equality with authority.

— For some, swayed by concerns of societies for psychical research as well as by physical science, a searching for answers to life and death questions to bridge the material-immaterial crevasse with substances neither and both

given as they saw it nothing to choose from but myths and fictions themselves subject to transformation such questions as what attitude to adopt in achieving a willing suspension of disbelief and which myth or fiction to believe with a will

while keeping in mind it is only one among a plethora of other possible solutions, irony for example displacing self-deception allowing to that extent more productive engagement than utter skepticism would allow

each biotic division bound by its own course of development, not transmutation but metamorphosis, an organic process like that by which all parts of a plant are true-to-type developments of the leaf.

— For some, the mystery of elective affinities in species and substances (wine but not oil mixes with water) applied to individuals and social groups from marriage to church state and class, each to each in preference to others by nature not will

— For some, a positivist skepticism (no grounds for moral authority or transcendent obligations) leading to moral skepticism fused together with moral indignation moral nihilism charged with moral fury in hatred of the modern

syphilization of society worse now than when the evil flowers first put the spirit to sleep

back before the canals started communicating pus between festering relationships before all the crying over lost edens called love.

— For some, the objective character of meaning and value verified by the fact that numbers ethics and logic being independent of empiricist materialist tendencies cannot be reduced to subjectivity psychology nature

or anything outside the spheres of logic ethics or arithmetic, gratified to have at least two truths avoid the naturalist fallacy:

Only the love of people and beautiful objects good in itself and The good cannot be defined.

- For some, an incapacity to experience others except through fear deceit mistrust and domination, love a technique a contract to enhance male production extramarital partners a logical consequence of imbalance at the heart of relationship.
- For some, conscience a knowing with, a sharing of knowledge with another oneself or otherness as such hard to tell from being with or simply from being given concomitant complications like genitive guilt and falling back on the unexamined impulse of the moment.
  - For some, the overthrow of superstition by reason followed by the overthrow of overweening rationality by passion followed by relentless freedom to experience absolute ecstasy.
- For some, words mere concepts that dissolve images and demean words into brutes with well-defined outlines, common stock therefore impersonal about impressions made by humanity that crush or at least veil expressions of individual consciousness.
  - For some, the vaunted objective science of the past not that but simply projected categories of the scientists' own language of metaphysical assumptions now

to be replaced by a truly modern science that thinks in terms of the experience of phenomena.

— For some, a seller's market of inflated language, nothing behind it its currency rubbed thin enough to see through, no longer convertible to meaning its gold standard floated on the open exchange all illusions of actual value just that

no choice but either to concentrate on producing a crystal that refers only to its own coherence or to register the absence of any transcendant, debunk belief in any referent affirm in a tragic key the play of meaninglessness.

- For some, as the old estates and orders gave way to classes parties and interest splinter groups as movements subsumed schools cults sects and persuasions as urban restlessness picked up the pace, a feeling of being alive engaged present in their own time.
  - For some, lives sacrificed to ever newer technicalities *having a life* traded in on *making a living*, keeping body and soul together dependent on the machine behind the hand that feeds, relativity the only freedom left

the freedom of self-expressive invention geared down to a range of more reasonable expectations appropriate to perdurable servo-mechanisms the nightmare of history graced with fantasies that bear no more than any a close looking into. The disrobing of goddesses does not said Santayana conform to the principles of exegesis and I declare it heretical: goddesses cannot disrobe, their attributes are their substance. In the beginning darkness covered the face of the deep save for a dull glow behind the Akkadian veil.

Then Alexander declared the Persian *drachma* the standard from the Nile to the Ganges. And the *drachma* 

begat the Roman *aureus* and *solidus* which moved upon the waters. And *aureus* begat

nomisima also called byzant five hundred years sound face value equal

to weight which *bezant* begat the *dinar* brought back with spices the fork and the oud by uncouth crusaders.

And the *dinar* begat the *ducat* of Venice and *florin* of Florence which begat the *real* which sailed

the Inquisition and pox upon the Spanish main. And in the new world the *real* begat

the *Almighty Dollar* and in the old one the *Pound Sterling* which bestrode the shrinking globe

from Waterloo til the birth of the Federal Reserve shortly before the Archduke's assassination.

And lo, when there was not in circulation coin enough to buy up all the goods producers produced

(and truly there was a perpetual shortage of ready cash) more was made to appear as if by miracle

created more or less out of thin air or bought borrowed or stolen outright in wars of trade

the shortfall in short made up in interest-bearing debt the benefit of which accrued not to the just. The terror of millennium's end famine the little ice age the ancient of days decomposing

markets gone from barter to cash money itself a commodity the value dependent not on need

but on current price of coin face value floating free from any link to metallic content

currencies devalued to pay for the next war's technologies cash-poor knights reduced to squires

governments inserting themselves into monetary policy setting exchange rates as they will

cosmologies from cosmogonies for those no longer satisfied with lurid genealogies

likely stories ply over ply Ossa on Pelion blind leading blind through *involucra* and *integumentum* 

to bring into line with orthodox doctrine the texts of Macrobius Virgil Plato Hermes Trismegistus

for what is man but a hapless figure a shadow in the Book of Memory a composite of unlike things

caught in the fiery back and forth of birth growth degeneration the emanation and return of existence

great schism hundred years war

crusades a failure black death the fire next time a proximate risk

writing come into its own again inscribing a new notion of self as inner space with its own laws

words and property losing their proper meanings property itself devalued

cities born at the crossroads where inter-kingdom trade fairs made permanent settlement

in urban centers relatively independent of the church profitable for craftsmen and merchants

all three salvage devices up from the rubble: the first, talking of art and dressing up folksongs

resulting in *la pastorela*; the second, by stuffing it with content to make it more intellectual

resulting in long-winded explanations of love and its effects; the third, by satire in the gaelic sense

the only one putting us in touch with the normal life of their time replete with wild-haired women

spitting invective from the battlefield foretelling and casting spells on behalf of the forces of light

speculation about signs fundamental to speculation

about the universe, words

identified with things they stand for linguistics identified with semantics properties of things with their meanings

true definitions that closest to a word's original intent their prebabelic lineage

all the way back to the sound *el* the primal utterance source of all subsequent signification

all reference and referent language the God-given helpmeet to God-given reality

rules of social order and verbal perfection dependent like rules of grammar on *fidelitas* each part

in proper relation to all the others — adjectives governed by nouns pronouns by antecedents

all constituents in agreement on gender number and case a paradigm of lawful behavior —

matching deeds to words the moral corollary to the linguistic goal of matching words to things

moral rectitude essential to rhetoric both *word* and *deed* translated as *verbum* in the Vulgate

Aristotle's predicaments literally *accusations* the logical framework to the macrocosm

substance quality quantity relation action passion posture where when environment

dialectic with its subject a concept instead of a person become the new impersonal grammar and logic

yet still: the nominative the defendant the accusative the plaintiff the dative the solicitor

who will proffer the bribe the ablative the magistrate who will accept it

*credo* credence creed credit born in the temple priests the first banker-broker-money-changers

turning gold into spiritual immaterial rewards coin exchanged for promissories

payable in the hereafter, money once a simple means of exchange a product of human labor

— coins stamped bills printed — now a magnet for fantasies projected from the congregation

displacing both golden calf and the wholly other unimaginable alien deity

the mind of God gone opaque except for what is revealed in scripture and nature's cursive signatures

- divine paternalism supplanted by radical individualism not the *why* but the *how* of things
- syllogism as the basis of science by the fruitful hypothesis leaving reality open-ended
- scholastic consensus that motion always tends toward the good by new visions of human freedom
- radical determinism by radical voluntarism man in the image of a willful God

Then the next renaissance the neoplatonic midwife *homo artifex* in attendance

the goddess' long labor arrested by men in black with heads and collars reversed toward wavering *speculi* 

a sense of propriety narrowing their eyes to the glare let in windows unshuttered by self-styled

enlightenment thinkers before they too lose their heads in that topsy-turvy century of revolutions

mechanically replicating the nightmare idealistic men and women made of reason's utopian dream

debauching into the ruthless American century — desire degenerated into abstractions

instinct throttled by ascesis

perverted to cash on the barrelhead mountebank protocols

the *Corpus Hermeticum* buried again its father-son teachings forgotten *Draw in the incorporeal* 

the body the perfect instrument of the increasing intelligence *Her priest must be her vehicle* 

Will it and it will be Turn off your senses and she will be reincarnate in you The scientists of love capable of most subtle discriminations having pursued the discrete perception to the vanishing point wherein transformation occurs — controlled confusion becoming excessive communication which is to say amoricity in essence

fine-tuning his three usual devices metamorphosis image persona to contemplation of the light at its source just before through rarefaction and condensation it emanates into infinite implication made manifest —

lux to lumen light to light no softer nest the sensual immanence of immaterial figures induced by form and matter in coitu illuminata (an early phase of ideation it was said a capacity for image not yet developed

beyond a radiant node or cluster from through into which ideas are constantly flowing) — not exactly parroting or mimicking to the point of identification but measure by measure breathing their breath moving lips throat tongue

as they would have moved theirs speaking their words as they spoke them as a man might actually speak in one or another mood their diction and rhythm getting the emotions across in those voices the masks require if they are to come alive

not exactly to raise the dead but to revive as possible an old often-lost language to think in *hic et nunc* with words given meaning by how they were used there then by thinking men who knew damned well what they were talking about

the subjects of which intelligent men have always talked to each other — books arms men of unusual genius the stuff epic is made of money sex tomorrow reaching people through their ears where self-defense is less sophisticated than that in the optic sector

feelings in vowels consonants for emphasis

by empathy by mimicry by negative capability making the outer reality inner *If you think it how is it far?* saving the spiritual by making it natural

transcending the by-definition narrow range of genealogical limits to experience (the bounds of individual identity some called his lifelong ego weakness) giving way to an interpenetrative process

in which *you* suddenly becomes someone else as if possessed of one of the natural human historical figures you found yourself in speaking in registers the lyric voice does not achieve along the subject-object *incognitum*.

Love in saecolo 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 greatrer: 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. Quibbling over details was never not part of the deal. Witness for instance the ancient arguments over Iambe — who she is and where she should laugh

the smirking over parts of speech in metrical positions obscene as any copulating of genders engaged in grammatically sound declensions, syllables juxtaposed *contra naturam* 

dactyls inserted where they ought not to be feet in comparison a minor fetish in the measure of things proper to man and that figure the long and short of it;

and over intelligence carried in the sounds, breath shaped by teeth tongue and lips thought in words emotion in cadence intellect in consonants and inflection

articulated in rests and stops; and over diction that favors possessive case versus less genitive strategies that evoke rather than symbolize,

the *mater dolorosa* though mourning her daughter cajoled into ribaldry by weasel words of the old midwife mimicking comedies played right after the goat song dithyrambs.

But in the main from Ecbatan to Rome Macedon to Alexandria Scythia to Spain those who thought much about it tended to agree

the breath that animates the universe circulates in the arteries untouched with blood and fertilizes the sperm is the same breath that in the brain and heart receives

and reforms the phantasms of things we see

imagine dream love that breath seamlessly intermediary joining body mind human occult

converting opposites to polarities polarities to mirror-images instances of spiritual motion both object and origin of erotic desire

the lucent wax pulsed up through the spine from kernels anxious in the testicular sac spirited into the heart as *eros* and temper into the eye as beauty an aqueous humor

into the veined and nervous and tentacled jellyfish of the brain (the skull the vault of procreative capital) fulfilling the chemical desire to conceive

in the imagination there suspended to be informed by memory and wit intelligence and intelligences intuitions foreign and domestic

a touch of madness (infernal or divine a curiouser and curiouser distinction here in the *phantastikon*) become in the process reincarnations of love

art governance devotion the craft perceived in all its precarious occasions from primitivism to decadence made new through association with one another. Since the critical imagination
itself a product of heredity
in its perpetual motion toward becoming
might in recreating the past from remains
of fungible or verbal medium
give us the exact science of the mind —

As the scientist can from a flake of stone
or footprint left in geologic dust
read the motives interests and effects
of history in a concrete moment
all the penchants attitudes and gestures
in a brushstroke or the inscription in a seashell—

As Columbus from a wood-carving he found in coastal waters deduced the social conditions of Indians he had yet to meet in the flesh able to read the culture in the craft half a world away from India as naturally as a tree is known by its fruit —

Time as space, a feeling of being at home roots in a fixed location able to count cultural heritage as capital a resource as natural as sunlight contra international moneymongers who regularly discount both —

In the mind all ages contemporaneous
parallel dimensions accessible:
so any contemplative who comprehends
this present past and thus in his own life
enquiring into the rationale of things,
feeling not only obligated but able

To harmonize the literary religious
political economic ideas of his time,
might live countless lives reading in nature
signatures corresponding to the design
bred into the race from the get-go
invisible to the uninitiated

Dante was his Virgil more than a half truth in view of all the anxieties of exile he came to call his own. Notions of perfection.

Visions of paradise. Prosody the composition of words set to music. Poetry less invention than a skillful finding

entering into the ghostly *logos* of language, and a willing of its own realization, the poet-author binding together vowels —

the souls of songs — as the man of authority binds together the disparate souls of men taking account of historical events

mastering them ordering them in his mind incorporating them in the work to hand. Which neoplatonists to look to

for clarity on the practical implications of the metaphysics of light. Which poets to spend a lifetime trying to get into

the eloquence of the vulgar tongue. Words as Aristotle said the seeds of action the monarch is obligated to plant so with time

they fructify in community life. Justice whose antithesis is avarice, desire to have more than others. The just

society a reflection of people in love. Fidelity to the authorities on the three orders of human dignity —

philosophy ethics theology. Speculation — the *vita contemplativa* — closer to God than the practical arts, as per

the Angelic Doctor, the moral order of action and technical order of creation both less noble than the theoretical order of knowledge though each the other's equal in authority: the personal spiritual and political spheres (reason contemplation public work)

each supreme in its own bailiwick — he who contemplates does not govern he who governs does not contemplate —

separate but of equal competence in a convivial live and let live world to each his very own beatitude

peace on earth finally enabling actualization of human intellect *in toto* the whole human community

free, each individual free to act in accordance with his own nature a hierarchy without subordination

a peace achievable only through sovereignty exercised by a strong leader who having all is beneficent, without greed,

a fount of unselfish love and charity which is to say love in rectitude to refine and clarify justice

constraining men by force of law to admit the natural truth of the philosophers the supernatural truth of the contemplators

for just as the natural body needs a head (man being a compound substance composed of rational psyche and demented matter

eyes on the stars and feet in the mud) it follows that as different middle terms in logic lead to different conclusions so

different ends require different means the body politic needing a head of state to keep ubiquitous greed in check.

Seven years before Armageddon poking through monuments routinely ignored by those who should know better

looking as Fletcher later said for values functioning and in sufficient strength to enable them

to make of themselves anything more from their colonial soil than complete failures to adjust to the standards back home,

in the gloom of old places of worship the light playing tricks on itself as it had around Aphrodite

Venus on the half-shell said Ford the spindrift she rose from spilled from her father's orchids cut or bit off by an uncle or brother

the melancholy god's loss the birth of love foretelling the end of every man's parade

Just kidding yourself said Lewis that you can see interiors
Art is all about surfaces

What a fantastic philosophy as if values, judgments about art and morality,

interpretations of poetry and religion, were independent of existence as if art

transcended the body, imagination endowed intuition with sense, mind

were self-perpetuating — his positions put with *imperturbable perfection* 

(perfection of rottenness) page after page assertion after assertion without a shadow

of argument — as if ideas were above day to day being the only place

a thing can be better or worse than another thing the question is *Do we accept life* 

on these terms and if not, because honor forbids, what do we do about it?

Those first eight years of the new millennium where ineffectual government was forcing millions of desperate people a year overseas

a man in his twenties was writing polemic (Stirner Schopenhauer Nietzsche and Marx open on his desk) which though a little suspect around the edges

for emphasizing individual will and group manipulation (not the extreme personalization of Christian salvation

but a realistic understanding of crowd psychology) were nonetheless taken for orthodox doctrine in Milan

where a hundred militant workers were recently killed four hundred wounded by government forces on behalf of capital —

intrinsic laws of economic production the eventual rise to power of a new class to supersede advanced capitalism

the state abolished along with the institutions servicing its established oppression (monarchy parliaments the church

the banks trusts cartels the military the old-school nationalism the propertied exploit to produce collective bloodletting)

that state that come the revolution devolves into fraternal productive communes owning property collectively

transforming itself into community animated by moral purpose creating for man an elevated condition of life

unattainable by other means than *violenza* — perpetual peace degrading the fundamental virtues of man which emerge only in the dark light of spilled blood — compromise and reform at best a slow suicide at worst those persuaded

they would gain freedom by pacifism or selling themselves into collaboration finding themselves ever less themselves.

Religion Tradition Authority
always the imperial trinity
political economy redux.
The third of the three having as Alain said

a wax nose which might be bent in diverse directions to satisfy as Lewis put it desire for ecstasy the passive rhythm of the crowd the absolute

release of individual will into
the power of another. The second the tree of life *axis mundi* reaching into the heavens.
The first now all but disappeared

since the recent push to replace it with culture —
art as religion, morals philosophy
science or mathematics as religion
a relict mode of rationalistic transcendence

practically extinct in the church proper
which for some centuries has functioned
principally as a holding company
for earthly properties, true religion

preserved when at all in indeterminate forms deep within individuals, personal enthusiasms expressed in out-of-the-way rites and apearances

sometimes neither hidden nor spelled out
none of the bells whistles or ectoplasm
adored by the popular press and its public
but like the oracle intimated

sometimes too obvious to ignore or deny—
a weird change in the physical atmosphere
the air luminous shimmering
a presence a personality a will

obviating any need to prove continuity or coherence though two figures of the triumvirate lie in fragments waiting for Orpheos.

Nothing supernatural about it but if those conceptions at the heart of occult traditions

esoteric practices and spiritual paths certain inexplicable uncanny

experiences more than a bit of the weird sisters rising together on the way unwinding out of hell

yet at least as certain as a sense of self as undeniably palpable as anything

agree with the consciousness in question on ascent as the right metaphor, the vertical

as the upright man's natural axis his beauty the source of light his most appropriate focus

- on exaltation as an accurate description of states of vision inspiration rapture love
- on elevation, being higher on the great chain of being, of natural desire's moral imperative

and if as some of our very best minds have agreed there is more than enough evidence to warrant

a thorough scientific search for proof that a corporeality too fine

for the gross senses to perceive exists that there is in fact a continuum

which may even be as the ancients believed a seed-bed from which the dead are reborn

then a sense of social responsibility as well as the desire for personal salvation

insists the whole matter — from musty essences hanging around graves to breath inspiring everything

to little loves flying from and to eyes

## spiriting souls away in radical semenic powers

to animal energies waiting to be completed by language informing the vibrant medium, acts of creation

oriented toward the literal world — should be brought to the attention of thinking people.

Ghosts in the machine and on call Fauns and dryads loose on the premisses An elf or sprite under every leaf Airy nothings asleep in the cowslip Love Truth Honor The Ideal Capitalized on everybody's lips

Her father a well-to-do solicitor her mother a beauty among beauties a proud unhappily married gifted novelist who gave *her fluttering consolatory love* with the clear declaration that she had had and would have many lovers.

Animal magnetism and psychic research Golden boughs and orders of golden dawn Table rapping and parlor manifestations Letters dropping out of thin air Tremblings of the veil and footsteps On the boundary of another world

Both sensitive and intuitive so knowing to distinguish between them yet unsure how intimacy and mystery combine she brought him in sincere matrimony the society and intelligence of a vital perceptive cultured and faithful woman

who deeply believed in the privilege due genius. Between you and me there should never be anything but peace she told him — no sorrow no anguish no horror nothing but gentleness an exquisite delicate love not hot-colored passion which dying leaves a blackness of hell.

Splitting dialectic hairs in Naples abstract opposites and finer distinctions phenomenology *versus* philosophy spirit as universal *versus* spirit as concrete history

(history fundamental as per Vico)

Platonic transcendental dualisms (mind/matter subjective/objective relative/absolute) *versus* process, change immanent and immediate, economics and ethics the practical art and logic the theoretical

The modern world searching for religion a concept of life and reality a conscience to combat the new diseased mentality made up of mysticism activism aestheticism and imperialism in short, pathological decadence



True history contemporary
not mere chronicle or philology
but imaginative grasp of the problems
of the past as understood by the actors themselves
and as they are vital to and relevant for
the historian's own time

History as history of *la vita*morale bringing back to life past
aspirations and spiritual existents
the true the good the beautiful supplemented
by economics as per Das Kapital
ethics as per the Manifesto

But neither communist nor fascist: freedoms inevitably lost under *fascismo* (a mere parenthesis in history) can live only in democracies, Il Duce a potential instrument to put aesthetic economics into practice;

Marx's *class* an intellectual fiction for only living breathing sweating people are real, the socialistic vision of the rebirth of and through labor and in labor possible only through faith and hope in historical materialism

appeared he said *doubly fallacious* as materialism and history both. His neapolitan ambivalence tolerated because the new regime found it convenient to use him to prove free speech lived on in Italy.

\*

The total work of art an *idea in action* — intuition imagination expression — *a coherence of images* brought to fruition in the artist's fecund recreational mind freely formed from true beliefs and desires reasonable as any schoolboy might wish

The difference between art and criticism
the difference between creation and judgment,
the test of poetic expressiveness the resistance
of any line to abstraction from its context
and its fit within the organic coherence
of the single complex image of the total work

Artistic genius like all forms of human activity always volitional, conscious, else it would be merely mechanical motion not an act of participation in the object but simply immersion in its otherness, not the rapture of willful immanence

the real contemplative experience of letting one's innermost feelings go unchecked and unanalyzed but mere lifeless syllogistic transcendence a logical abstraction devoid of feeling

## lacking the unity of organism

\*

Some psychologists distinguish something no longer sensation but not yet concept as *representation* or *image*. Certain men have greater aptitude to express certain complex states of the soul. These men are known in ordinary language as artists

Seeing the tree as tree no more no less an object adequate to itself subject to classifying naming instancing, all its propositions at any given time discernible from its founding premises which themselves may change over time

Seed root stem branch leaf fruit a single image not susceptible to being anatomized on pain of ceasing to be what it is, becoming something else not a content but the whole universe seen *sub-intuitionis*  To the proposition that after their stone cottage winters they might have to join the clergy in saving art from the masses bought up sold out dumbed down into good soldier material

by nation-states doing what they're told is good for business, forgetting as best they could the desire of the man for the woman the desire of the woman for the desire of the man though

agreed that a real heaven must glorify carnal love, both more drawn to the bardic than to the leprechaun poets excepting always the music from under the hill where the rainbow ends

Coming to grips with phantoms and echoes of arcane philosophy, boning up on spectres apparitions daemonic systems, wrestling with decadent angels of continental idealisms,

summoning the ghosts of oriental nobility to cross in their masks wing to wing to the keening of the pipes disembodied images passing silently as thought

through lunar phases replicated in Minnaloushe's eyes, *CONfound it* objected the king of the cats with more than a bit of stage Oirish *in moi counthry the Church IS Babbitt*.

Fantasies of more efficient language more perfect union on imperial terms in fashion since the Rosetta Stone translations raised interest in the birth of civilization

Newtonian dreams of redeeming at least in part our fall into arbitrary written signs from the original tongue Adam spoke when calling things by their right names

Grimmerian aspirations for the mother tongue
the spirit of the letter of the law recoverable
from word sentence tale, meanings borne
in the sounds nature teaches her natural children

To answer the ancient question of whether language is a product of social convention or a gift of nature, the names of things existent and subsistent the representation in speech of things in motion

something to be understood in its own terms its own regularities and analogies, or accepted as the result of a necessary relationship between words and phenomena

raising the even older question of whether universals exist in the same sense as concrete particulars or rather as mere concepts figments of the rational mind

The tree of knowledge *yggdrasil* the spindle the middle term become the human tongue that through an act of differentiated self-consciousness breaks apart

the continuity of man and nature of meaning and object that links entities not by script not by non-discursive images understood immediately

by their forms but by an arbitrary

imposition of the discontinuous erotic fecundating spoken word interpolated between mind and thing

Visceral discontent of those unwilling to think of themselves as clever animals evolved from some unspeakable form, human behavior mere animal behavior,

much less as animals distinguished not by consciousness or minds but language a development whose origin (unlike that of mind

consciousness or a faculty called reason capable of grasping the nature of things) is understandable in simple purely naturalistic non-transcendental terms

The hope since the birth of modern science for a *characteristica universalis*in which everything that could be said at all would be said clearly

a language tooled by reason to get across
what needs to be said free of the goose chase
null results of irrationality
meaningless statements and propositions produce,

purely logical in its relation to other languages, the notation perspicuous looking like what it means conveying even the illogical

Feeling back along the ancient lines of advance to be in touch with the source of meaning to catch a glimpse of original perceptions establish a personal relationship

deducing from current similarities

in etymological *culs-de-sac*a primeval unity unperturbed
by its being devoid of empirical proof

corruption of syllables lost between sleeping and waking lip and cup breath and breath redemption by return to original inspiration *lucus a non lucendo* a grove with no dryad

Conceiving a form incorporated among history oratory chronicle lore legend mythology religion fairytale saga legal accounts song

a psychic construct sensitive to time yet durable, coherent through the ages patterns in perceived phenomena verifiable signatures of nature

witness to persistence of mental production largely free from monitor interference, not causes but origins suggesting a synchrony in answer to their prayers

Aesthetic aspirations for a language of nouns language in monotheistic terms a prelapsarian language of proper names when word and thing still coincided

not yet fallen from grace into abstractions of instrumental and conventional speech a divine language the ultimate dynamic creative word that started it all

the residue of which the artist may recover by accessing the unmitigated flow of original communication running through the whole network of nature

Objects of vision the language of nature's author —

their bodies thickening the alphabet soup turning attention away from meaning to sound making the hearing of a word more difficult —

the language of lesser works, authored by mortals, far from being a beatific light
between truth and intellect the voice
of a Beatrice conceived in purgatory

is a shadow inscribed between us and the glare a providential obscurity not unlike

Apollinaire's *ombre* saving us
from blinding ourselves seeing into it

In an environment degraded by commercial and political obfuscations a language that offers if not quite restitution of verbal innocence before divine

nomination then at least a sense
more true to the words of the tribe so through
a non-utilitarian non-euclidean
discourse exchanged by those with ears to hear

a language where words sing their own swan song our authentic relationship to the world to being may be reclaimed transformed transfigured redeemed reinvented

Art starting from the visible helping us understand with our senses Poems from intelligible accidents letting us feel with the intellect

picture-writing for quick image-ideas phonetic glyphs for discursive intercourse the hieroglyphic and alphabetic in tandem universals less concrete than supposed

though it's said they're not in fact abstract but so effective that some particulars are unthinkable without them, some unifications impossible

Long preludes and prefaces celebrating in polyphonic narratives the pastoral decidedly pre-industrial one great society the noble living the noble dead

a live growing palpable thing enfolding like the concrete idea diverse alien elements until it reaches a unity more instinct with life and joy than red of tooth and claw



Fashioning characters to resolve through elaborate ruminative passages matters that can be resolved in talk, the cracked golden bowl the Bloomsbury cup of consciousness lived in time and space

under dominion of caste both practical and political acquisitiveness intelligence confronting the stubborn pluralism represented by physical and emotional differences distinguishing men and women



Perpetuating the essentials: *love* the confraternity of human and human at home in the world; *liberty* political but also of thought and imagination the senses freed from slavery

released from the dead hand of custom; *hope* and its willful corollary *fortitude* sustaining the dream;

*joy* our birthright the sign that a man in full exercise of his faculties is alive



Substitute emotionalintellectual-moral-aesthetic ideals for metaphysical concepts, then biological-psychologicalsemantic-linguistic-literate models for cultural relations

inevitable timeless structures informing all living conditions naturalizing the *status quo* adjustments made as required to keep the organism alert the totality functioning.

Zarathustrans and genealogists propounding new age aristocracies from late medieval guildhalls

built on a warrior-and-monk morality
— virile heroic puritanical
pessimistic but willing to hedge bets

An infinite number of imperfect human beings cooperative rather than competitive moral rather than political

authoritarian rather than democratic preferring their lives to be regulated by reverence honesty caring and justice

High Romantic notions of right and wrong less concerned with workers' liberation than moral regeneration of society

a sense of duty and sacrifice in order to keep in touch with the past a personalist democracy can't quite conceive

Tending to define subjective against objective in terms other than disappointment regret despondency consolation expansiveness

and the like — vocabularies of desire done to death in *la belle époque* — *ennui* well on the way to overripe and rancid

Politics as craftsmanship indifferent to class conflict owing less to Marx than Bergson and Nietzsche

> cranking their ingenious wind machine to clear from the still faintly wagnerian air a lingering slightly decadent scent of progress

Recalling the life indivisibly one yet ceaselessly changing, emotions desires instincts

both group and individual consciousness

revolutionary spiritualism socialism with no proletariat blending seamlessly into salon fascism

Critique of influential anxieties a property of the art, summing it up according to benchmarks on a volitionist scale

a factory-run of products from assuming will exists in any meaningful sense of free — insight on a par with passion informing action

Intimations and intimacies replayed by those said to know how to read the score expressed in the overlays on cave walls

their perceptual formalities — colors lines composition — the non-abstract antedeluvian original language

Objects *au naturel* in the midst of themselves standing for nothing other than themselves adequate to their own best intentions

the implications of their existence alive in customary means and attitudes the living utilize to ape the dead That the man he'd never met in person whose oriental notebooks he was digesting was of Harvard Hegelian stock disposed to assume that language the medium of thought is also the repository of knowledge and that after the trials and tribulations

of spirit in throes of philosophical passion the mind simply discovers itself alone
— that *it* is what was meant by the term *god*— that *it* is death, that *no throne* awaits that those who experience such discipline gain only a conscience reconciled with human

mortality free from false concepts conceits eschatological illusions, he knew; and that the notes stood Hegel on his head so far as the values of intellect and nature or nouns and verbs went in getting us to the unnameable presence

the word *is* from the root \**es* to breathe the word *be* from the root \**bhu* to grow myth poetry relation image all attesting that the primary unit of language is the verb: *the cherry tree is all that it does* the interval not the note is the musical atom

the image conveys essence in the sense of potential to achieve its own perfection, the particular a body of such potentialities revealing itself in its relationships, the concrete particular, the fact is that in which the universal obtains,

not abstractions signs classifications intellectual generalities piled up in grammarian pyramid schemes each name in touch only with the names immediately below and the one at the top (being — the copula in apotheosis

the phonetic fantastic transcendental

signified), but concrete images processes conglomerates of relations embodying each character's history transferring energies linguistically keeping the obscurity visible;

but because they kept it secret outside Japan he never knew the man was a Buddhist priest ordained in a sect of an esoteric sort who tended to read the written characters through dialectically tinted spectacles fine-ground in vitalistic flux

inclined to regard the most primitive language as the most poetic, constructing paradigms involving decay and disease in life as in language only poetry can redeem, tending to elide inductive method intuition common sense and Emersonian metaphor

whose desire in occidental quest for satisfaction through logical syntheses affinities cohesions cleavings picked out through geologic strata of analogies (harmonies too large as the notes said) confused emptiness with the absolute. Suffragettes suffering the myth that a right to treatment as male or less means freedom even if only in a most commercial sense a buying into equality

equality of the sort death bestows on us all —
indistinguishability —
for equal read same for consciousness understand
a species effect or property

Man and Woman taking the place of women and men in the eyes of blind justice abstract entities entitled by statute in the name of liberty

as if civilization by definition entails
homogenizing the human race
genius bred to reproductions of reproductions
forged in the melting down of creation

Rome's temples pulverized for lime mortar chunks of Athens in the British Museum Homer and Dante so much paper for wrapping fish when not applied to lower functions

as if having legal equal rights on the books could guarantee equivalent power under rules of law by and for the forces that are and that will be

as if having adjudicated rights and duties —
respect and dignity certified —
could ever provide love care sympathy
the spirit behind the letter of the law

as if turning private responsibilities
over to the public sphere
giving the bureaucrats access to our most intimate lives
could make for free individuals

One-size-fits-all equality is in fact

as the *Gotha Critique* says liberal inequality — equality confused with identity —

legal and political in a mass society
perverted from a working principle
that gives everyone equal status by reinstating
excluded middle classes

within the action-authority-order equation into a mangle that renders individuals normal, unique human beings bourgeois liberal ciphers

Not to say that armed revolution is the answer — property rights turned upside down the means of production assumed by inexperienced hands the men with know-how out the window —

nor some transfiguration into a public image of some private sublimity attained by a breaking out of some particular cultural inheritance

— some style vocabulary tradition — when all it takes is a tweak here and there in the money supply so those whose labor produces things of use have cash to buy those goods they produce

a simple redistribution of the beautiful —
not indiscriminately
among such as are not to be trusted with the secret
but those who know the difference

Of no interest whatever save for cranks and such who have some reason of their own for abetting purposeless individualism.

Thus Tony Ludovici in a *New Age* review, paid, of Epstein's latest exhibit seven months before the Austrian archduke

in newly-annexed Sarajevo went down to the shot fired by one of the Black Hands thus kicking off the mutual massacre.

A charlatan wrote Hulme in the next issue a little bantam his criticism disgusting his writing on Nietzsche that of a child of four

watching a play about adultery, the most appropriate means of dealing with him a little personal violence

(and that just a year before his own translation of *Reflexions on Violence* came out three before his own violent end).

To which said reviewer replied the following week that art is always prophetic; that this anarchy in painting and sculpture is only

a forecast of what the disintegrating influences of modern times are doing and will do in every department of life

if not stopped at their every incursion phenolized at each irruption; that it behooves all who see the danger

to do all in their power to resist the attack that one day will be general upon all the most valued institutions of orderly life

and to be prepared to survive the attack not only with strength but with the kind of health that naturally wards off disease and infection. Art wars Poetry wars Sculpture Painting Music Dance Theatre wars. A cowardly shifting individual

wrote Lewis the following week. *A fool. His dismal shoddy rubbish not even amusingly ridiculous.* While just round the bend of the vortex

Br'er Rabbit was shouting in boldface and loud colors that an impersonal hatred is or may be an artistic merit but personal hatreds

are of no value whatever and that the war between artist and public is a war without truce. Seven months and counting. Like to unlike constituting relations between things in love hooking up in an open field seemed unlikely even to the preSokratics ability to make it happen the true mark of according to Aristotle poetic genius engaging form and content order and chaos

intelligibility out of sheer incoherence
maybe on the offchance of natural mutation
but more likely through the metamorphoses
objects images and ideograms undergo
a murmuration of hands warming the skin
in the process of mouth to mouth resuscitation

The human as image emblem icon sign
a shingle squeaking in the wind above a threshold
down some squalid medieval backstreet
the vehicle for the tenor's aria
leading up to the gallows scene at the end
staged by extras from all walks of life

the corporeal bringing to mind a sense
of the universal, from micro- to macrocosmic
the biological as analogue to
the political order and otherwise
ineffable aesthetic symbolic domain
the well-schooled call theological

Immortality said the last romantic
is perpetual embodiment
of even so little as an instant of self-possession
in a concrete image that as its embodiment
retains that possession forever for others to know
after the artist's presence is no more.

First a mood then a surging thought and last a thing he said the Triple Logos: unmanifest eternal manifest eternal; the moods emanate from communion of individuals with Anima Mundi

appearing to poets and writers as their individual archetypes immortal passions or their personified images the gods, permanent states of mind.

The more a man lives in imagination the more gods does he meet and talk with.

Belief is the spring of all action: we assent to reflective conclusions, we believe myth; belief is love and the concrete alone is loved; only by images is life eternal made part of our ephemeral life; to die into the truth is still to die

Backsliding down through age after age of infamy recapitulating the original butterfly through every time dissolve sequence human imagination comprehending all things in their eternal forms the actual body of Blake's savior Emerson's individual

a glistening thread in and out of the weave
leaving a permanent trace in each generation
the oak through every germinating acorn
communal consciousness the ground underlying
both pseudo-Dionysian individuality
and Apollinian will to individuation

Like father figure like unlikely son the elder of near the younger of distant yet very Irish background the loves of their lives a mother and her daughter glamourous as goddesses in the eyes of their beholders

their momentary consummations more or less spiritual proving each to his own satisfaction that as long as the moment lasts man and woman coming together are identical with God

the daughter deliberately conceived in her infant brother's crypt as soon as practicable after his death on advice of an Armaghman that certain steps being taken certain phrases said in time

reincarnation could be coaxed even into the same womb, the daughter for her beauty named after the heroine of love true but doomed by the dark powers to celebrate her love and lover

by joining him in a matrimony of agony and untimely death
— according to her mother people called an Anglo-Irish Minerva after she played the title role in Willie's *Cathleen ni Houlihan*; who called

herself the voice and soul of the crowd; took herself to be Maeve returned (though having a horror of physical love no warrior-queen ever had); confessed she never analyzed personal things very deeply

at least not consciously; knew

she said she wasn't the leader type because she couldn't plan ahead; felt inclined toward the triune; gave birth three times for two comrades-in-arms playing out in their own lives

the dramas of spiritual revolution blood and soil nationalism against the three-headed god of materialism — Marxism usurious Liberalism vulgar and venal Democracy —

twice for the Boulangist remembered most for a certain failure of nerve when it came time to carry out their assassination-suicide pact who told their daughter then pubescent that given the kind of woman she was

her best bet would be to become a rich man's favorite mistress, then once for that brute of an Irishman who abused both mother and daughter before becoming heroicized by firing squad and Willie's poem;

had with her from childhood she said a grey spirit lady she had long trusted for sound advice in public matters but banished from her confidence after overhearing the lady whisper she despised and killed newborns. Interest the intellectual name of love reflected the non-political man reborn in Berlin after his *Libestod* in Venice

a love malnourished on analysis of decadence an unearned income on cultural capital later applied to the talking cure on the magic mountain

a melancholy love upholding the recognitions that understanding plus devotion is passion that passion is clairvoyant that conscientiousness

the essence of his art lay close to pedantry erotic irony and literate loneliness in a mathematically rationalized social world

\*

Romanticism nationalism music humor placed he said in impersonal parts of his being by the century Nietzsche called *honest but gloomy* as though —

sick of the twisted almost joyous fatalism of Goethe's will to deify life and the universe, the urge of his nature to form a totality of itself

in the belief that only in totality is everything solved and finally justified — it had shaken free from the death-grip of ideals

left by the feminine deceitful century past and was looking for a way to bill its submission to the factual then coming into dominance

\*

I hate politics and the belief in politics because it makes one arrogant doctrinaire stubborn and inhuman, I do not believe

in the *république democratique sociale et universelle* do not believe in belief but rather more in despair because it is despair that frees the path to salvation.

I believe in humility and in work — work on oneself — which in its highest and most moral strictest and most cheerful form seems to me

to be art, I cannot say that I believe in God though it would be comparatively easier for me to believe in God than in mankind.

\*

The musical a form higher than the literary music and poetry being what fiction aspires to a rhetoric in honor of the human race at its best

not French histrionics and English cant that legacy of classical reason — the heart-stirring phrase the generous gesture worthy of a human being

that makes life worth living, makes human human in the Roman West — civilization if you will the victorious advance of the literacized

politicized middle class antithesis French revolutionary English puritan deriding the ecstasy of German metaphysics

God in Heaven and in Rome not within, Gallic wit a fey *celtique* gallows humor art a confession to the animal with many heads

men and women of no particular standing holding *bonafides* that affirm a degree of intelligence conferred for a fee by imbecile institutions

the USA not an attractive alternative — base utilitarianism ignorance conceit bigotry enslavement lynch law

swindles of neighboring sovereign states repudiation of public debt vulgarity mob rule single-minded veneration of women

Personality the feeling of being coherent in the atomistic anarchic unholy mass the only thing on earth interesting

The great majority boundlessly egotistical said Schopenhauer unjust unfair mendacious inconsiderate even evil

white-collar rabble and pink-stocking riff-raff narrow-minded with very scant intelligence cogs in the plutocratic drive for property

Pessimism synonymous with morality when civilization has colonized nearly all the once-free barbarians to the north and west

into a *Monte Carlo Europe literary* as a *Parisian cocotte* somewhat amusing somewhat insipidly humane trivially

depraved femininely elegant implausibly adventurous and loudly democratic *a two-step and tango Europe* 

business and pleasure  $\grave{a}$  la Edward the Seventh when gauche freemason republican bourgeoisie confuse mediocrity and excellence

intellectual aesthetics and politics South American harbor-saloon mating dances and Bach *the precise accomplishment of the fugue* 

\*

Intellectual individualism less liberal-democratic than aristocratic Free and unequal that is aristocratic

Any idiot can be a conservative every idiot is democratic

Voting rights opposite to freedom and duty

Only one with nothing calls for equality equality and freedom exclude one another freedom is independence of spirit of feeling

A democracy of the heart of brotherhood of an order higher than that of guillotine reason and redshirt humanitarianism Condemned. Though James and Paul had preached much the same. Though God's ubiquity was orthodox doctrine.

Though the divine illumination rejoiced by Augustine wasn't that different. And even though Guido and Robert,

Bishop of Lincoln, were soon to rhyme light with love which everyone agreed the most high is

as most who thought also believed that that most human, the soul, assumes human form in this sphere

the active intellect animating matter toward that end as the Philosopher himself had said

Psyche and Isis gathering the missing pieces to pull this world together again. Nonetheless:

Condemned. For the learned doctors ruled that light is not (as Dante said love is not) the thing itself

but an accident in waiting like mortal reason an attribute of intellectual substance

an affection of the color-shape variety yet insensible, requiring to exist at all

some insistence some intention on the part of both parties to care about and for one another,

what in a decayed some say depraved state gets called property, not to be confused

with capital, commodities, or means of exchange as light comes forth from a body not of but on fire.

Having had it with the human-nature-is-good sort of gingerbread sentiment in needlepoint purple plush and stucco

> the in-bred faith of divinity bubbling around upstairs attainable if at all only through obeisance

Having had it with overstuffed manners dead flowers pressed behind glass full figures in mauve with black trimmings

> wings unmoved by the charge that emanates from the remote past when amber is rubbed against filaments of the proper fabric

Having had more than enough dialectic of the deadly double entry sort along with its deadening textbook science

the damp recourse to dead metaphors musty rhyme too limp to keep the measure newly struck images set

Having had it up to here with stale replications of the tried-and-true trade-magazine profit-margin aesthetic

> hanging the author's creativity on a conveyor belt to mass produce authorized versions of therapeutic clichés

Having had it with being powerless to change the terms of debate the language imposed by parties who define social reality

(the daily experience of life lived) as surely as money defines the economic reality underwriting our lives

Willing oneself to disappear
into the numinous realm of things
limpid air aroused by light
the sensuous sublime
a metaesthetic path to rapture
through Germanic territory

A tensile emotion at the sight of this innate conjunction perceived between artists and objects their urge to install themselves inside things to mix themselves in most intimate recesses of everything met

Directing the will to *let things be*to stop the self from being itself
the subject to escape its prison-house
of subjectivity to become
indifferent to others, making
no distinction of them from oneself

So desire may drop away
in a no man's land paradox
individuality
dwindle to the point of pure
disinterestedness
a thorough self-abasement

The lyricism of the masses transformed into discourse by art
the sensual the natural
in natural supernaturalism
the intercourse of body and mind divorcing syntax from grammar

Ariadnes and Kalypsos
sisters lovers helpmeets
whose threads of encouragement counsel
divination and heartfelt embrace
made everything possible
even the letting them go

One after another put off

on backs of whales or turtle islands
nothing for the most part
particularly oedipal
save that instilled with a mother's love
in the voice of authority

Who come alive in theory
when addressed in the linguistic
appropriate to the moment, a fair
trade of fluids vital to production
orgasm as *ekstasis ekstasis* the bottom line.

Land of the flea home of the daygo down into indiscriminate skyscraper murk

patriarchalist said women faggot said men a breeder said those who don't

even the medievals knew theory is in the practice the action the act

not in lawbooks that define injustice textbooks on how to count beans

gap-toothed histories permitting the enormous I-me-and-myself

certain of nothing but *the holiness of the heart's affections* and truth of imagination

rooming in close as they say in the trade quarters all liberties due him.

To feel like a man driving into London eyes on him for who and what he is given credence acceptance authorial say creatures of his creativity alive and kicking in the real world

All that nervous energy come to a head the excess after the purely glandular put to artistic production and distribution on the improved ultra-modern plan throughout the emotional body politic

But then the war the peace the demobbing the dismembering, the young lions conceived in part by his generosity bringing in the next big thing utterly indifferent to him

Authority he always believed his by right of his authorship denied when not ridiculed or worse ignored things getting done in the real world on his say-so approximately zero

The image reverted to glib poeticizing
no longer charging the language with utmost meaning
no longer the brainchild he called his own
everyone who knew the difference
dead or otherwise out of touch

Passed by more than ever since his *up yours* attitudes and antics at the start of the war his stage poet get-up and didactic barking his ill-timed futuristic blasts from the avant garde circus clown cannon

Income in merrie old Kensington meager, invitations to tea dinner and column too few, hardly a penny for his thoughts and an indecent price set on whatever in art might be spiritual

Post-bellum depression taken to heart

economic and aesthetic production insidiously entangled poetry as market vulgarity the poet in motley back to picking rags This wine said Sam looks like urine.
But ah said himself holding his glass up to the light of a duchess.



in tongues

from rock to slippery rock cross stream calling all things by their proper names

as they have made themselves known to those with ears

negotiating

passages subterranean phosphorescent

into with any luck a way

from the ear's empathies to the eye's pristine diamond silence

to get somewhere flat circumferences no more than priesters gun sellers or debt brokers go

from sight through opinion to judgment from knowing to acumen through the dark stones of the tower the man-childe came to

leaning perilously against the leaden sky

implement in hand to overturn the earth

Ridiculous gesture said the younger of the two
to no man in particular like father like son
not like sis eyeballs floating memory's ghosts
reliving themselves one holy water after the other
thinly arcing trajectory of angels falling
transformed into the sea of that O so catholic night
outside the house where the bella donna of means found them
in their usual attitude listing to starboard when she
took them in hand to feel for herself how they were hanging

Is that a potato in your pocket or are you just glad to see me?

music rhythm emotion

rehearsing the twofold vision

talk logic thought

signs become song catching the mind in words as it moves

proving little enough to the point

trusting in more or less

spontaneous emissions

spinning out of the flames

finer than spider's silk

whispering a veiled name

to illuminate something of substance in the moonlight

An undistinguished unity prior to anything thinking or sensing timeless nowhere no one a sort of confusion a feeling neither sensation nor consciousness (relations between objects objects in relation to states of mind) passing before the monitor

\*

Everyone in their own center each self that self's whole world unable to encounter anything other than itself, to break out to external things — objective time and space people — alterities appearing as qualifications of the inter-related world peculiar and private to the self

awareness of other points of view part of the instability disorder insecurity fragmentation vertiginous motion: I am, therefore I am only an appearance — the active the passive the real the ideal the mental the immaterial all only appearances

\*

But if the elements of the finite hopelessly peripheral self can be brought into order by art they may vibrate with the sensitive depths may resonate with the divine stillness, as image and memory in harmony with infinitely distant sources of the self may by imposing a credible design *on* ordinary reality elicit perception of order *in* reality, bringing us into serenity

stillness and reconciliation where only Beatrice can lead us further.

\*

Even in a society like ours worm-eaten with liberalism, tradition — almost effaced in parts of the North by the influx of foreign populations, foreign races —

involves all those habitual actions and customs from the most significant religious rites to our conventional ways of greeting strangers which represent the blood kinship

of the same people living in the same place homogenous population unity of religious background any large population of free-thinking Jews undesirable.

\*

Having long since left the bank and having consigned his bleeding delusory wife to the care of top-drawer professionals; assuming without question consciousness words and all names coincident, and feeling, feeling and emotion, fundamental; regarding seemingly irrelevant details passively yet judiciously; looking out and in focusing on the oral and tactile in his locked study muscles slack, making discriminations comparisons abstractions surrounded by books, pronouncing them to himself.

\*

The self abnegating itself might through self-effacement naturally fall into that infinite expansiveness that all-inclusive immortality it seeks, if a collective consciousness is there for it to fall into.

.

The bourgeois individual subject dissident protestant proud conceived in ecclesiastical angst nurtured on a xtian notion of personal salvation

born to a pre-enlightenment mathematic legitimated by means of pious doubt (a notion with roots as far back as Herakleitos writing *I am seeking my self* 

but not until Plotinos the neoplatonic longing for its own unitive origin) a free romantic cogito or spirit sole proprietor of its own existence

free to do anything irresistible external force does not forbid, self-referentiality its gift to itself newly-formed

out of absolutist tyranny finding in depths of its own identity the very principle of its own free autonomy the source of all law

the law thus one with one's own experience — to consent to the law to consent to one's own inward being one's heart the living world which speaks a language

different from that of intellect a language which casts such a familiar spell that law is judged by custom force of habit sentiment affections pieties

law in short modeled on aesthetics the body politic reformed to resemble the newly-minted personality's likeness to saleable artifacts society

an aggregate of such monads in exchange mode an arrangement of atomized persons in pursuit of the best deal

## the individual a property

in debt only to himself each seeing in others not the realization but the limitation of his own freedom seeing his own self as owing more to the past

than to consciousness of one another the only right of others recognized in the war of all against all that of each to be protected from others like oneself

an idealist subjectivist instinctively romantic perspective associated in time oddly enough with galley-slave means of production. Both comic and dangerous the foolishness and falsifications regarding origin fantasies repeatedly reasserted by purveyors of disciplinary knowledge

as they tend to think of it
— abstract speculation for instance
on concepts rejoined to their metaphors
either for better (as vital concrete
singularities) or for worse

(analogical illusions underlying all thought) — a faith that truth abides in the past in non-abstract images available to cognition

Metaphysical polyvalent nostalgia for various essences prior to language primordial states words should be good for evoking radiant images reconnected

through however unlikely means behind the biological murk the psychological labyrinth the theological fumes and mirrors to something paternally ultimate

firmly felt for the most part to incorporate at bottom both history and contingency keeping in mind what is not to be spoken should go without saying

Neglecting to teach themselves *that* the path back to the birth of words loops again through consciousness conceiving itself, *that* consciousness is consubstantial with language, born in the same instant

of origin-myth out of the babble of infancy, enunciation of sounds understood by others who speak the same tongue — consciousness language and history all compact

not in infinite regression to *ille tempore* at the head of an infinite quantified empty track but a marginal that guarantees synchronic coherence of the system

Tending to ignore linguistics as such the obvious fact that their object of desire is a fetish fashioned from mere grammar, the linear logic and word order of a certain language family —

definite articles added to adjectives and verbal nouns generating universals, a common verb signifying to exist or to be available

used as a copula so something understood without being expressed is taken as having existence, encouraging identification of what is with what is thought

Scholastic classificators in good logic-chopping fashion not taking sides in the endless struggles between fearful complexities but searching for means to preclude struggle —

contending forces becalmed in sameness aesthetic sensibility safe within equilibrium inanimate as organic art intent on maintaining a place

in the departmentalization their intellectual networks face while downplaying the ruthlessness that led them to universal order as their vision of truth and reason

whose secret notion of what they do is neutralized specialized sustained self-purification minimizing the content of their work reinforcing the corporate wall

of guild consciousness social authority and exclusionary discipline around themselves precluding non-specialists defending their tiny fiefdom

their mysteriously pure subject against all others in effect institutionalizing themselves as a religious community despite their avowed secularism

Some principle contrary or flat out hostile to life a heavenly agent programmed to assassinate the future by destruction of human will

through curricular strangulation
— Philology a case in point
demeaned since her marriage to Mercury
the god of hidden meanings yet still
the fluent realization of love

of words by the word-loving animal invested in significations attached to physical properties privileging the temporal proprieties of utterance

This mistress of meaningfulness sister of Wisdom and Charity daughter of Nature in her younger years bundling together semantics heropoetry sign-theory

and bloodlines withered now to academic nit-picking lint-weaving textillation one nit at a time — definition lineage

continuity the grammar of history the content of poems held captive in squalid tenements where individual consent is all that's required to procreate

Her dowry thrown on the open market face value and just price left swinging in dialectic — never asking why watermarks of undotted *I*'s left in the record

by literate mammals are felt forever by anyone who speaks the language, philologers as Vico said failing by half in not paying more heed to the words of philosophers

and to the tricks of their own trade — establishing original meaning through interdisciplinary study grounded in etymology manuscript *genre* family stem

techniques of dating and locating

identification of facts within their specific time place *milieu* peculiarities of a scribe's orthography or lexicon

the focused attempt to understand the presuppositions semantic range natural conditions relations between orders of knowledge that social theological psychological signs point to —

but shrinking genealogy to denotative radicals related by clauses of Grimm's law to over-anxious family resemblance under the influence

resisting the centripetal pull of art's unprecedented creation of things uncanny neglecting the interesting emotional intuitional moral

genital edges consigning to mere contingencies the genius of inheritance the brilliance of personality tending to frown upon messengers bearing

consolidation plans budget cuts or new information missing for all their worming through texts the point of Mephistopheles' translations of John's *Logos* from *Wort* to *Tat*  Condense. Point. Juxtapose. Make the reader do some of the work.

Philosophy history culture method of knowing. . .no man knows enough

to say it all. No man alive long enough to read it all.



Precision. Concision. Incision. Decision.

Luminous correlatives.

Material things filled with ideas.

Intelligence of a period in gists & piths & pertinent snippets.



Make distinctions. Dissociate without self-disintegration.

Life is short. Let the ink coalesce into figures

that add up to themselves. Paper trails. Fingerprints.



Name names. Unmask characters. Reveal motives

certain redundancies of act scene agent agency

trajectory repetition coined lines ringing true time after time



Confucius Mencius Homer Sappho Catullus Ovid Propertius

Bertram Daniel Guido Dante Mantegna Leonardo Velásquez Manet

Facts. Gristly resilient concrete examples that can't be squashed.

\*

Interpretative detail swift and easy of transmission

lighting a way toward paradise through the cold dark cluttered

utilitarian discounting of personal idiosyncrasy.

Pure music is pure art its extreme abstraction balanced by its spontaneity.

Just so Old Jarge's knack for aphorism a Mediterranean sympathy for the natural

against his department's various Harvard idealisms. What most people relish hardly music he said

but a *dreamy revery relieved by nervous thrills*. What is tedious to the inattentive, a frightening

discord to a sense incapable of discrimination may break into a celestial choir for one

who can hear the component parts may seem perfect to one who takes it in in its totality

may be an intellectual essence beneath the mesmerizing power of the commonplace lullaby

an ultramarine region where order is free a realm wherein the mind is made familiar with perfection.

To hear is almost to understand. The artist a highly suggestible mind hypnotized by reality

a dreamer consenting to dream of the actual world *a world all about nothing* a mere distraction

to a political animal concerned less with avoidance of pain and suffering, morality's negative values,

than with art's positive relation to the moral — the same relation as that of play to work —

as emotion is likewise about nothing and much of it remains at the end. *All experience* 

pathological if we consider its ground but also rational in terms of its import. Thus what some called his highly idiosyncratic doctrine of transcendental subjectivity

animal faith in imagination hostility to the *ethos* of commercial democracy.

Better instead of lunacy or faith
animal or otherwise to call
the abrupt leaps from glacial ledge to ledge
scientific imagination insight
a suddenly apprehended universal
even proleptic thought though that one would be

soiled by Graves who had the temerity
to call Penelope a duck and cloud
the issue with ancestries unnecessary
to an understanding of words going into action,
not mere refractions of external abstractions

but actual sensual particulars

an immanence of imaginary subjects

realized in cadence rhythm rhyme
different orders of acute perception
illuminating lines of communication
species to genus profane to sacred

visionary to economic joined
through skilled aesthetic actions techne poiesis
correctly performed, will correctly directed
an intellectual and emotional complex
in an instant ideas springing from affection
spoken in affectionate tones an abrupt

transformative liberation a sense of freedom
from time limits — not through argument
but as angels speaking to one another
each utterance a symphony
celebrating not generalities
but particular celestial marriages

properties abilities quirks
character personality aura
each animal individual
each individual familiar
in relation in comparison
like to like like to unlike

corresponding to an absolute

rhythm emotion exact emotional shade

each standing for only her own perfection authority recognized not bestowed a natural hierarchy informing the process turning spirals on their axes. Shall the infinitude of the private man cut a deal with the body politic, the self-created individual have commerce make pact come to agreement with the infinite numbers of a democracy a free community of inquiry?

Shall remnants and figurations of the feudal past rebirth as a promising experiment that takes as its starting point not human nature not the nature of reason but desire to preserve and nourish utopian freedom, the freedom found in bourgeois societies?

As well might Mt Sumeru be leveled. Certain distinctions gradations differences are to be recognized, dissociations admitted to, terms settled upon. Coins bear several denominations. Divine comedies outweigh tripe. If indeterminacy gave cause for hope a pardon from the logical death sentence

an uncertainty principle reviving dead metaphors and prophecies

energy and matter flip sides of circulating bifacial coigns of vantage

Hamlet's mill grinding out the stars gold condensed in the butter churn of the gods

the spindrift of interstellar stuff rewinding the spindle of necessity

whorls of metamorphosis informing the matrix resurrecting brute reality

chance as Arp put it freeing us from cold reason's utter hopelessness

of implacable causation and sheer logic Indra's net of meaninglessness

If the new vibratory physics pythagorean in its overtones

lent physical feasibility to otherwise idle speculation

on the natural varieties of electromagnetic animism

rods and cones giving off sparks of life waves particles galaxies reborn

genetic opalescence set free again by the initial reciprocating engine

presenting nothing new under the sun save the current experience of it

chance as Richter put it freeing us from residence permits banality

microbes generals the tyranny of rationality and the past

Then continuity of memory the recapitulation of tradition

the persistence of special identity at cellular or molecular levels

the embryonic mark of the human type incorporating acquired characteristics

so having no more to do with that sort of being who used reason as a juggernaut to crush

acres of corpses, but a new kind of being human to be contemporaneous with

spontaneous expression in a universal language a remedy against war

may be an article of faith in ancestral will and charity

subject like art and dream to the law of the image rather than the concept.

The something that consciousness is conscious of (consciousness that is being conscious), neither thing nor a thing's representation

to be known only through intuition requiring a radical change in attitude from interest in things to concern for meaning

from meanings objectified, out *there* a life-world beyond the life of the mind, to immediate experience

from focus on sub- or insubstantial atomistic discretions (presenting in series at apparent random) to relations

among said things communications perceptible to the adept practiced in methods of empathetic reduction.

\*

Yet consciousness may be self-consciousness, neither substance nor process but presence less a psychic state than a direction

a tendency that doesn't construct but displays the intimate objects of its intentions, existent due to recognition of what it is not;

concentrating on how it relates to body to its situations in the real world to past present future to knowing desiring

willing choosing having and doing to values ideals to others of its own kind to ethics mores prescriptions for living.

\*

And while they agreed it's ridiculous to keep going on about what can't be known

it was felt that clarity is muddied not so much by linguistic misapprehension

as by preconceptions distorting the presence of everything in everything else

that attitude is worth more than aptitude concepts of less import than intuitions

that time-stop philosophies are meaningless useless when not downright malignant

that imagination is not madness in the sense of deranged fantasy

but the highest human ability our best shot at getting out alive.

Intuition seeks to get back the movement and rhythm of the author to live again creative evolution by being one with its physical sympathy — Bergson rehearsing his sly impressions of Nietzsche for sympathizers of Comte and Saint-Simon.

Franco-Iberian philosophizing throughout the whole Dreyfus disgrace. Husserl anticipating Heidegger asserting that discrete continuous time like infinite ubiquitous space is an illusion that can be overcome.

A post-Revolution eagerness to prove egalitarian notions empirically with slides of organic social order that reveal an ideally hierarchical variable human nature, behind all contemporary life said Ortega

the profound and provoking injustice in thinking men are actually equal A time must come when society must reorganize itself into the illustrious and the other.

Thus also spake de Gourmont

who had the ear of our co-respondent, suggesting insistently but obliquely that minds with gifts of superior intelligence should claim the rank of preferred social status. The eye dissolving the verbal opacity the tedious ineffectual talking cure

of parliamentary democracy and socialism, forming behind the abstraction behind oral and musical anarchy an intensive image to evoke as a distinct whole the masks of sentiment Sorel's people Rousseau's general will. Transitions not oblivion one of the comforts of the old stories

structures consciousness idolizes flattering itself as immortal

in the aggregate in specie however individuals fare

Intelligence not intellect intuition not calculation

natural science not logic experience not abstraction

caste not class art not money a poem including history

Innovation not convention the individual not the mass

the value of art in itself in the form in the structure

form expressed from the complex conscient artist consciousness

Oneself under the spots outside time watching the pageant

feast day of the one twice-slain birthday of the new dispensation

a bright line through the labyrinth a wake left in the phosphorescence

Poly- not mono- or a-theism neither left nor right but the mean

use- not exchange-value property not capital

hierarchy ad astra

phallic to the hilt

Father Parmenides Father Abraham one foot one leg one eye one arm over the other when all the world testifies to plurality

Though unity may be a paternalistic notion meaning one in the delimited sense of having naturally logical boundaries

Pythagoreans never speaking but of what is actually perceptible what the sky encloses one in the sense of rational totality

Though it's conceivable that the infinite the boundless intangible yet spatial impersonal yet moral moving knowing informing keeping things in order

like *physis theos psyche arche ousia eidos* (necessity *eros* and *logos* for that matter) are terms for the same continuum seen in different lights

Though it may be that the one cannot have a name nor there be knowledge or perception of it nor that it may be an object of opinion

Who could believe the goddesses all one goddess with so many catfights going on in the powder room the cloud-banked chambers of heaven racked with jealousies?

or deities and all attendant spooks balled up in a static sterile numerical concept subservient to an egotistical thunderhead?

Who could trust a walk in the wolf garden logic once the fathers of the church universal got hold of it — deduction *from* reduction *of* abstraction *out of* 

the only reality that counts? Who of sound mind could bring themselves to venerate *the metaphysics* of the syllogism, estrangement from nature, the trivial

unsupported and unsupportable assumption of oneness — monotheism monism — the mental convenience underlying the whole

of so-called philosophical writing? or even conceive of going through life wearing always the same face despising Janus denying Judas never thinking

to look behind the eyes of the mask. Yet the two Duns Scotti bookending the age of contemplation affirm that being and existence *ens* and *esse* are one,

that bitterness is in two because one is not the other but God is love and in love there is no bitterness no difference only unity of opposites,

the world of becoming the world of essences. The one made of light immanent and infinitely diverse, the one made of scholastic nonsense a *fata morgana*.

First gone the measure of exchange hell in a handbasket then language the basis of valuation then the nations gone to war, sovereignty to the banks

master artists living hand to mouth monopolies capitalizing on human distress Apollo — patron of poets philosophers and whosoever can speak in, refine,

augment and modify his tradition once they master it — withdrawn since the massacre or like Pan and how many others done in.

Classic and Romantic grammars syntax vocabulary learned by rote in schools of late xtn humanism at best inane after the mustard gas and trenches

the artist carrying baggage but no weight with oligarchies elected bodies heads of state of whatever inclination let alone a hypothetical two per cent. said to read

or even fewer who understand money: the actual weight of the English noble reduced by a fifth in the hundred years of war while the nominal value remained the same. A fine bitter tongue onto him wrote Hem. Tends to lead with his chin. The grace of a crawfish in the ring but sporting, game, sweats well

and has developed *a real wallop*. Only a fifth of his time to his own writing the rest to advance the fortunes material and artistic of friends.

An ass of course, a fool with a pretense to universal knowledge who can disgust me sometimes but has written *Christwonderful poetry*.

Reproducing the world as perceived of only rudimentary interest like contemplation or computation of it tending toward a state of equilibrium

among its atomized individuals
maintaining the *status quo* imbalance —
diminishing returns in facing mirrors —
when the point is to change it

turn the circular logic of mother tongues against itself *bust through* the abstract generalities depleted concepts subordinative laws of relations

that keep the mind within a literacy endlessly imitating itself in lines laid down by yesterday's schoolbook grammars dismissing things as they are now —

world of absolute sound, timemachines made of compacted time an intelligible ideal indifferent as bombs to listeners

unidentified flying subjects
about to be what they will be
coupled or decoupled at will
author and auditor joined at the lip.

Not words set to music but music to words a linear horizontal harmonic coloring

the vertical polyphonies it passes through or near, a composition of frequencies in just

relation to each other and to a bass note too low for the ear to hear but generating

tones and overtones that determine the audible elements of the piece, melody forced against

ground-tone against yet another melody their articulations in hexatonic scale

intimating medieval lute and lyre scored in microrhythms and pointillist orchestration

for voice and other period instruments, the essence a mastery of duration, rhythm the key to unlock

vibratory situations, not measure but rhythm and cadence the basis of melody, that

the percussion of the rhythm enter the harmony as another note, shape cut into time

(that element most often omitted from treatises on harmony, vertical harmonies of blues

developed out of chords, the more horizontal harmonies, intellectual strategies

for improvised choruses, developed out of scales themselves fanned-out chords, and harmony

may be soul *that most dangerous of words*) any sequence of pitches chords or arpeggios

apropos so long as the intervals between them are adequate (the world itself but waves and pulses)

the essence of music precision with time, the animated

sonority of division shaped by duration

tempos and registers set by the unsung so-called rests ambiguously suggested by wide-open spaces on the page

presumably bringing to mind something like a voice having something formal to do with the script. The heart

ticking beneath the time signatures. *Duration* of the resolving chord must also be considered.

Vapor trails in cloud chambers celestial mechanics in a vial light bent around a trace of bodies where something or other probably was

Mass becoming energy involving singularities becoming mass again at the fuzzy logics threshold of quantum equations

The shape of measuring devices contingent on state of motion relative to coordinate systems or second body a first points to

Through curvatures of unmanned space indeterminate locales uncertain constituencies white dwarves on the shoulders of giants

Inspiration intuition
narrative imagination
escaping history via stories
the turn to myth when reason fails

To get the emotions down in their fullness strength and appropriate dignity without falsifying them through ambiguous mysteries —

trobar ric rather than clos—
obscurity more from vocabulary
and allusion than twisty thoughts
and their presentation within

the structure of classical linear harmony, weights and measures proportional over time, values greater than the notes alone

can carry, a natural increase

gathering in the rests and stops an auditory transcendence afforded by the polyphonic

verticality adding
resonance and counterpoint
to the simple melody
and moral at the end

To build again the eternal city entire still in memory
whether it anywhere exist now or ever is to be

Wandering islands of disparate races improvising associations stamping OUT-OF-DATE on sources origins and principles

Wrong hero wrong hell lares penates and father held close against the suffocating press of mindless dead and unborn

Acknowledging that there can be no exactly truthful account only tantalizing attempts to transmit the feel of the thing

Mosaic patterns rising to the film at the top of the melting pot *the epic* farings of a literary mind observed Miss Tricornered Hat

Self-realization / self-possession the very condition of possibility for individuality prescribed by the social logic of private property

achievable only when self disappears into an eyeball so transparent as to admit the enduring contextual rhythms and laws that constitute ethical totality.

Repetitions accumulating a structure a texture generating significance calling less for levels of interpretation than multiplicities of response

expressed less in ambiguities than in particulars, determinate meanings actions words — nouns when feasible — resonating within certain lines.

Intrinsic worth of ethics nature religion art the past — any experience — immediately self-evident congruent with the particular itself

being experienced, the difficulties inherent in personal discovery
— knowing thyself in an oracular sense — part of what makes life worthwhile.

Wilde's Each man kills the thing he loves
Butler's All men eat what they love
The darwinian nightmare in either case
(Lewis again: The Art of Being Ruled)

complete absorption in consummate embrace one universal tongue of agglutination not heart to heart in fond desire but *protoplasm to protoplasm*.

Warts and all received into the garden despite the violence in the name of love he promised against the rose unfolding there by the fountain where dipolar gems beneath the surface

transfigure ordinary male desire to cavort among the laureled guests even mortal enemies conceding the magnitude of his contribution. Modernity a different animal from modernism a quarter century after

Rimbaud in support of the Communards said

Il faut être absoluement moderne.

The former, a shambles shot through with tickertape ammunition-stock heroes' parades

romanticism's funerary desire for desire Keats's famous attic figures forever out- not inside the urn

a thousand-and-one desire-prolonging nights consummation never so-wished so never so close as to need *interruptus* — the ever-repeated

promise of the thing itself a *pathos of the new* stimulating customer decisions to satisfy the urges of investment.

The latter, after the latest canvases destroying illusions of geometric perspective, refusing meaning by flattening vision,

a savvy half-cocky attitude toward novelty *news that stays news* the new the old seen with new eyes.

Yeats and Gonne in *gai Paris* on mushrooms (or was it cactus?) Ellis having made it almost respectable after *The Drunken Boat* 

Freud and Conan-Doyle into cocaine drug of choice for bright young things taken with cocktails on both sides of the channel

kief a mediterranean specialty Pound and Hemingway on the left bank dabbling in opium and absinthe.

A necessity that requires us said Wilde to *live the collective life of the race* by using imagination as an instrument

to live in our own time countless lives of the past, inhabit all the ages; *the sum* said Pater *of everything that has preceded*.

This universe one turn of phrase in a language
embarrassed by misappropriation of funds
no amount of monkeying around with words
in parliamentary counting-houses can erase
though an eye-talian aesthetic sensibility
toward certain delectables of eye-magination
may distract both penny-wise and pound-foolish
from the verbal economy informing the mind

## This history the history of this

civilization sold short where shades of meaning twitter of copyright syntax custom duties

levied by no-account goldbugs given offices by an electorate who can't tell art from arse the pinwheel of the stars from kaleidoscope stones tumbling into mirror-perfect symmetries at the end of a long cheaply reproduced tunnel vision

## All written and spoken matter fair game

to a hammer saw auger and language handyman material grist for ancestral mills — some ground fine some cracked some active working assemblies some mere toning exercises in juxtaposition — consciousness, almost by definition enamored of order, thriving in a haphazard medium it seeks to exorcize by artistic suicide

Cobbling together in make-do fashion not exactly
a lineage or tradition much less a community
of sinners saints or figures otherwise indisposed
yet some nimbus of persons in their individual ways
like-minded toward overlapping though hardly congruent
ends, several generations of kissing cousins
incorporating traits that can hardly be put into words
a peaceable kingdom avant la lettre

Positing an anonymous basis or principle
that brings together disjunct phenomena
from literature philosophy the arts — in music
for instance a fundamental duration a rhythm that cannot
be heard or denied — without which there can be no objective
standards by which to set values no scale of such values
only audience consensus to go by

## only public opinion to authorize judgment calls

To come to this: gathering for recreation in watering holes where impolite conversation relieves symptoms of odd man out disorder — good fellowship making up for the suffering solitary discombobulators of words endure rolling line after line through the wringer the *hurry up please* ching! at the end of each measure announcing it's time to push the carriage back to the left

The sudden shift from nothing to something which may or may not be felicitous the movement of objects through dense air the void at any moment liable to fits of violence — an accusing look sexual overture reversal of fortune —

the sense of being innocent of concepts,
one in the bosom of the one, intellect
displaced by vague images persons
converted into machines or time-motion
occurrences, personalities
mere transitions of one event to another

yet a change and that might favor life and hope — more than one pilgrim in sympathy these days with catholic materialism turning attention to the surfaces of things, intelligence and emotion both, this world in all its vulgarity the path to God

even such neoscholastic compounding of mental with extramental a better bet than latter day protestant mysticism genuflecting toward its own hypostatizing of feeling — belief by any other name — looking for God in the ego not in the world.



The past a myth in the classical sense: dead people we do not interfere with whose integrity we respect

a past in which events and people stand in an imaginative perspective those with a care for the principle of life prefer

to notions of history-as-evolution
or history-as-communist-destiny
or history-as-present-reality;
the immanent world of space the form
thought takes, what we are and what
we are doing the real history

leaving *like any other pantheism*little room for the individual person
or memory; the fleeting world of time
the form feeling takes — the distinction at stake
that as Bosanquet said between time
in the absolute and the absolute in time.

\*

Wyndham going on about time and western man:

Chesterton a dogmatic Tory jug
a ferocious foaming romantic

Fascism merely futurism in practice

Marinetti the prophet of the next instant
speed violence impressionism

in all things incessant impermanence
a pur-sang bergsonianism fighting
a rearguard action against the morning after —
evolution and will-to-power both
spencerian just-so stories
(Instinct seen at its best in ants bees

and Bergson said Russell: human nature's barbaric substratum unsatisfied in action finds outlet in imagination)
the clear outline including that of your own sense of yourself as yourself lost in the movement from static to temporal

from the material to the organic from ordered objective intentional common-sense to chronological mentalism

the *naiveté* of romantic nature-quests where *you* as Whitehead remarked *are only a thing for-its-own-sake not a thing in-itself.* 

Make it new plain English for the French Jesuit translation of the phrase said in the Ta Hio (The Great Learning or Great Digest the grist in the Stone-Classics

thought to be the words of Kung Fu himself) to have been engraved by King Tching-Thang on his bathtub — *Fais-le de nouveau* (which might just as well have been rendered as *Do it again*)

not in any *ex nihilo* sense (originality or novelty not only improbable but a bit of a bore) the starting line always other men's labor

the untaxable inalienable cultural inheritance inhaled along with air earth fire water wood in every newborn's first breath

honoring one's ancestors: those in leaves pith and fruit of the family tree : those whose names have not come down but whose gifts less sanguinary but no less familial have Somewhere south where he had never traveled — pyramids still stinking of blood spilling through carved gutters from glyph and altarstone sacrifices *ad infinitum* to pay

the inexpungeable debt to imaginary forces high and low whose accounts are kept by men of priestly mien wielding power where in purple morning fantasies

they string deer's eyes to lie above perfumed breasts catching God's eye in diamonds of colored yarn on sticks — he might have found a textbook image

in the aftermath of a revolution gone awry as they've been known to do, the gunmen given properties and office things assigned scarcity model names

paper called gold for instance *oro* and coin *plata* no matter how debauched with copper zinc nickel and lead the silver is however little of value backs it up

though some there might still recall the noble metals gathering more dust than light behind the choirs of thick-walled cathedrals in the naves of colonial-style missions. Robespierre to Roosevelt democracy proving itself to fit Aristotle's description

the public noodle since the war wound on a fork by the usual suspects whose duly elected liberal subjects

pledge to institutionalize the usual ignorance of the common newly enfranchised human persons

incapable of watching how the legislative sausage gets made but all too willing to swallow it

impossible to educate to the degree necessary to the reading of poetry

voting against themselves for the slate sworn to devalue the currency so debts said suspects own pay more

leading to acute depression the nation they say can buy its way out of by having the government borrow more

from the same damnable suspects who sold out the public trust in the previous raw deal

offering egoists for their hope to avoid biology's dead end by sheer willpower nothing more

than certainty of being devoured by inbred fallibility anxiety alienation. Cancer in the eyes of prisoners Dollar signs in the eyes of the young

in thrall to vile demands of banks currency plus interest

the price of wheat the price of money everyman has on his head

God and the banks from nothing creating to be exact nothing

though another persuasion of dowsers christian it purchasing power

by which the young give credence to bankers' crocodile tears

lending credibility to claims we're all better off

with wages cut jobs lost the cost of borrowing going up

The eyes of the young the aging eyes sorrowing in their desire for things

real and things imagined things they're made to believe debt will give them

when all it gets them is cancer the sadness in their eyes cancer

the death of hope freedom joy the great majority locked up

in idiot rounds for wanting things made scarce in a state of overabundance

desires bought off by combinations lives signed off on the bottom line

The melodramatic chopped bitter tone suggested by the abrupt clipping and stopping he is addicted to, the laconicism of the strong silent man — said Maxy Larmann while vilifying the time-philosophers who suffocate the classical in the romantic — the histrionic pauses intended to be thrilling and probably beautiful makes his better personal verse very monotonous gives it all a rather stupid ring

a kind of mock-bitter or bittersweet terseness *cum* manly epithets characterizing most of *his semi-original verse*. He is in fact *that curious thing a person without a trace of originality* an *isolato* in a melvillean sense no one ever getting through the crowd he is to touch the individual therein he embodies *the primeval individualism distinguishing our race*.

He is the really simple charming creature natural and unvarnished so many assay in vain to be but some inhibition prevents his getting that *genuine naïf* which would have made him a poet into the work where instead he attitudinizes frowns struts looks terribly knowing breaks off shows off puffs himself out not so much an inventive intelligence as an executant, a craftsman.

Honest weight no springs

natural beauty more than sufficient

gold for its intrinsic luster

some perceived something or other

so many measures of dust to dust so much dead weight

a pound worth these days as much as you can get for it

A self beside itself so to speak to transcend its origins

lifted by bootstrap maneuver to an Archimedean purchase

a tale older than Jeremiah ranting against his alter ego

in continual agony nostalgia for the lost cause

Coherent consciousness

identity pure and simple provoked

to high-tension ideations by its own images

of being different from itself personal narratives imploding

discontinuities rampant otherness as identity

identity as difference philogyny recapitulating

unlikes and material limits as externalities

Things defined not in terms

abstracted from lived experience

projected out from subjective sensations into a network of bright ideas

organized in terms of copulative interpretation

conception rather than reception some versions of analogy,

but like and unlike of the same ilk lovers known by the light in their eyes

the surface of objects inserted into a universe of formal relations

During the war to end all wars so many didn't come back from or come through whole fought like all of them with gas lies and bloody hands gun runners selling to both sides elastic money bought across the wires at high mark-up war just another monopoly creating demand for its business intellectual internationalists enlisted *pro patria* alongside the loyal opposition the arts of peace as dead as atheism in the trenches;

pissing off friends and enemies alike with his flair for ad lib invective his unflappable sense of his own genius averse to confinement in terms like self and soul genitive by definition foggy around the edges, still young and cocky enough to want to see what all he could get away with blasting away at the staid and strait-laced out of one side of his Underwood recounting troubadours' affairs from the other finding in ancient Aquitaine and China Augustan Rome and the odyssean world refuge of sorts from the current derangement;

admitting in print to finding himself relaxing when in conversation with beautiful women more often than not of independent means though the talk be nothing but nonsense the purring of invisible antennae the daughter goddess returned with knowing eyes the goddess of mercy and compassion at hand, though the propensity of American men to fall head over heels then think marriage a foregone conclusion was a matter of lawn party wit, engaging with lettered women who in a breath speak of equality independence and a longing to serve and sacrifice, a desire to be wholly used by the one who loves them, of loving themselves best when in love feeling most themselves when lost in another more lovable loving than being loved though lovableness having both use and exchange

value does involve reciprocity

I love you he said. Strange she said

that I feel none the better for it;

having an aging Voltaire in veiled play
on Ovid's tongue-in-cheek advise his younger
unfaithful lady To stop loving and being
lovable, that is the real death.

Moving with increasing difficulty through the rising swill of hypocrisy swamping la vittoria mutilata after promises broken east and west patriots betrayed treaties ignored the red flood sweeping in from the east the US ducking out of Versailles big business at the wheel the state increasingly in the hands of media money reversing the *ante bellum* trust-busting rejecting the Geneva Protocols refusing to take responsibility for securing the peace it had pushed through, the Big Three a repeat in history Vienna Verona the same old liberal imperialist usocracies in command splitting up Poland and dividends setting things in motion for the next carnage;

laughing himself silly feet propped up on the front row balcony rail cowboy hat on amber-waved head enchanted as talkies came in and magic lanterns went out with pratfalls doubletakes slapstick sight gags muggings cornball plots hypnotic characters in close-ups an almost animal magnetism serifed titles translating their pantomimes so how their mouths move may tell a different story;

all the arts on the left bank aspiring to the condition of music though it be ragtime dixieland and atonality, teaching himself (knowing Vivaldi's delight in it) *il fagotto* 'the bundle of sticks' around not an ax but measures of breath, with his *compagna virtuosa* restoring

the red priest's genius to the world, giving sustenance to the bad boy composer of *ballets mécaniques* and *sonatas sauvages* before and after the riots and headlines they caused, twice a father in a two-year period once by nature once by convention caring he said not a damn about private affairs private life or personal interests, believing life impossible if you stop to consider personal feelings, the only reason people can live near each other is because they leave each other alone the important thing being to get on with the work production the goal not generation;

trying to find among the hobby-horses hare-brained schemes and mass pipe-dreams of genitive case *memento mori* some key in which to sound a proper canticle, composing his own operatic *montages* music for voices and diverse instruments set to the words of Villon and Cavalcanti in horizontal harmony music the most abstract of the arts and best model of mens sana in corpore sano in psycho-sociological terms a method for unity in diversity a polity of unequals at peace the good understood in the widest ethical sense Pythagoras at the blacksmith's anvil hammering out the laws that compose the universe;

Picabia gone to hell Cocteau in *Vogue*Léger's photograph in *Vanity Fair*young London awhirl in Coward's *Vortex*Eros removed from Piccadilly Circus
Sr Stirling starting to lose his edges
among the puns on sounds signs and substance
of his given family and assumed names
before pulling out of a Paris taken over
by surreal neo-nietzschean clatter
to swim in a smaller pond south of the Alps
while undergoing his own *transformismo*coming to focus less on form than *praxis*how to get things done in the real world

the plutocratic present governed by money with a thin mask of democratic pretense, switching from myths of aesthetic creation — the body a perfected instrument of the increasing intelligence receiving the radiant world of moving energies — to myths of history and high finance a global agrarian economy a just price based on use value everyone granted purchasing power choosing to choose the true the useful the beautiful — poems having not only drawing room effects but active political results;

concurring with Dante Aquinas and Aristotle that if the *dictatores* each in himself or *in senatus* are upright and just empire might not be so bad, yet still trying to figure out where the rot began that ate the hull that sank the ship that drowned the crew that sailed out past the gates into the cold Atlantic of the mind the euxine Pacific of the heart.

In the collapse following the Crash — the central banks bankrupting Central Europe while letting the lesser banks loan at obscene rates money they didn't have and brokers sell at top dollar stocks they knew were worthless to people they knew couldn't afford to lose,

disgust with the liberal establishment
more virulent by the second,
intellectuals of all stripes
fed up with hands-off economic
politics and boardroom ethics,
a wealth of movements at hand promising power
without obligations of democracy,
nostalgia for the past that never was
a kind of obvious inanity
to a decade flooded in theories
of how to get things back on track,
the utter stupidity and venality
of agricultural authorities
ordering farm crops destroyed when people

no longer had the money to buy them eggsuckers again in the henhouse bankers in the mint the infamy of a nation required to pay interest on its own money borrowed from private parties in order to keep people from starving in a land of plenty,

the failures of capitalist democracy in promising individual freedom and formal political equality but denying the social basis of personality the social power of money creating instead the most impersonal unequal mechanical civilization in history everyone isolated from everyone else (any oligarchy with half a brain of course setting up a two-party system, credit to Chesterton of all people for seeing that party politics will work only when the parties are Tweedledum and dee);

though he'd made it with ears burning past songs that might have driven him mad learning a thing or two about melody in the process, though aware his own strings were best tuned to snowflakes falling in oriental winter the purring of a tame cat in his mistress's lap, knowing you can't play all tunes at once or both ends of a string against the middle yet fearing a nation once utterly corrupt can as Ruskin had warned be redeemed only by military despotism, tempted to conclude with Yeats writing new words to the popular airs of the crowd as marching songs for blue and brown shirts that western civilization having wound up as mindless murderous bureaucracy implementing an inner circle's ends nothing short of apocalypse would do: the tabula rasa wiped clean with phenolic the pestilence completely eradicated violence without hatred without the spirit of revenge a purifying force the tree of liberty refreshed with blood any means the right means which will

re-magnetize the will and the knowledge *Fiat lux* that those to come next may start fresh that the State should loan not borrow;

though at the top of his game in his fifties writing off to natural maturation the fact that smiles let alone joy and glee (jouissance the troubadours' supreme value hilaritas a sure sign of the gods) came less and less of late, the light bridging with love aforethought the gap between life and death less often, keeping to himself any qualms that it all might be pretentious bullshit the works of genius crank racist bigot a lonely kitten crying for attention the ego throwing up mask after mask after mask coherence (though likely no more than an idée fixe just another solipsistic nightmare) with luck a kind of totalitarian synthesis at peace in some meaningful sense of that word ends tied up opposites reconciled everything consanguineous the me-myself-and-I isolated in all its infinitive variability seeming to contain multitudes;

confounding his faith in sinceritas his belief that looking straight into one's heart and calling things by their right names is the ultimate virtù the source of the poet's dignity and respect (in Greek as in Chinese the sun pointing precisely to the deed thought judgment word, even as late as second century Rome Sol's rays illuminating what one is and has consciously come to terms with) sinceritas a man standing by his word an axe by the cherry tree twists of the tongue in stone setting words to the tones of the heart, ethics and morality the whole social body the process the tao language in action precise definition self-discipline knowledge of nature proceeding to order in the family the city the state the whole intelligent

integrity, totalitarian instinct a sense of responsibility of the widest extent for the well-being of society a principle of social consciousness the myth expressing reality without over-simplification or scission in the beginning was sinceritas;

despite the moral stupidity the suburban prejudice inhaled with the stench of empire reducing persons to abstract ideas in the gas recirculated by the star chambers the right of the righteous to write off whole nations whole continents as evolutionary dead ends their misfortune not to be oneself, willing himself blind to the thuggery assassinations squadristi and castor oil, saluting the call to turn the country into a nazione militarista dissidents legally declared insane locked up with sterilized schizophrenics telling himself and anyone else who would listen the Abyssinian mislabeled "Invasion" (backed up from before the start by money and oil on favorable terms from US banks brokered by the House of Morgan to sidestep League of Nations sanctions Neutrality Act definitions of implements of war and consequently Roosevelt's toothless because merely moral embargo) was neither war nor imperialism but a Kiplingesque bringing of civilization to the natives for their own good, redemption for the Aduan debacle a certain value added to the transaction;

even his best friends telling him Your letters increasingly incomprehensible Your ideas on Social Credit are at best amiable lunacy The United States you are describing is imaginary Don't root out the wheat in a mad desire to chase the hares You made a great mistake to set up as a wizard Pull your catgut out of the petty pond of practical politics You are wrong as hell about America; unable or unwilling to deal with the gap between his words and reality, to shape his square-deal rough-rider rhetoric to his new-deal audience. to see that no matter how often he threw in bully-pulpit race-suicide warnings his failure to dissociate economic reform from praise of white supremacy and Roman politics kept both Capitol Hill and the brain trust from hearing his main message, he was mad as a sack of bees that the walls in DC didn't fall as easily as they had in the literary Jerichos and that after he got there out of his own pocket though they observed the courtesy protocols due his political ancestry they gave him even less audience than Kung got in the Forbidden City: the insulting smile the humoring the flat much-too-often mocking refusal to listen at all to his plan for preventing the next war by simple commonsense monetary measures let alone let him bend FDR's ear on how to achieve moral rearmament. wrenching his already more frequent delusions into paranoia his fears into anger his wit into a blunt instrument.

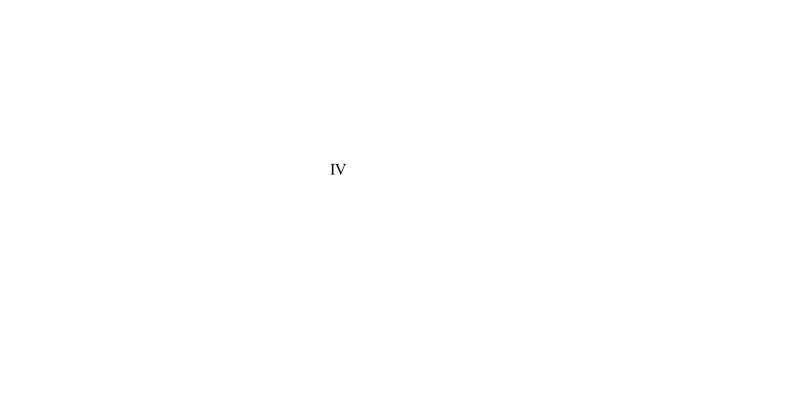
By the time the panzers rolled through the Ardennes zeroes into the skies of Pearl Harbor flying fortesses into the air over Monte Cassino, long before he learned that the Tempio Malatestiano — his touchstone of Renaissance civilization and power of human imagination to renew itself, image emblem inspiration of his life's work since his first visit to Rimini that magic year of *Ulysses The Waste Land* and the March — had been hit by allied bombs, the pivot had begun to wobble badly:

dwindling hope turned into vehemence religious dispute into black bile and spit to-the-point arguments into change-the-topic retreats behind nostalgic vituperation his poetry into squirrely jumps between discomposed prose and lyrical brilliance his invective into a blue streak his upbeat ironic erudition into recondite tutorial harangue in out-of-date out-of-touch down home smart aleck havseed voices his audience anybody's guess, his quasi-platonist elitism into Fascist risorgimento daydreams of Machiavelli's ideal condottiere vortices of power coincident with vortices of creative intelligence running the new corporate republic on bourgeois notions of individual responsibility for the good of the state Confucian beauty-as-order precepts (only the great man said Mencius can rectify the evils in the prince's head) slightly restyled along futurist lines even der Führer might buy into once he saw how well it worked in Naples.

What is it inquired the smooth-pated Holy Roman et cetera

his blessèd tongue heavy with wine separates sottus and scotus?

The breadth of this table, Sire said Dun.



Arguing less with Plato than Aristotle about their mistakes on ethics metaphysics and logic — their views for instance on time and space as classical dialectic classifications logical forms moral imperatives

— Unfolding their explications of stasis and becoming being and not-being the one and the many and valuation as such mind matter *mater pater* the dry the moist material immaterial

— Trying-on modes of knowing that once kept poets out of the Republic — Debating if everything actual must be transformed by imagination into something experiential or *vice versa* — Conceding

that sudden perception of illuminating links between unlikes is the function of metaphor as well as the mark of poetic genius but not that the good life consists in navel gazing somewhere above the fray and that

there is no lesson we are so much concerned to learn no habit we are so much concerned to acquire as that of forming right judgments on and feeling delight in good actions of fine characters — In accord

with their sense that a man does best to learn from men of means stature good fortune good will and that justice means each individual doing that to which at his utmost he is best-suited — Taking note

of their political applications of music: times tones and tunes bringing to mind images of states of character (temperance fortitude anger calm and the rest) inducing real changes

in the sensitive *psyche*, the Dorian temper

moderate and collected the Myxolydian sadder and graver the Phrygian fire inspiration the Ionian modes the softer more cognitive moods — Concurring

that practical knowledge of things made and things done considers things that change while theoretical or contemplative knowledge of first principles and deductions from them considers things that do not change — Rejecting

both the assumption that the human quality most nearly divine is intelligence rather than sensibility (intelligence plus moral and social responsibility, capacity for making subtle discriminations)

and the contention that contemplation as action leading to the good that is political life is the highest kind when that distinction is owed to productive contemplation a sort of *poiesis* toward union with the gods — Construing

phronesis as one's own good conscience so no one else's opinion is needed in taking moral action, no communal or universal assent in making the right political decisions — Entertaining

the notion that a man's *daimon* is his eternal guardian spirit his tutelary genius his individualizing *psyche* bestowed at birth but not their belief that it is at all reasonable — Of like mind

on the one the few the many becoming in power their inverse: monarchy/tyranny aristocracy/oligarchy democracy/anarchy so the state needs both a constitution and a strong leader and that

wars are made for money to satisfy unnecessary desires and that powers that be take advantage of their position to milk the situation for all it's worth in the name of the common good and that

human nature cannot be changed by teaching nor humanity improved to the point of universal equity let alone equal shares in the four noble virtues: courage temperance honor reason and that

with money the common denominator running through all the arts the art of statecraft is best put in the hands of artisans men who lose themselves in their work who are dedicated to public not private

and that despite the fact of bad monarchs, a man so superior in virtue as to be obviously above the common should as a matter of justice in accord with nature be chosen sovereign over all, not

a tyrant but a wise ruler absolute in authority over the masses yet himself bound by severe self-denying ordinances and a long novitiate of rigid observance to law — In fundamental

disagreement with the dogma of the noun as the essence of nature, the verb as a sort of noun, the categories of the substance of metaphysics behind the two thousand year plague infecting the West with abstraction and monotheism — Doubting

that all significant assertion comes down to attribution of property to things, that only things and properties of things can be spoken of, that Greek and nature are all that coincidental, classical

Attic Greek in particular: erotic tensions of transitive verbs and gender (the *genesis/genitive/generous* family)

resolved in neuters, abstract universals like *logos* and *physis* and cognates of the verb

being and to have been displacing becoming, the subject itself isolated from time, separated, abstracted out by force of mind from the narrative flow of epic action into capitalized ideas — Discerning

when use of the verbal nominative identifies what is as concrete substance and when as ideal form or abstraction or in the axiomatic sense *property* which entities have or participate in, but even

so dismissing with prejudice the vicious intellectualism that pretends a thing really is its definition reality really is essences known by their designations — Disputing

their neat distinction of self and thinking soul like that between self and subject (the thinking thing-in-itself) and that between one's *psyche genius* and ever-thoughtful ageless sexless *nous* which alone survive death — Regretting

the duplicity of their binary visions reliant on an economy of simple prime rational numbers with no zeroes no vacuum, intelligibles plus matter the key to reality — Disowning

their wholesale use of commercial and numismatic metaphors in talking of everything from grammar logic law to cosmos and being, monetary nomenclature having long since set the terms of the idiom

coins stamped with *charakter* impressions the ring pressed into wax confusing sign with signified natural reproduction with mere convention symbol with usury

just price with *mot juste* — Convinced

an essential pattern must underpin phenomena but not that it's mathematic or anything near so Apollonian when daily existence so clearly has more to do with Zagreos and Aphrodite — Asking

as both mentor and student may have
why or how a poet should get away with
something unreal or immoral, why not
the same as in politics and the other arts
and why should there be a pleasure in this

— Seeing

eye to eye on the path particular instances take in order to become knowledge, turned by the *nous poietikos* the active intellect from memories and emotions into intelligible species — Knowing

thyself an introspective process absent in Homer, not just a ghost's reflexive pronoun but a substance, self-consciousness self-creation in a language innocent of words or concepts for it — Sharing

their belief that the way of the most noble is to honor forebears give due respect and sustenance perpetuate keep alive that we know with no doubt is the best in both *gens* and species — Confirming

the four kinds of madness, prophetic dramatic poetic erotic, as attributes of Apollo Dionysos the Muses Aphrodite Eros and that he whom the gods would destroy they first send to the bughouse — Objecting

to their law-morality-knowledge confusion that posits only possibilism in morals the arbitrary in politics leaving us with a moral incertitude that does disaffect youth — Not

exactly averse to the notion that how of two to arrive at one how elide difference nullify the prefix and so unify unlikes without each losing its own identity may be the principal issue — Sokratic method

a sculptural technique: chipping away at the excess to reveal the matter within, no haloed truth or meaning commanding devotion but some degree of somatic understanding informed by habits of attention acquired in the process. Dissatisfied imaginations imagining dissatisfaction looking for answers to what questions to ask

manufacturing faces day to day false as memories of what might have been if only; the masks put on in dawn's early light

backlit by cat's eyes through the openings false as promises of love undying the worm inside the brain's unopened rose

a shadow passing overhead a figment a curlicue of hesitation transfigured into a shimmer of iridescent wings

forms of light of no apparent mass no responsibility no limit but to be in joyousness, if only. Timor mortis me perturbat Psyche a missionary view of herself as self-understanding

seeking Love through an Augustinian novitiate ordeal brought nearly to her knees

to take the priestly vows but taking a veil instead reacting against the dictatorship of public opinion

an existential loneliness the pathos of historic nihilism contempt for everything social

deliberate alienation a methodical solipsism evolved from vulgar egotism

into esoteric phenomenology a thinking more primordial and so more authentic

than the vapid universalism of enlightenment that ends in positivistic science and technology

bureaucratized industrialized wage-labor mechanized warfare urbanized

mass culture — western history a decline *from* the Platonic conviction that the point of inquiry

is apprehension of principles, that knowledge is contact with an underlying nonhuman order of things

greater and more powerful than human existence yet available through techniques of knowing thyself

*to* the American conviction that the point is to get things under control by technological means —

his anti-Semitism the usual culturalistic sort squeezed between bolshevist and americanist

collectivisms his great fear fragmentation disintegration dissolution his anarchic

democratic exterior metallicized

against the interior feminine

*Point•* That only death can bring man to realize his very being *I am not, therefore I think* 

*Point•* That the business of philosophy is to become poetry to recapture

the force of the most elemental words by ceasing to think those words and their metaphors natural

*Point•* That there is just us in the grip of the words we speak, the metaphors we've internalized

*Point•* That one is what one does the practices one is engaged in the language in which one is spoken

*Point•* That we are nothing save the words we use our being is what our vocabularies are about

or more precisely what our final vocabulary the one we can't help using is about

*Point•* That to understand what language has to say we must enter *the vortex of the dialogue we are*.

Self-sacrifice a sort of transcendence not to be encouraged *non obstante* 

the reverend's pitch for self-eradication in pursuit of literary perfection

extinction of personality in the work though knowing that clinging to the self will defer catharsis

beyond the pity and fear curtain calls beyond even the satyr play purgations

interim satisfactions of syntax anticipations of a remembered past

repeatedly resurrected — stanza breaks commas the sub-sub-subordinate clauses

perfected in the master's *Portrait of a Lady* displaced by epigrammatic offbeat

perceptions inflections focal points surrounded by deeply indented tab-set space

any metaphysical ladder pulled up by the last one out through the smoke hole.

History no less than paradise a matter of steeds of different color and shape

spurred on apocalypse after apocalypse plashing roughshod through feathers of blood

revelations redux dissolving the banks goddesses riding riders astride their beasts

ecstasy lathering their musculature lips curled away from their teeth as they round

the finials marking the course upward from Wyncote to Santa Margherita

laying waste the monkey-tailed host

that's itching to do the evil twin's bidding

reducing the republic to a mass democracy in pursuit of the greatest number.

Putrid he wrote in slashing characters across the face of the typed playscript his once-upon-a-time merlin had asked him to read

— and that was the year the Great Slump set in, that last visit of the elder to the younger's resort to fetch his furniture and other effects

Both of them racked with chronic internal disease — the older man's heart the younger one's bowels — meaning not a stage in alchemical process

the second level of blackness in the writhing egg but just the reverse, one of the final cuts to the umbilical he'd imagined between them

Himself now in his mid-40s ensconced for the unforeseeable future on the ramparts above the boardwalk and Ligurian shingle

with wife, mistress and Jefferson's letters, one pigeon enrolled in the new Ezu U., no more use for beheaded heads that sing.

Evenings he would walk

to the strand with scraps

the ristorantes saved him

to feed the hordes of cats

speaking with Greek inflection

out of the gathering darkness

sinuous as shadows

(of the oppressed races

said Yeats thinking in terms

of one both lost and won

the pity of it the pity

of a drunken man)

knowing their histories

the personalities

their eager Chinese

eyes wide and tails

weaving between his legs

with soft yet firm intention.

Cat people know

not to trust people

who don't love cats

the love of cats (in both

directions of 'of')

thus opening

opportunities

in regard to how

to make two one —

osmosis correspondence

identification rhyme

mystic participation

vivid imagination

sympathetic fusion

simple propinquity —

a melting into he called it

an experience

of soft yet firm accession.

Not just an idea

cooked up in the forebrain

not abstract figures

derived by calculation

but presences, beings

taking phenomenal forms —

panther and snow leopard

lynx and snow-white girls

a flame above black fur

the charismatic dead

as they pass through

translating us for a time

into their reflections

if we have properly

performed the rituals

aligned heads and bodies

into attitudes

of soft yet firm attention.

Two in particular

bemused him

one cerulean-eyed

a pedigreed disposition

kneading at his shoulder

purring under his hand

gentle reassurance

on his return

in his own good time

one violet-eyed

a russet shorthair

nibbling his ear

claws just barely

into the skin

delicately recalling

instruments unheard

on earth for centuries

soft yet firm persuasion.

Knowing the creature created of words and figures
to go about our business in analog time
has an android brain at best and though
roughly humanoid from nose to groin
is polyocular multiply-armed
many-legged and favorably inclined
toward beauty of only the most orderly kind
admitting only contemplative sorts of love

Knowing the binary imaginary
injected into the moral petri dish
often grows a manichaean culture
a classic dialectical foundation
that puts art and artists in charge of imposing
objectification of the desired in order
to neutralize desire herself
in effect denaturing life

Knowing analogies by definition
are always inexact the metaphor
a construct of faith and ideology
exerting pressure on subjects and objects
of interest, encouraging certain assumptions,
facilitating certain attitudes
about how human beings ought to behave. . .
yet nonetheless to personify:

apply the organic human genetic image
rather than the abstract or lithic,
implicate the collective incoherence
in ills individual bodies and minds
are heir to — degenerative disease
congenital disorders debilitating
infections parasites miscellaneous
likes and dislikes that make each self

the site of a lifelong losing battle
 a vivid chronicle of lost causes

— on the hunch that seeing society
 as organism gives cause to think
 biological sciences can reveal
 through inductive more than deductive reason
 the mathematical that is to say

## indubitable essence of nature —

bequeath the world head heart belly
disregard the intrinsically shapeless
inevitably oozing characteristics
embrace the most pathetic fallacies
aristocratic measures in just proportion
more to the greater less to the lesser
versus more democratic distribution
based on some bean-count equality.

Taking it from the bottom Brushstroke stick figures Terminology

Sun and moon light descending the total light a single word

The sun's lance coming to rest on the precise spot verbally

An eye looking straight into the heart 'Know Thyself' carried into action

Man in two successive positions Will directed *voluntatis* 

To succeed in due hour Nameless man standing by his word

Humanitas ('Manhood')
The feet carrying head

head conducting feet Cocked arm Legs running

The Adult Study order within to obtain order without.

## In Rapallo

down the hill from Circe's ingle among the olives

silver slipper dreams where yellow brick ends in amber waves of corn

years before the funnel back to that funny farm on the Potomac

that swirl of images gyred jumbled and gibbered pregnant in the vortex

Dorothy too at the loom for all her maiden name a stitch unstitched in time



light years before in Roma palindrome of love upside down and backwards

heels over head and rainbow hot-air balloons secondbest beds il dottore il arlecchino

soapbox to crackerbarrel a space of time free of commercial interruptions

the village explainer un guillare americano in il Duce's futurist court

speaking in tongues that old time religion that Jewish question moneychangers and Venus armed Fibber McGee and Molly Bloom Jade Prince from Milanese jowl

the two gentlemen of one mind over matters of Verona Work the basis of money

A right to not of property cold type from hot lead in the common interest



il Maestro il Poeta il miglior fabbro

in his element receiving visitors in the grand manner

elliptical episodic counter-intuitive not yet in fragments

sea-hawk gaze grizzled mephisto beard under a black Borsalino

pointing the wrong direction while pronouncing *There* the Greek ships sailed in.

Why do you want to set your ideas in order? a question he had long asked himself and would later conclude that a man who wants to set his ideas in order ought to be soused for a week in at least one part of medieval scholasticism, all the more resonant

aware as he was that in Homer the god-term *nous* and its verb *noein* signify a man summing up a situation seeing its point appreciating it in a military sense, and put by the man he already believed a Malatesta

draining marshes building temples playing violin while Rome grew orderly as a bundle of sticks bound in that one face-to-face to utter nothing but pearls though it might be as banal as remarking of an ethnic slur pointed out in *The Cantos*, *But this is divertente*.

Mass production smothering tradition conformity strangling meaning the *laissez-faire noblesse oblige* humane belief in the finer things — ancestry bloodlines fin' amor spiritual love crushed between leveling collectivizing materialist post-war powers east and west not a conspiracy but a system, this moment a repeat as farce burlesque commedia blague Herakleitos Empedokles polarities foregrounded the old school abstractions absurd ludicrous but by them the world cast into duplicities prone in formal settings to become dramatic figures agonizing over something or other

But then though aware of all that prefigured by a scriptural namesake who knew the void is negotiable only through a reading of a text a fool could tell was totally powerless for bringing back the lost presence, to offer to restore the temple of the missing piece for the good of the people of the book to insist that since the gods are provident the mandate of heaven benevolent, increase follows naturally from natural use, hard times are *un*-natural so evil must come from *mis*-use the evil-doing of sinister demonic pustulent evil-doers who ought to be immolated. Not far to look for the many-faced one slated for hell in the world to come mirror mirror on the wall

Already middle-aged when radio first circled the world with music news and chatter transforming one-way communication long the purview of the written word into the broth all discourse is cultured in the medium all words must inhabit now

that *devil-box* he called it, allowing one, a gift from the Amazon, into the house only a few months before Pearl Harbor ten years since his BBC opera raised in his mind the spectre of his own voice his own words broadcast around the world

Seven since he started tuning in the radio priest each Sunday bringing Aquinas to bear on social justice and the *Nude Eel* via the *Rerum novarum* encyclical *On the Condition of the Working Class* and Pius's follow-up *Forty Years After*—

the best defense against godless socialism
a decent workplace workday workweek
just wages just prices just distribution of wealth
control of money taken back from the banks and cartels
sovereignty restored to the citizenry
thorough reform of industrial capitalism

Nineteen since the March on Rome in Year One
Prague and Vienna still playing high culture syrup
lost in a center-of-the-central-powers delusion
Lord Haw Haw out of Hamburg
trains on time north out of Italy
Sturmtruppen im der Lebensraum

Believing democracy the biggest mistake the previous century made — the rule of gold

displacing the golden rule, capitalism given the state and a free hand on workers —

the anti-Leninist Left in France was longing for a totally new civilization

led by a proletarian elite an avant-garde aristocracy of producers

an intellectual youth avid for action that didn't mind calling itself fascist.

The year before the non-aggression pact the intellectual partisans in New York

believed the workers' revolution still possible, even likely, in Germany —

Hitler capitalism's true face bourgeois anti-fascism one more

attempt by the middle class to avoid its fate, the war an imperialist machination

the US should stay out of on pain of bringing neo-totalitarianism back home.

Who with any feeling for history could be blamed for hearing on such party lines

farcical echoes of the fatal consequences promised by Italy's CP

shortly before the blackshirts took over that if the bourgeoisie did go

whole hog in the white reaction and throttle social democracy, it would simply prepare

the best condition for its own swift defeat at the hands of *la Rivolucione*.

After they signed the Lateran Treaty Christ's vicar on earth in his moment of glory

called Mussolini the man Providence sent but five years later denounced *Il Duce*'s invasion

of Ethiopia as an unjust unspeakably horrible war and five years later

shortly before his death from natural causes called Fascism a dangerous pagan

ideology deeply at odds with Christianity and God's love.

At Bretton Woods the US having entered the war officially and having three-fourths

of the world's bullion at Fort Knox and having a Kremlin spy heading up its delegation

naturally refused Britain's plea to take the world off the gold standard

then persuaded the allied nations instead to set up the IMF

to insure that when the war was over they would all be in debt to Wall St.

In the year before the liberation
— undertaken as few knew at the time

mainly to appease the Russians for getting slaughtered on the eastern front in the bloody mess

both sides said was a war of good against evil —

with Germany starting to call the shots

in Italy, Christ's new vicar on earth proclaimed from Vatican City that Mussolini

was the greatest man he'd ever known without doubt a profoundly good man.

Surprised at the brogue in his own voice the rolled r's the orotund vowels on first hearing his reading played back

who most of his life had been so good at mimicking getting laughs at others' expense the joke on them

not as adept at charades as the ladies but a master puppet early on at accent dialect parlor games —

his portliness Mr James issuing easy-chair *dicta* Jim the after-dinner tenor

squeaking Bertie manly Ernie Bill Gert Willie Tom his father Homer sometimes the butt

Likely on the spur of the moment to sing his *Yiddisher Charleston Band* or do the dance itself in broad daylight

drawing chuckles and knowing smiles even from those who disapprove such antics in a serious character

channeling on special occasions Barnum's ballyhoo and hoke Fields' exaggerated drawl

Mr Dooley Sam Slick the Bigelow brothers Major Jack counting on people born yesterday

to hear the real McCoy the fortune cookie analect behind the twang and homespun *patois*  Atomistic individuality in mass reproduction along lines laid down by applied capitalist rationality

which is to say liquidity, denominators more common, transactions involving dissimilars smoother, terms of exchange more fluid, more universal —

thus modernity from a work-ethic perspective it's aesthetic innovations tied to inner transformation of individuals within a social revolution hostile to the iron cage liberal order made up of property values allegorical figures in a *danse macabre* 

the only escape an indecent one through prophets proclaiming a charismatic message: a total art to heal the shattered totality of society,

> becoming fluent in the deadening language of commerce (a discourse not of production but exchange, letter and number devoid of iconic content,

extreme poverty of intuition image and other nonmonetary values), fluent enough to turn it into poetry

— a language apt when it came time to transmute the gorilla cage down the road from the leaning tower where *something* as he later explained *cracked* inside his head

during what they called his nervous breakdown before he finished the installment he came to be best known for — taking the mental situation head on

interrogating the ideational domain the prevalent idealist ideology its physical properties mechanisms functions

its root structures growth habits proclivities potential applications avenues of approach — the trick being to see again with a loving eye avoiding reason's point of view that in colonizing everything contaminates the natural strain with undeniably ignoble foreign bodies.

Assuming for the sake of argument psychic non-integration the subject a so-called interior a multitude swarming with alternate realities that replicate a presumed exterior

epistemology and ontology playing on the same disfigures of speech

Assuming as an issue of practical politics the value of a pound not simply material determined by scientistic physical dogma but set by vital psychosocial logics physis indistinguishable from psyche

solipsistic idealism and utter realism annealed in classicism

The holding cell of intellect as crowded with significations as hell with ghosts a diacritical disequilibrium a copy editor's mine field throughout the intensive manifold

each iota clamoring for attention on the way to becoming something else

Assuming there is a way from here to there a desideratum this side of death that it can be found and may be achieved earned in fact largely by sheer will no more crazy a notion than any other

general particular divine triple entry accounting deduction

The old one-two punch: the laws of attraction retraction distraction repulsion this time oversimplifying things as pluralisms or diversities to the exclusion of totality

unity incorporating divisions comprehending the infinite absolute

Still, subjectivity at odds
with itself gives everyone the right
to raise a ruckus on the point of identity
with no nostalgia whatever for its possible
future integration into a norm

just action on achievable goals sufficient unto the subject the moment thereof

The lusting after vacuity the longing
to never be or never again, the will
to be elsewhere to find a way in the struggle
against death, the nihilism of nature,
to give suffering meaning or better yet
to quell the meaning-dragon altogether

the will to emulate the ascent a part
undying presumably makes in purifying
itself of increasingly subtle vehicles
from corpse to eidolon simulacrum
imago shade until all that's left
is essence its luciform celestine body

A theory a myth an ideology
a proposition in the logical sense
thinking through thought to negate the need to think
the knot of worms in the bowels of middle Europe
the three quarter *Schwärmerei*metastasized into the Great War

an excremental old testament diction
an unholy alliance of parasites
a Baedeker of hate in multiple tongues
scum imbecile castrato
vituperatio ad hominem
ad baculinum ad nauseam

Elitism a principal subtext
underwriting the upwardly mobile pathos
the middle classes suffer by definition —
but credit for this at least: pinpointing
an undeniably crucial nexus in the matrix
then devoting himself to its extinction

willing himself not to be subdued
by the lack of effect he seemed to be having
on the student body — perceived by them as at best
something of a garrulous nuisance or worse
a clacking persistent percussion instrument
out of time with the rest of the ensemble

Only strong individuals able to keep the process in mind, hold

in thought attitude and gesture the form linking particulars, the tough-minded master maker presenter of images discharging at high energy

excess fluid to be held in suspense
above the cervical ganglia and nerve
centers throughout the pneumatic organism,
might have a ghost of a chance — though belabored
by both massive post-war camps —
to bring things back around where they ought to be

Animal vegetable mineral moral
authority taken for granted to set things in scale
serpent maggot perverse miscreant slime
prophet of a razed Jerusalem
wandering jawbone of a golden ass
braying the rebirth soon to be

assuming an aesthetic bias from the start,
the requisite scot paid to the boatman
to ferry him across the bloodbath,
reassigned in all good conscience
to illuminating uncials
in the certified scriptorium

The gang over at *New Masses* called for his immediate execution

Williams told him that foreskin or not the dumb cluck had gone off half-cocked

not crazy at all and as for justice shooting him would be the greatest miscarriage

The money reform simpleton said Munson believes Hitler is fighting for money reform

Less a traitor than a fool said Aiken the first back when to have christened him Rabbi ben Ezra

Maybe the biggest jackass in the world said Schwartz but maybe the best ear in English ever

To shoot him said Orwell would establish his reputation whether his poems are good or not

Tate defended purity of language Joyce was somewhat ambiguous

A crackpot said Matthiessen a tragic instance of the gulf between poet and audience

Kikes leading the goy to slaughter a call not to poetry said Bellow but to murder

Cummings in light of his own enormous Olaf and infamous *Eimi* best left unheard

Olson tired of playing Esau couldn't take the pureblood bullshit any longer

Ginsberg was more filial and later played hippie guru to perfection

but beatnik interventions were even less effectual when the time came

The next generation: no suck in DC but spreading the word out in the hustings

where the old New Age met the current and the modern met the post-

Hemingway said he was nuts should have shot himself after canto twelve but if he got out

promised the cash to pay his passage back to Italy where he was appreciated

Crackers said Laughlin confusio senectutis but horse sense about debt

while word went round at State that we were getting a bad rep in Yurrup

Hammarskjöld let Washington know he was a political prisoner in the eyes of the world

MacLeish knew strings to pull to get across to Ike's crewcuts the two main points: incurable and already in longer than being convicted of treason would have got him

If God is good he is not God if God is God he is not good wind on the water

Eliot said he was neither sane nor insane and as for guilt that could be determined

only by evidence heard and judged in a fair trial. In the end concluding the world

would likely immortalize him if he died inside, Frost was instrumental All here maybe mad off course loose in white sheets point-blank paper many-tongued background noise looking through any number of looking glasses refracting sinister hues and shades of darkness

Yet claim to not be delirious though knowing that that only suggests delirium of the authorship/originality type just as its opposite — claiming to be insane — achieves discursive reality

Delirium not of the brave but one coincident with the mental transmission electronic media dictate — to write at all an acting-out of madness protecting delirium from the loss of its words

A cat may look at a king of the magic mountain leering and blinking up a tree in the pineal colony afraid the doctors will suck his brain out through his nose to pay for all that intercourse with the dead

Alone day by day alone six lines of hexameters

isolated alienated disaffected detached

day by day alone alone alone alone alone

but on view around the clock in one- and two-way mirrors

feeling fragile susceptible maybe something in childhood

an ever-awake demon peering through the crack in the egg



One without two impossible even in imagination

the self conscious of itself *ipso facto* entailed with another

the myth of individualism the will to individuate

egoism as self-protection persona after persona

image after image educed to ward off the evil eye

to measure self-identity in terms of what is not



Dance with dialogue with form dialectic pairs with

all the dramatic situations

all the emotional colors

all the two-steps conceivable and then some, reality

raised to the power of two the other oneself one imagines

necessarily a hazy figure just out of sight

so naturally suspect ability and intent to harm

given all this time to keep it together nothing better to do than think thought through

all gall still
more or less divided
depending on what you believe
when

you

believe

it,

where

attention must be paid: a bundle of three needles tells one tree from another

herself giving birth to triplets

memory intellect desire sensation understanding imaging intention reason vision

> particles waves or tropes depending on whether or not somewhat's about in the quad

conceptuals strung out synchrontaneously con- and transsubstantial

could not thee so much my love my love my love if not womankind

the ant in his world of dew a pismire of the stars

at first for wit then poet plain fool at last wormwood wormwood

agenbite of inwit alone to tell the tale

when of itself what has been spoken is

knower knowing known substance species genus desire wisdom love

and the greatest of these beyond its own ratio its own knowledge its own nature

modus forma ordo

dimension form order

doceat moveat delectet

teach move pleasure

numerus pondus mensura

number weight measure

thus

not entirely ignorant
of the Arabic Aristotle,
Richard school of St.-Victor
of the race (self-styled) that
advocating in cells and at court
the meaning method and means of the message
almost civilized the West
the second time around

cogitatio

co-agitatio flitting about the object

## getting the feel of it

## meditatio

on the mountain, circling, the sharp-winged one the sun's grand-daughter

## contemplatio

becoming, becoming one with the impartible intellectible light

So the three of them — Lugh, the Dagda and Manannán mac Lir — one late mid-May afternoon were walking in the earth when an old peat-bogger out tending his hives saw them and though having not the slightest who they were or what their business here where the only snakes are those in office invited them to share his fire that night as was the custom in those more courteous times.

While the cabbage and turnips boiled the jar went round a time or two and Lugh told him. Once he recovered, Paddy good as any Greek sacrificed the one bullock he'd had to plow his field. As that taurine aroma filled the cottage Lugh asked him what he would have if he could. Though he would he said keep his word to his late wife not to remarry he'd be glad all the same he said of a son to bring light to his remaining nights.

After passing the jar so many times you would have thought it should be dry, and so enjoying the bull you would think it would be gone, the three took up the fresh hide and pissed in it, laid it with a wave of hands and signs in the grave of the old man's wife then left without a word. Ten months later the hide was reborn as the handsomest son ever to gaze on the moon, a fair-faced lad the father named with a twinkle in his eye O'Ryan.

scribble dribble drool and piddle

in the prison of the self

grey eyes in olive leaves

maenad bassarid

long flank firm breast

lovers left to their happiness

wrapped in veils of widowhood

things are in people people in things

unsatisfied passions of youth

words as good for it as any

*inheritance* she insisted

not grim compulsion upending their torment

among the ruins still standing

a tall beauty vexed with dreams

serenitas she would say

air and crystal adrift in the blue

laisser aller paradise

pair of dies Let go Let go And that one's problem? they asked pointing out the greybeard.

Oh, him said the guide. A serious character. Absolutely bugs.

Bugs? Explain, please. What is this "bugs"?

You know he said, finger twirling at his temple Bugs. Nuts. Crazy.

Ah, bugs on the nuts no wonder he's crazy.

Head in clouds over feet stepping into *The Republic of Utopia* 

focus less ideology than vision, power and order congruent by act of will

his Mussolini like his Jefferson his Adams Malatesta Odysseus

his Roosevelt Ol' Uncle Ez himself his own grandfather Thaddeus a myth

Telling his FBI interrogator before Hiroshima and Nagasaki

the White House should send him to Tokyo where his competence in things Confucian

as well as his rapport with authors of note in Japan's leading modernist journals

would let him in next to no time get the empire to come to terms

Telling any number of correspondents and time-dated visitors to the asylum

the White House should send him to Moscow where after twenty minutes or so to learn Georgian

given his special understanding of how international banking works he would

have no trouble getting Uncle Joe to see the error in his line of thought

Sincere in his self-implicating presumption of his parity with heads of state

insisting he knows in person or is in with the people who are up on the only matters that much matter in the immediate those who have the inside story

the lowdown whose intelligence reads leaves and petals blown on the wind

Berating the reading public for not knowing what he read and what he said back when

since had they but wit to recognize the genius behind and nuggets within his

table-pounding and tongue-lashing harangues their very knowing would have provoked them

— and might still — to take decisive action against the blatant beast sucking dry the earth

Freely admitting that Hitler was *crazy as a coot* who saw but failed to get vaccinated against

the Hebrew bacillus of world domination he was bitten by but that we should distinguish

as with all innovative or heretical writers constructive ideas from fantasies

ignore the negative concentrate on his positive lucidities about money

Telling more than one St Liz confidant not that the moon is made of mozzarella

but that *they* (referent understood) didn't want to let him out because

they know he's got the lowdown on them and besides what would be the point

in getting out when plain as your nose

they'd have him bumped off just like that.

That authority cohabits the same forcefield but outside the individual in the massive pressure cell of the democratic energized by capital to shortchange intellect

That in the sphere of justice the thrones concave and convex are mirrors at once subjective and objective a self-image disconcertingly plural a coin so thin the surfaces are inside out

That value desire and so forth embue objects intrinsically while at the same time being individual feelings to be made conscious while at the same time being social constructs

That the adulterous demigod come home with one too many wraps his all-too-human flesh in a gift of love that blisters everything it touches is able beyond knowledge beyond knowing at last

mind wonderfully concentrated on his absent father's presence to accept divine justice — heat: light, completion: perfection, immolation: splendor a final enlightenment while burning to death —

Suggests an attitude adjustment may be in order a letting go of defunct notions that art artist will or desire have much say in how things go and recognizing the fact may be the best one can do No ideas but in things: clear-cut signs the good doctor goes by

presenting in their opacities without the mome wraiths of past masteries

swirling about them flesh and blood and breath obstinate in their insistence on being present.

*No ideas but in things: res* then *verba*. And things contemplation contemplates?

things that outlast any corpse or creed? what consciousness is conscious of?

things transfigured into other things too quick for depth analysis?

things not yet material or mental but tensions of energy potentials

the efficient cause of substance we apprehend as a tensile light?

res publica that public thing? debts owed the dead too late to pay?

all that money is not the measure of? *All things are full of gods* said Thales

All things have thoughts said Empedokles All things said Herakleitos flow

seeking justice in their opposite numbers. *There is no knowledge of sensible things* said Plato

he lives in a dream who believes in beautiful things but does not believe in beauty itself.

Ask yourself said Aenesidimos what is the nature of things? What attitude

in relation to them shall we adopt? For those so disposed, what shall result?

*things* are equally indeterminate by nature, admitting of neither movement

nor discrimination; for this reason our sense of experience and beliefs is neither

true nor false so we should be disinclined to take a stand one way or another

and thus say of a *thing* it no more is than is not: *discrimination, then tranquillity*.

Time said Vergil bears all things away even ("one of his better moments") the mind. All things

*in measure number and weight* said the Book of Wisdom. *The beautiful* said Pseudo-Dionysios

is the beginning of all things. The beautiful moves the world, in its beautifying

communication calls all things to itself and gives them each according to its nature

clarity and consonance, holds the conjunction of parts the unities

underlying all multiplicity the indestructible ligaments

of all things together in existence by their yearning for their own beauty.

All things said Eriugena things that are grasped by the intellect

and things that transcend the soul's reach, all things which in their comprehensiveness we call

natura and the Greeks physis are images which point to God. The disposition of things

in the network of the universe said Hugh of St Victor reasserts the prior necessity

of *things* in nature and *things* in history the *fundamentum so arranged that nothing* 

is unconnected separable or external history the narrative resurrection

of *things* contained in the first or literal level *things* that come before allegory

historia ante tropi in demonstration of the tension conjoining

immanent and transcendent realities. *Beauty consists* said Albertus *in its form*.

The intellect having been informed by the species of the thing said Aquinas

by an act of understanding forms within itself a certain intention of the thing

which is to say its notion which the thing signifies; the intellect understanding

present and absent *things* indifferently in this agrees with the imagination

but the intellect in addition understands a *thing* as separate from material conditions

without which a *thing* does not exist in reality but *this could not take place* 

unless the intellect formed the intention; beauty he said in sum has to do

with knowledge and those things that have knowledge approach to a likeness of God. Things created

said Ockham setting out on the *via moderna* are contingent in temporal happenstance

there is no regulation of *things* by eternal ideas in the mind of God no cosmic order

to which *things* conform only bodies numerically distinct separate

singular disposed in certain ways as constituent parts of objects and *no object* 

other than these absolute parts beauty is not metaphysical

but to be sought in that uniqueness of the image generated by the felicity

and genius of the artisan. *The intellectual love* of a thing consists said Spinoza (as sure as any

troubadour of an ecstasy that is not madness or a whirl of senses but a glow released

from the exact nature of its perceptions) in the understanding of its perfections.

Res cogitans res extensa. Things are one or the other said Descartes introducing

mind in the modern sense into the conversation transforming by linguistic slight-of-hand

a purely grammatical first person singular of the verb *cogitare* into a substance *a thing* 

that thinks lumping cogitatio — the task classical psychology attached

to imagination — with *intelligens* sentiens volens and all the other

properties antiquity ascribed to nous psyche pneuma anima

*intellectus mens ratio etcetera* making of the Christian soul

a new metaphysical entity. We talk said Locke like children who being questioned

what such a *thing* is that they know not answer simply that it is *something* 

which is to say nothing more or less than *a phantom they suppose* must support

the *thing* in question a fundamental ground or base *a hitching-post or starting-point* 

a constituting image essence nature a substance that stands not only under but for

the sensible qualities they have in mind *things* necessarily being defined

at bottom in terms of what they are not. *The* esse *of unthinking things* said Berkeley

is percipi nor is it possible that out of the minds of thinking things which perceive

them they should have any existence. Why may not the mode of action called thought

asked Jefferson have been given to an organ as that of magnetism in the needle

or of elasticity in the spring? to talk of immaterial existences

is to talk of *nothings*; to say that the soul angels god are immaterial

is to say they are *nothings*; rejecting all organs of information but my own senses

I rid myself of the Pyrrhonisms with which an indulgence in speculations

so uselessly occupy and disquiet the soul. The thing mused Goethe which is the thing

without being the thing and yet the thing. Existants (through difference and identity,

reflection-on-another and self-reflection) *appear* said Hegel *as things*. Thence Fenollosa:

that relations do not exist but *things* the meeting points of actions *consist of their* 

relations collapsing culture and nature into one organism materializing the self

in verbal medium *in media res* time a blizzard of discrete particles

overweening imagination transmits through radiological impersonations

a constabulary in various voices policing the premises. *Things admit* 

of being used as symbols said Emerson. Then Whitman: *All truths in all things*.

Science has advanced said Marsden because it has trusted in unprejudiced observation of the thing;

before as now in art it had guessed about things and made a pile of useless words and ideas

unproved and incapable of proof, but the experiment *the essaying* 

of what could be done to a thing and with it dissolving error into fact broke

the dominion of the guess the tentative existence of the hypothesis; *the soul is a thing* 

with movement consciousness repulsions attractions a thing which forages feeds dissipates and grows.

Things are illusions said Croce. Rilke sympathized with the urgency of things

their *desperate earnestness*, a *beauty* like the Eros of Sokrates evolving

irrepressibly in human hands the *daimones* between gods and men;

yet now a surfeit of *sham things empty indifferent things* with no conscientiousness

pours across the ever-shrinking Atlantic from America leaving the earth itself

at risk of becoming a mere *thing* with *no way out but to be invisible*.

Res said Heidegger that which is pertinent an affair which concerns somebody

which has bearing *cause* in the legal sense the Old German *thing* or *dinc* meaning

a gathering specifically for dealing with a case or contested matter a word

suited as no other to translate the Latin,

the realitas of the Roman res conceived

in terms of the Greek *on* Latin *ens* that which is present which stands forth here

res in the Middle Ages the normal term to designate every ens qua ens.

The painting said Merleau-Ponty thinks itself in me; through my flesh Nature is made flesh

visible and mobile my body is a *thing* among *things* caught up in the fabric of the world

its cohesion that of a *thing*, it holds *things* in a circle around itself vision

happens among or is caught up in *things* in that place where something visible

undertaking to see becomes for itself by virtue of the sight of *things* in that place

where there persists *like the mother water in crystal* the undividedness of the sensing and the sensed.

Things are gods said Proust. Things fall apart said Yeats. So full of a number of ~. One

 $\sim$  after another. Direct treatment of the  $\sim$  . All  $\sim$  but symbols of all  $\sim$  . Beautiful thing.

By then the *dottori* of realist persuasion had long expounded upon consciousness

as consciousness of *things*, as itself those *things* it is conscious of; had at length explained

how the normative mind distinguishing *episteme* from *gnosis* sensible

from intelligible apprehends *things* in nature (intuiting them through instinctual

acumen as a matter of common sense) but *qualities* it abstracts (as matters

of logical possibility reified in the active imagination, thinking not knowing)

— had for centuries speculated on how meanings of words tend to get realized

once they're conceived uttered and heard how ideas once thought out loud self-execute

(liberty and freedom for instance spreading on their own once word got out that a few

disgruntled English nobles took *things* in hand tabled Maggie Carter and had Lackland

sign off on her virgin or fresh-scrubbed vellum)
— had for roughly forever expounded upon

how sight and vision alike are intentional, meaning for their views of *things* to be real,

consciousness intending, intent upon the *things* it's paying attention to, is in

relationship with. *Things* said the younger James brother (a Celt and so decreed

the autocrat at table *irrational*) always the splendid Things the bone of contention

conscious of their eminence and price.
The relations between things explained the elder

as much particular experience as the things themselves correspondents informing

one another each party's very being coming to depend on the other's good intentions

(lovers self-created of their love said Hildegard) each object intensive

subject as well with a tendency to tend to one another tenderly while minding

one's own business, attractive bodies consenting to private exchange of current interest

as lovers' eyes meeting across a field compound each intensity each hue

creating together their own conscience the tension informing their tendered contingency

nearly distracting them both from the beauty each finds in the other's incorporation.

Twenty years a mad wolf
in La Loba's *desmesne*no simpleton but touched
by a hand too soon withdrawn

muzzle and snuffle just to get by grubbing through the litter out of your head lying there moldering in the sun

when not on the run from hounds set loose on the false scent of your conceit unjust recompense for your having only just chanced to see

she white as sepulture
beneath the fine-spun silk
catching the moonlight as she moved
only that once among the reeds

needing from you demanding of you nothing but fealty the cockles of your heart liquified spiced mulled honeyed imbibed

Duplicitous reason intermittent a plan to save the world the devil himself given the chance might be glad to organize

not that Pater was wrong to give up his famous conclusion to the *Renaissance* that every individual is a prisoner in its own dream

the narrow chamber of its own mind for a faith that in the mind of the race in the character of the age all individuals unite

a general intelligence remote laws of inheritance

vibration of long-past acts a permanent common sense

through the medium of language and current ideas made manifest in the new order of things, but that the conclusion is still in force

Forever squabbling *eris* and *eros* in celestine harmony
by simple Gallic device converting hostility into feline desire

A hobby horse for the kingdom a yankee order in the court
mixed blessing memories
pounding at the temple gates

Then twelve in institutional green with lawn privileges squirrels teased with peanuts on a string swung round with it held in their teeth

Acolytes' inane questions answered in kind under the spreading Chestnut Ward belated layings on of hands

A scent still in the air confirming the nymph with pinned eyes performing the recognitions that come April the leaves return Redactor: gathering limbs scattered by the storm, leaves staining red the edge of the sea

> steel cage concrete floor murderers rapists deserters

the criminally insane under the unforgiving sun

behind him

Capacitor: building pressure at the atomic level sparks discharged across the abyss

getting off on getting into
bringing the luminous to light
through memorized lines

the snakepit institutions with grounds for appeal adrift with catatonics

brains in a manner of speaking removed for their own good

the odor of death in life up and down the corridor

behind him

Ego scriptor: in his own juices
a brisk stir now and then
watch it doesn't boil over

practicing the pre-Dorian art of turning gray sitting still before a looking glass

worrying beads and knots self-interfering integrities teased out of memory personal letterhead transfigured from a calligraphic profile

once posed for into the phrase *J'AYME DONC JE SUIS* 

Prestidigitator: precise dissociation become a trick of willful ignorance

accentuate the positive
eliminate the negative
latch onto the affirmative

the luminosity of being right about money for example eclipsing the atrocities

> thirteen years no trial then twenty on a short leash

thanks to lawyer publisher wife and head head-doctor swearing

once the politics changed he was and always would be of unsound mind

hopeless and harmless *in totidem verbis* more a nuisance than a danger

Intelligence love beauty the process slow the way exceeding fine bones of things in the mouth of time

when not like a shot *furious*from perception quicksilver

swift as a swallow after a gnat

only those of the willing able to perceive and experience

## making it out intact

giving voice to voices given

Do not eat the brain sd Iamblichos

Do not eat the heart.

I know so many who were Mary Queen of Scots said old Mead true to his honey-sweet name never suspecting as Yeats had after years on The Quest

that Madam B turning lions and eagles into asses just might be pulling his leg and when I consider what wonderful people

they all were I ask he said deadpan WHAT they can have been at in the interim to have arrived where they are.



in the fall squint-eyed through lashes at the sun something starts to come free of the hard light around the source of all this heat

line | shadow smudge | color the black center a secret shot through the pupil into the retinal nerve just that instant all it takes to blind or enlighten



behind the lids flashing | pulsing forms empty of substance full of consequence

what can't be held yet touches all warms all

known to be invisible is revealed full spectrum on passing into on passing through triangulation

that once admitted dissolves outlines that might have shown where one lets off where two begins that looked upon

with god's eye

remember that thou art that

makes you yourself

one-eyed bandit cross-eyed seer

beautiful

to look upon to realize

that once released

from the eye

where love is there is the eye

rejoins the air

little loves to and fro

opening

one another for all to see

\*

if white is all the rainbow intensities black none

as cold is absence of heat as evil is of the good as nothingness is imprisoned at the center of the sphere

the center which is equal to its circumference

> as matter is unrealized potential

> infinite deprivation of form

> > as the zero space abhors is mathematic

not geographic a mental figure highly effective

in time-space situationmythology

old enough to philosophize he asked again What then is light?

What is it not?
reposted the monk
in question revealing
out of habit
his gift of gab

Is perception

fatal always said Emerson

a matter of choice said Uncle William

the will itself after Plotinos

making darkness visible

Is compassion communication

ground level *caritas* 

the first commandment the first amendment

Is as painters remind us

in nature: divine intelligence informing humans being human

in art: devotion to each other brought into the picture

dedication to the craft

Venetian sunsets Umbrian dawn

the mourning cypress veiled in gold

a glistening

## thread unwinding

a ball of it in hand above the torso kicking through hell's high water

the air expectant trembling

petra sterilis barren rock transmutata inluminata

landscape details for their own sake

Accidental

or otherwise

takes will to make it real

to let it be as it will

Where does it go when it goes out?

\*

More light
Goethe's last words

More light

what he wanted?

what he saw?

## milkweed silk catching the sun

the breath the seed immaculate

Follow the light

the book instructs the newly dead

Follow the light

Maelid — hamadryads specific to apples — invented it would seem to inhabit the one still there in the well-kept backyard behind the three-storey woodframe he was raised in: Fernbrook Avenue suburban Republican Philadelphia

names of some repute on both sides —
a Pound in Congress a Wadsworth in legend —
church-going humanitarian folk
a goodly share of their lives downtown
in mission work with Italian immigrants

In the shade of which old apple tree redolent of the fruits of paradise stopping on their way from a baker's dozen years of Washingtonian hospitality back to *the Mediterranean sanity* they hoped would still be there

he kissed his wife of forty-four years who had kept him daily company while he served out the *de facto* sentence into whose custody mother of the son who bore his name he was released.

Negative liberty — freedom from in the broadest sense: from pain in the body trouble in mind restraints on movement inquiry perception expression experience pleasure. The maximum degree of non-interference compatible with minimum social demands. *Positive freedom* — not only *independence* in the declarative American sense (insistent that if you depend on someone else to uphold your rights, even if they are upheld you are in servitude); but freedom as success in having become your own ideal, having found in yourself the human essence (a kind of moral asocial endeavor which was part said some of the liberal ideology and so to blame for the Great War's carnage); and in even more recent political terms freedom as equality of unequals, consensual generation and exercise of power among equals in a democracy.

Liberty as liberals liberated
in a commercial sense: liberalism
as government in pursuit
of private interest. Freedom
as republicanism: government
in pursuit of public happiness.
Brotherhood odd man out of the trinity
the holy ghost of the revolution knowing love
not money the universal equivalent
the one of the three most difficult to achieve
in a culture that extols individuation
yet firmly represses deviation and difference,
separates theory from action, contemplation
from politics, a culture dedicated
to acquisition of knowledge as assimilation.

A preening eagle of stoical mien noble as a paycock in Venus's temple casting his eye on exquisite figures

of her thesaurus

confiding to his young secretary

If they knew what we thought
they'd do away with us
they want their poets dead

Senator Y seemed to live said Woolf

in an intricate briar bush

coming out and going back in at any moment he pleased.

Possum hanging upside down
playing dead for all he's worth
Puss in his own tracks twice
once in either direction.

Bull in variable *contrapasos*contemplative qualificative

ruminating on the spectacle

of *inarticulate anger* 

attesting to Ezray's mystical ear
his saving grace damned
to have to listen to this language.
Wasps in his head said his daughter.

Wise hick doodle dandy
purveyor of homespun malarkey
tongue in cheek back to the wall
making a fool of himself

until fortune intervenes

obscuring the sun with imperial presence casting shadows with alphabet blocks trolleycars bitching the vision

as out of the common run something
sacred this way comes a salmon
intelligence a rule of thumb
as tips the shopkeeper's scale.

Poets long past their youth

still wanting to string the beggar's bow telling their grandkids B'rer Rabbit tales with other tricks up their sleeve

natural aristocrats

self-contradicting right and left
wanting to exempt themselves
from nature's dead end

strange bedfellows engaged

in keeping the craft from running aground on lowest common denominator

Realpolitik

feeling since the century turned
the shift in tempo pitch key
yet none quite come to terms with
economies of scale.

.

No blank slate: the marble

anticipates the chisel the clay its hand the ear its voice before old Fudd goes for his gun.

Washed up then on that eutrophic shore whale road behind yellow brick ahead where his grandfathers fought and died

following his nose upstream so far people laughed at him, taking the chip on his shoulder for some outlandish harvest implement

upstream through the brindled liquidity, the banks as they crumble bespeaking lower orders of beings more tractable for having lost their homes

past the musical market place where opulent behind her veils the brazen one undulates a cross of gold between her open thighs

past the scornful lips of the god father holding the power of issue above the laws nations engrave for themselves in white marble

past the greenbacks swimming like blind eels the scuttled gunboats no longer pressed into service the wads of newsprint and tickertape parades

past the great headless body of those incapable of comprehending their burden as the means to someone else's gain

thw illusion of nationalism as Veblen said leading the unleisured populace to believe what's good for J.P. is good for all

past the panics of '93 and '5, 1907 and '29 the eight minor and seven major depressions

from 1880 to 1930 the auction hammers the walking papers the lives ruined by the boom and bust loop-the-loop

necessary corrections sd the Secretary breadlines soup kitchens hungry kids a little suffering for the common good people starving while farmers go bankrupt so speculators can play with the money the Constitution says belongs to the people

businessmen jumping from their high-rises hanging themselves with their own neckties sometimes taking their families with them

past the gentlemen's clubs and ladies' salons stolen treasures brought back from the export wars ransoms held in the coils of the Worm

it is important said the president of the manufacturers association that the unemployed understand

that their suffering is not the product of economic breakdown but the direct result of their own moral infirmity

past the institutions of bad faith the household gods in wreaths and robes crying If they only knew If only they could see

against the current long enough to reveal the fiscal past with minor variations reproducing itself as the future:

national sovereignty turned over in the grave reverted by adverse possession to corporations financial causidical or productive

the power to mint stamp and distribute tender deployed worldwide for private ends the way people get to eat sleep

dress and recreate overdetermined by choice and chance of a lucky chosen few unlikely to get caught with their hand in the till

the dollar in '72 pulled off the gold standard floated on the oil slick global market in exchange for petrodollars forty-six thousand prematurely dead in '74 and '75 alone strokes heart attacks suicides

the invisible hand tightening belts though the liquidation less severe than it would be ten years later

when it was mourning again in America sweetheart deals junk bonds palm greasing the trickle of what is said to flow downhill

taxpayer bailouts of banks that over-reached on high-risk investments followed by bailouts in the form of high-return loans to client states

followed by bailouts of the S & L banks after their high-risk real estate scams fell through followed by lower wages

less net income for middle class workers weaker social welfare safety nets bigger shares of the global arms market

the fact is sd the Chair of the Fed to members of Congress your constituents of course are unhappy but mine aren't

voodoo economics the magic worked in money begetting money liquidity to the neglect of industrial production

self interest a public virtue no *res publica* but that perversion the market a carnival of speculation

a high tech bubble rising through the ooze towards the next millennium crash heads of dead presidents baked in a pie

Finance Insurance and Real Estate a FIRE sale of properties underwater neo-mercantilism protecting the wealthy

government debt exceeded by personal debt for the first time in the nation's history the merchants of debt drunk on tax write-offs

tax cuts and deregulation multinational corporations tax-free the top one percentile fleecing the rest

in a house of credit cards economy sold by oval office commercials that assure consumers that going into debt is patriotic

while sovereignty the power to value money is given to unelected financiers with the power to overrule the nation's laws

the banks compounding each other's bad loans War Department budgets on the rise derivative get-rich-quick schemes imploding

the current chair of the Fed admitting it is inevitable that the producer of the money supply will have inordinate power

The banking establishment more dangerous than standing armies said Jefferson and Adams that every bank of discount taxing the public

for private individuals' gain is downright corruption arising from general ignorance of the nature of coin credit and circulation

the usury cartels *in flagrante* with mortgages drugs and oil too big to let die bailed out with taxpayer dollars

the specter of evil aliens raised again just when the pain of the necessary contraction gets to be too much again

the market's rebirth again delivered by war paid for again with the public's money borrowed from firms growing fat on public indebtedness apprentice financial wizards who caused the mess put in charge of mopping it up with a lick a promise and a cat who ate the canary grin

clean-nailed born-again leaders of the free washed in the blood of suckers born every minute making the world safe again for vermin

the thick line of smoke from the squat temple coins jingling around her swollen belly the stench of pigs fattened on the sacrificed. Flotsam and jetsam *gists and piths* drafts and fragments ply over ply all that glitters in the backwash agitating the moonlit shingle

Allen Upward working with the ear more fanciful than Isidorus in an effort to antecede old Skeat's primordials

Fenollosa more with the eye intricating identities stick figures and moving pictures between nouns and pronouns: both eye

and ear more or less liberated from the idea that the beautiful is the hellenic caressible the physically attractive,

both directing the reader's perception to subsets of sense-data not conventionally thought to be units of meaning, both accounts paying

phenomenological attention to phonetic as well as graphic linguistic paraphernalia in their attempts to grant language

an inherent empathetic immediacy by by-passing — as family resemblances revealed in Agassiz' fossil record by-passed

hit-and-miss evolution — historically specific dialogue that argues for meaning as a collective achievement.

eye to eye, not forthe thrones of justice of liberty

the circle after the seraphim reserved not

> for blood lust oneupsmanship the feudal gage

> > but who pay attention to measures common in free speech

> > > levels of harvest numbers of mouths tools needed

> > > > state of affairs affairs of state state of mind

sliding scales no fixed rate just-distribution

> of labor's fruits cultural value an increment added to each enterprise

:of natural increase providence husbandry resources sustained

on in unearned earned paid out to

## no gouging

:of charges, timed, the right circuits right sequence throughout the mechanism

of blame, enough to go around coming around without the stupid pointing of fingers

of obligation good will golden sector golden mean peace on earth

And the liberty
of not being in debt —
what about that?

The Six Classics: The Book of Poetry
The Book of History The Book of Rites
The Book of Music The Philosophy
of Mutations The Spring and Autumn Annals
I've studied them all said Ch'iu and tried to teach
world leaders what I have learned
but no one wants to listen to my lessons.

Lucky for you said old Long Ears you met no ruler who wanted to put the world in order. The white hawks reproduce their kind by not turning their eyes from one another. Without losing oneself in humanity how can one teach humanity? Without the *tao* one is lost wherever one goes.

Ah so. And yet and yet as the *Odes* say the falcon comes out like a dog from the gates of heaven the fish on wing-like feet glide through the water. *Sinceritas*. From using words precisely comes ethics from ethics the three virtues knowledge energy *humanitas*. Do not try to split them apart.



Denigrating the whole notion of an unconscious as a Viennese waltz of gray matter so dark light may not reach it at all so it becomes an enormous unknown quantity whose image the imaginative mind tries to embody

conceiving it in more human scale a more corporeal sense a coping mechanism deployed by survival instincts to represent outside on more equal footing a pageant play of fluid characters each transformed in turn

from pushme-pullyou me-myself-and-I to a vaguely human likeness dressed in a cloak of interstellar space and death mask from ego id and superego to us-them puppets portrayed as real-life action figures

a strategy carried out in primitive cultures by rituals of scapegoat sacrifices maybe most faithfully where the *dramatis personae* are known to be stand-ins and shadow-figures whose defeat doesn't touch the malignity inside.

\*

Symbol image intensive manifold existential particularity intuition intentional grasp of essence *epochē ding-an-sich* autonomous work of art significant form

the practico-inert — the institution itself a structure as synchronic system radically transpersonal a realm of impersonal logic depositings of presence consciousness itself an effect

of ambient structures — signifieds abstractions formalistic purities consummations devoutly wished to transcend such surrounding determinates as nature / discursiveness of ordinary discourse /

historical environments / death — something internal that utters itself as inner activity or rational cognitive function performed by a univocal expressive agent — a process born of imagination

that parallels a metaphysical process of spirit unfolding from the *I am* asserting a natural rather than arbitrary view of the hallowed literary sign that language may overcome the contingent world.

Radiant instances radio corpses tagged on the toe of so much dirty linen — fascist modernist anti-Semitic money-crank intellectual snob revolutionary simpleton a sensibility without a mind vainglorious dogmatic ridiculous wobbly in the head opinionated analerotic anal-sadistic grandiose — metaphors of metaphors for the act

yet something specified as experience transformative translative transmissive transumptive cumulative detail spontaneously come busting through the quotidian into figures indicative of alternative dimensions so some feel it enough themselves to believe or short of that at least see a path to where the light may be taken up the stones come together on their own after the musician has stopped playing.

Standing by turns for both lechery and prudence a lady at her mirror for centuries asks about love understood (an oxymoron) as an inclination of the intellect toward the intention (*id est* the form of knowledge) conformed in *the apprehensive faculty* from flesh and blood reality not heretofore attended to by the senses

an inclination induced by phantasms of breath as if in reflection accomplishing union (copulatio) of the isolated single separate special intellect with the generic possible intellect incarnate — an immediacy an immanence experienced breath light insight apperceived

informing the more corporeal images the imaginative faculty assembles from materials paid attention to in that same life-sentence reality, substantial information eye to eye back and forth on cupid wings through the field that separates less than joins subject/object internal/external desire/desired.

Mnemosyne his true Penelope godmother of all imagination

whose daughters helping us winnow out the chaff help us too to bring love into all our art

dress the stone skim off the dross forget all we once set out to learn

remember our memories of a paradise we never did real time in

At her discretion all the sense-impressions in her keep released or not and when

to be incorporated by will and desire projected outward by reason and intellect

the whole symphonic production process a systole/diastole breathe-in/breathe-out hermetic

all one's faculties about one dancing in peace and joy to sirensongs

All the idioms dialects diacritical remarks intonations

this unforgettable taste and aroma this breath of air in the maelstrom

this thread of this color traced back through these cats' cradles of unspun wool

played out all at once on the walls of the skull *totalitarian* in the sense of coherent

A fluid entanglement of economics politics ethics art you name it

touching all bases all p's and q's all prevalent mannerisms minded

cosmos and even the consciousness inherent in that cosmos the whole

kit and kaboodle set close to the wind some sense of pride in the clean cut of her jib

Why everyone still seemed to think ordeal necessary after this many centuries and so many good answers obvious enough to anyone who took time to look, escaped him. Why in this time of over-abundance men supposed to be of good sense and will still let arms peddlers and money changers strap the world to a private interest wheel, bedeviled his gray matter right through the twelve years of self-reproachful silence at the end.

In the family album a profile shot on a rooftop, the sea behind, face lined, wizened presumably from looking long into his own vision hearing a music past masters insisted be sung to cauliflower ears pot-metal tokens in hand closed minds far up their own orifices lotus-eaters whose memories quail at the day before yesterday who can't but mistake for dancing their stumbling from delivery to burial.

Grown long in the tooth despite the long knives, each bite of the apple revealing the flesh blue around the edges where his lips had been insatiable, her shoulders perfectly fit to his palm her breasts rising to his intention with an intensity matching his own all hesitations cast off in the gray lynx-light of her eyes fixed on his where he kneels before sunrise lips and tongue quietly reading her office.

Very well then I contradict myself.
The plain sense of words no less essential
but as Hulme said before he went down in the trenches
essentially inaccurate and now

complicated no end with elusiveness rococo layering univeralizations erstwhile demands for concrete diction and image displaced by claims for ideational representation.

Gone from defense on behalf of what is felt — aesthetics of imagination techniques of poetry, to arguments commandeered against what is thought to be inimical to artists and artistic production

from touting ever-changing forms of perception and production to free the mind from the past's *mortmain*, to beating the drum for a fixed set of principles said to be natural law an unchanging content in new bottles

emphatic that excess words those that do not contribute must be eliminated for the good of the whole: conjunctions particles first person singular pronouns, but no limit to the number of personations.

Gone from making a fetish of the concrete image, insisting that even the slightest tendency to abstract general statements is a greased slide and that there is no use whatever in ever discussing

package words like those that end in *ism*, to thinking of one thing in terms of another — metaphor first cousin to abstract universals whence cometh the problematical notion the ancients called *relation* 

(nothing to it at all but hope and imagination) discrete hypotheticals themselves no more than sense data and hints of past experience, figures of speech put in compromised positions.

Agreeing again with Aristotle that usury

in asexually reproducing money is the most unnatural form of generation, but not with his various Levantine half-children

who condemned the verbal usury of puns for generating meanings most unnatural diabolical in their ambiguity alien to the parent words that bear them in disgrace.

From insistence that signs truly correspond to their referents that money be worth its weight that images be indical or iconic not symbolic that words carry precise meanings and mean what they say,

to lauding the virtues of paper over coin inscripted value over metal the primacy of sign over substance design over material form over matter sovereign over nation author's intention over text.

From advocating for precise language that excises words unnecessary to the immediate object, to deliberately unspecific syntax ambiguous pronouns analogies with no subjects

inducing a sense of illusory coherence the periodic rhythms of discursive logic lost the space between naming and judging collapsed in desire for celerity in turning words into action,

to a shifting of balance that exploits grammatical uncertainties to expand the range of possible congruities between *l'idea statale* and lyrical moments of visionary imagination.

From image and thing to symbol emblem concept, from a more pristine state inscribed with truth where abstractions freely exchange identities with each other — the true the good the beautiful

reduced in an ideal equivalence-exchange, no individuals where all are equal,

to a progression a passage to a more complete complex organization of linguistic substitutions

which may well be more effective in a carrot-and-string world of people given from birth to adulate things that can't be defined in words but only by reference to ineffable feelings toward hardly perceptible

or totally obscure forces represented in images traditionally repeatedly redrawn from economic ecclesiastical legal political and proverbial pools.

Resolving to write a poem including history, but then giving in to idealism and romantic desire to establish an aesthetic space free of the frame of capitalist economy but privileging

property so reproducing it instead as a domain free of pluralistic democratic forms thereby in effect abolishing history in favor of a timeless nature and fixed state of society.

From history as totality recuperable if at all only by artists and contemplatives, to the doctrine that a society's *ethos* lives in its ideas and social practices,

to a belief in fixed racial types traits and vitalities persisting through time *eternal moods* immortal *concetti* linguistic essences *representative outlines of forms* and the like

too intangible for workhorse words that by nature and instruction must *go in fear* of abstractions, from totalitarian ethics to totalitarian metaphysics.

From castigating the booboisie for ignorance of their own cultural memory, to perorations on the power to forget all that was consciously learned all the disarray of dissociated details

so as to be in closer touch with the prelinguistic curriculum the ancestral orders of the day transmitted through channels unknown to science which intellect alone can never access.

From praise of government that governs least — the individual exalted and amplified liberty well-being and latitude expanded, each personality actuated

to denigrating as artificial the opposition between individual and community, satisfied that the only freedom is that of the state and that of the individual within the state.

From thinking detestable qualities inhere in something thought of as The Jew, to mocking the notion that Jews are to blame for Aryans' muddy thinking, from denouncing the *Protocols* as unbelievable fantasy

anti-Semitism as kneejerk scapegoating to elude questions of usury's real source, to thinking race determines behavior so policies may be rooted in blood bone and endocrines,

to calling for racial and ethnic massacres white supremacy à la Gobineau echoing Hitler's quip that their being a forgery is what lets us know the *Protocols* are authentic.

Opposed to war but given to verbal violence the parry thrust slash of polemic the voice of judgment expounding abstruse apologetics of the new poetics until the Great War demanded a rhetoric more

accommodating of common sensitivities, and then aggravated by the contraction before and withdrawal into self-defense postures after the depression revested the pen almighty with a genocidal vengeance. Though certain that artists put heart and soul into their products along with the sweat, adamant that market value should be based on usefulness not on production costs alone;

Though a direct local-level consumer-producer economics as ethical anarchists proposed made sense and their commodity money might lead to abundance and thereby destroy

scarcity-based capitalism once and for all without the disruption suffering and disgrace of armed revolution, and though their leader's racist anti-democratic

pro-authoritarian denunciation of usury fèudalité capitaliste warmed his heart's cockles *Property is theft* rubbed the beaver the wrong way

given his honest sympathy with the smallholder populist's desire to have property without himself being anyone's property save his own;

Though having less Greek than Latin, enough to track arche from source to first principle to sovereignty to command to a realm to an empire to a government office

enough to grasp that *logos* and *kosmos* have in common with *armonía* a sense of proportion of justice requiring proper emplacement of the inferior, enough

to see how the weight of a *talent* might balance *nomina* and *nomisma* with *nomos* 

(the *name* for *coin* with *law*) might rhyme rent (prósodos) with the wealth song (prosodía) bestows on us all,

to enjoy the grecian anthology of *allegory subtext* enigma riddle oracle to glimpse the suicidal options in release to the mysteries;

Though well aware that properties get called all kinds of things — virtues ideas essences powers the soul of whatever inessential they are in fact essential to

some going so far as to call them particulars — concrete individual entities substance conceived as no more than a bundle of denominations;

Though dead set against property rights over people involuntary servitude someone telling someone else what to do, period;

Though all the above, coming to see only belatedly (not until simply lifting the feet up and down — the upstroke lighter in Greek the down in Latin — a stress common toward the end —

became a moral exercise in customshouse weights and measures) the problem is not merely people with their heads on wrong who so might yet have them set right but as he said in a late rendition

in property's very nature —
property like the unmoved mover
scholastics likened to their deity
moves like mankind the stars and money

by being attractive — the fundamental

problem not particular economic political social or racial structures but how they are used or abused by individuals who choose

according to the cast of their characters — not usury but greed the greatest enemy of justice said Dante Aquinas and Aristotle all three rhyming with Anselm and John the Scot

that sin is not of the body but a disorder of personal will not a connivance of interests but a diseased constitution not the act the desire. Poets lovers lunatics — nothing new there or thinkers and statesmen found out as traitors

confusion of art words poems tokens money customs law as representations of value

but who would have thought the State Department would stamp you PSEUDO-AMERICAN stymie your efforts

to get you and yours out before Washington declared war on Italy

would call your exercise of freedom to rave a legal equivalent to aiding the enemy

or that the DOJ wouldn't understand that poets lie even when telling the truth

or that they'd put you in a cage
just for shooting off your mouth
the way you always had

or that in Paris toward the end of the game guest of the playwright you once put down as a Joyce sycophant

seeing your own ghost on stage in an old coot and his blind cripple sidekick double

you'd break your rule of silence to whisper to no one in particular *c'etait moi dans la poubelle*.

```
My whole life believing I knew something.

Then . . . I realized I know nothing . . .

Knew nothing. Words become empty of meaning . . .

I have come too late to a state of total

uncertainty . . . conscious only

of doubt . . . through suffering . . . an experience

of suffering . . . I do no work anymore . . .

I do nothing . . . I fall into lethargy . . .

everything I touch . . . I spoil . . .

I have blundered always . . .
```

constructing instead a universe more or less material phalanxed with particulars selected for viewing pleasures scored for moral edification the satisfaction of educing

by germinal insemination
through talismanic images
attractive to seminal reasons
transporting both form and species
the least-corporeal most subtle
celestial figures and spirits

logoi spermatikoi
directly to the cranial vault
not a body of abstract dogma
based on rational evidence
but states of mind in which certain
things are comprehensible

a faith which finds its validity
in action a faith without substance
a fascination of images
in sufficient numbers of skulls
to instigate strange innumerable
unimaginable futures.

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 pennydreadful 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

## \*

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

Theory given the lie by practice said some who might with just cause execrate him, the conscience of reason and art founded on rejection of the will to power foundered on the will to order

the luciform swiveling city built by voices striking the air glinting in the sun *ever more luminous in the light* perfectly beautiful in its formal realization each word

conserving — consubstantial with — the person it names or who utters it (the authority of the author privy to special knowledge of how to restore antediluvian hierarchical social values)

a house of fame storing rhetorical flatulence a house of glass in splinters from a bent axle transformed into a contradictory message: not a one-way radio transmission

but a verbal economy of exchange language not as *logos* but as communication a democracy of words histories cultures impossible to exhaust or rank

every grain strain and swatch its own truth a constantly site-specific text with no center a chordal simultaneity at pains to put off any coherence save that of its own provisional nature

not exactly the possum's forlorn prayer that salvation come after death but acceptance on faith hope *karites* that art might evade the overreach of the one true church might find perch and purchase

unconfined by the skull might spread the word that belief in difference for the sake of the different is *our power to resist provoke re-think take sides* in a reflection of *a conception of meaning*.

What are you, box? I am goddess of all foreigners diety of the Land of Punt daughter of Horus daughter of Rē wife to Horus wife to Ptah a woman a cow a tree a sistrum both seven and one goddess of the moon of the earth of the western hills of the dead goddess of joy and love queen of merriment of music dance laughter song the sovereign.

Yet with all the lower kingdom goddesses available to animate the final pages where justice is said to lead up to a non-artificial paradise, choosing to fabricate his own Nile princess Ra-Set of two male gods combined producing a goddess figure by simple hyphenation of masculine names a disposition of hieroglyphs a father/daughter androgyne.

## I

Dusk. Midsummer. Small kine watching from under the hawthorn. *Lesser cattle* in that sense. Small birds flitting from catrock to hedgerow. Scent of timothy up from the pastures below. No clouds in sight. Mountaintops floating in the distance on a flood tide of rose-tinted mist. Then a lustrous commotion in the immediate light becoming almost palpable the air overhead more substantial assuming shapes in a silent pouring forth of translucent bodies an endless procreative flume teeming with generations the literal sense of her imperative *Breathe me in*.

## $\Pi$

From the unpronounceable root \*rt thousands of acorns each bearing the weight of the next generation of dragon's teeth — arete arithmetic aristocrat north rhetoric ritual art rite with no g-h wright with a double u right as in right-handed right as in righteousness

as in *Varuna* god of sovereignty of all that is worthy and good as in the Sanskrit *rta* the notion of *dharma* of cosmic order *rg veda* the sunwise course of things around the unstill center not unrelated to Hebrew *arhetten* the one not to be spoken, righteousness divinized

## Ш

Justice is never anything in itself not for instance an abstract idea not some principle from on high but in the dealings of men with one another anywhere and always in a compact not to do or suffer harm.

# IV

In pursuit of the highest good *contemplation* has supremacy over enjoyment for intellect is exponentially greater than will but then the nectar of the will's joy is superior to the ambrosia of the intellect's vision for intellect's knowledge of God is less perfect and less fulfilling than love kept alive by the will to love.

V

Keeping things in perspective that optical trick brought to perfection among the Florentines who frowned upon individual glorification, found private show in public offensive, considered indecorous the apotheosis of dead persons as was customary in Venice

(a more ungrateful and arrogant people than whom said Michelangelo he had never had to deal with) a place where grandiose tombs had been unheard of under the eye of the church a vanishing point everything perceived falls into as if by magic a numerology

mirroring the black hole of the pupil at the opposite apiculate end of the conic visual field ocular apparatus the circles of confusion left unresolved the object never brought into focus with the subject a slight astigmatism leaving space for mystery

## VI

Romans called the ancestor's death mask the imago; the wax imagines.

Art the last refuge of the egoist

laying another universal-and-many conundrum on the ochre palimpsest adding another register to the harmony.

Between the dead and the undead the essential difference lies in the release of the image. The image is essentially mortuary.

# VII

Monuments in the green world overgrown with organisms beset with elementals of the upper regions

built on sand underlying leaves and bones mixed with clay that turns to ooze when it's wet

alternating strata of earth

gravel stone then bedrock surrounding a molten core and then

elephants all the way down reason given over to imagination not the unimaginable

situation or predicament of rational contemplative conception but an earthly paradise

within reach of humankind as a whole organism in perpetual homeostasis

## VIII

Consciousness in the strictest sense is present only in a being to whom his species his essential nature is an object of thought. Science is cognizance of the species.

To overthrow patriarchal law Judic by definition and resurrect primitive community by eliminating abstraction and the liberal state to get in touch with the matriarchal moment the imaginary order the sublime oceanic feeling induced by media technology

Critique of money entailing critique of Jews the biblical critique of idolatry the gold sovereign deity a product of laborers' hands enhanced in value by sheer imagination the price of anything the price the market will bear the very notion of deity enthralled to a commodity fetish

Both the intellectual and the petty bourgeoisie susceptible to myth, the bootstrap myth of education and culture in particular, and culture itself a myth soon given the lie but for the willingness of erstwhile populists to rejoice as they disappear into the crowd

# ΙX

Between the analogic and anagogic a sword's razor edge splitting the difference — micro/macro realistic/utopian self/other — a silken thread in the wind clusters of images pulled over the eyes the better to see the social poetic played out in a progress from enlightenment to world war:

universalism materialism individualism liberalism paper equality — bourgeois values steeped in the quaint rationalistic myth of mortal perfectibility, the idea that positive change in relations between individual and collective can be made

by cultivating humanistic virtue
in individuals without substantial
reform of the means of production without destroying
the impetus of economic activity:
the profit motive or its foundation private
property or its necessary framework
the unconstrained market economy

## X

Until the war made it the spitting image of science fiction horror, science in the guise of Empirio-Criticism (another third way between so-called materialist metaphysics and righteous idealism, tough-minded positive-thinking and visionary aesthetic episodes in which the subtle body the oversoul the aether are equally plausible) seemed to discerning minds the perfect analogue to modern poetry:

material not defined by differences and limit but phenomenal — a supposed external projected out from subjective figures gathered in an act of imagination a network of unified formal relations abstracted from and shaped by experience through that most mysterious of discourses the analytic method: a mythic technique of the image to transform metaphor into metonymy, metamorphosis the literalization of a metaphor to erase distinctions between fiction and theory—

psychology the new metaphysics: objects less substantial than history things mental symbols for groups of sensations the old science of objective description more *conceiving* than *perceiving* sharing with dreams poetry jokes and taboo the mechanisms of condensation displacement idealization projection introjection the omnipotence of thoughts — committed to employing methods and materials of magic to sustain the lie of their being the truth

## XI

Justice is less the trying in principle to maximize happiness in general than individual rights fair procedures equitable distributions that manifest in mutual respect for others as persons

#### XII

Socialist Liberal National Socialist to compensate themselves for being short-changed by mortal existence conjure up ideals the old trick of using one's head to escape into another mode-level-planeorder-history concrete to abstract

as if revolutionary change could occur before the isolate individual resisting all collectivism refuses the logistic premises of the state and freely expresses the emptiness of abstract forms of language

# XIII

The ultimate cognizance of the species is the cognizance of death.

## XIV

Looking back from the mirror the image of a quarrel between those content to place things in contexts and those who want to reveal essences confusing a need for self-definition
— private identity — with a need for public liberation which as soon as it gets loose from some particular bind (chattel- or wage-slavery gender-race-class discrimination mindless bureaucracy) confuses the aim of historical interest with a belief an idea a desire that there is something called *humanity* or *human nature* in need of emancipation

yet how by this late date can we not know that every form of social life is likely in time to freeze over into something the more imaginative and restless spirits will see as repressive or distorting, when what is wrong with those life forms is not that they're fundamentally bad but that they're used to justify the systematic administration of pain and humiliation.

#### XV

The key values of leisured liberalism hedonic, a free product of personal growth of autonomous subjects the personal pleasures of private individuals the poetic pleasures of imagination creativity originality *society* the missing term in the balance

# XVI

To get out of the double bind enclosure of binary oppositions evoked by the genius of the negative without recourse to caricatures of the dialectic as the synthesis of a thesis and antithesis

making one of two by making two one confusing exegesis with critique refuting

with a not-the-other-but-both strategy the hierarchical thinking that separates form and content, base and superstructure

inducing productive coordination between contingency and theory subject and object chance encounter and intellectual project keeping the tensions between self and text engaging both at once and together

in a society like ours — ruthless corrosive dissolution of traditional relations the greatest aesthetic productions cries of pain of isolated individuals — the critic's task is the teaching of history

#### XVII

It is our job to brood over man's dismal bondage to the magic of social relations as rooted in property and thus to mention the topic in a hit-and-miss sort of way whenever the subject offers such an inkling.

A vision social political pragmatic and moral seen through the mask of comedy — communication ground level love (though warlike words may lead to war people in conversation with one another

are not so to speak at each other's throats: peace too after all is a kind of love). A master of verbal revels rejoycing in strategic ambiguities that encapsulate truth the power of words

to have themselves realized by verbal animals who in uttering them contribute to their perfection the actualization of their ideal abstract abstruse meanings and kindred implications (*a non-symbolic* 

body a necessary hypothesis of all symbol-systems things defined in terms of what they are not) in a metaphysics of foolishness and failure — a horizontal democratic political desire

to explode the myth of disinterest the hope that traditional liberal values can make us free in a society where identity motives action and power are *images of private property* 

where money not only talks it decides what shall be said who shall say it when where and what kind of people shall be targeted to get the message, where *order as such makes for a tangle of motives* 

(the gleam of mystery and corresponding feelings of guilt when beings of different status are in communication, the grail of symbolic purification ingrained in symbolic action culminating in victimage wonder catharsis

the complete perfection of *Thou shalt not* that infuses even the most visible and tangible things with the spirit of the image through which they're perceived), where *order* is impossible without hierarchy

(the only organizational order we have ever known) which so spontaneously weaves that tangle into the social fabric that in a free society the best approach to *the hierarchical psychosis* may be

- to recognize and accept that it is inevitable in a social order
- to aim at a contemplation and sufferance of kinds of observation that *make the building* of hierarchical magic most difficult
- to, through perspectives of incongruity remarking in episode after epode history inevitably bungling imaginative possibility, transcend oneself by noting one's own foibles

## XVIII

As long as we long for a lost synthesis master narrative complete views we will be unable to imagine how to shape institutions which can override greed self-interest and cruelty.

## XIX

A spontaneous process triggered by random fluctuations amplified by positive feedback where some form of overall order arises from local interaction between parts of an initially disordered system

Patterns of cellular automata distributed wholly decentralized disaggregated throughout the system islands of predictability in a sea of unpredictability

## XX

Aesthetics and ethics are one.
Philosophy is a battle against the bewitchment of our intelligence by means of language.
Tell them I've had a wonderful life.

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for things they didn't know

Best of seasons said Cormac is a mist and I have been a bird a bee a butterfly a fish in the sea unanswering wishes put to me

And I have been a hare in winter a grain of corn in the summer field a stag a vole a flame on the hearth a string of the harp a babe in arms

And I have been a dandelion seed a drop of rain in the wind a word in a book in a mouth in a seashell ear a spurt in the womb a hedgerow

A wasp in a catechism of countries building paper lanterns of spittle a wandering Suibne lips peppered with cruciform watercress petals

Bird beast flower rock and dreamt the moon churning the tide a hope in the tomb a thorn in the side a jewel in the lotus a cat in heat where the desert fathers wait

the last light tingeing the air under clouds saffron with dusk-rose petals

where the desert fathers wait

an aquamarine opening in the overcast encircling a bone-white moon

where the desert fathers wait

the first light red gold a vibrant vermilion suffusing the western range

where the desert fathers wait

Timing is all and life to the living. Girls round the pole and boys through flame attending the mystery.

Unmindful now of courts where oaths are muttered and loves played by the number minus both net and ball

On nodding hill Seilenos naps syrinx mislaid on the grassy knoll no monarchs but butterflies seeking his wisdom

While there beneath on the wayward green quislings and poundlings bodies electric trip the light fantastic to the odd

Measure rude mechanics employ to sell the latest thump and wiggle contrived from melodies unheard. One does not stepping along the bright snowline skirting the lower reach of the evergreens confuse fragrances of basil and mint for these are wholly distinct in the mind bent on materializing the air before and light behind perseverent eyes

One does not looking back on the disappearing path below the moraine conflate the blue-green juniper buckwheat artemisia nor the incenses of their sacrifice nor the complementary blues of sky ice mist

Smoke thick in the valley dispersing in this thin air clear notes of sparrow sharp cry of falcon prints of fox hare mouse snowcat still fresh in crystalline ephemera as close it may be as we get to paradise

And here becomingly poised on a rude outcropping beneath Sunbear Mountain and Lion Mountain among fir larch pine she who blesses, her thousand arms and eyes imparting pungent flaming dragon consciousness radiating peace At the dead comedian's grave remembering him in the city of light

blind as a bat without his specs propounding blasphemies left and right

his head it was said holding several encyclopedias the better

to busy professors a hundred years hence wiping their glosses with what you know

supine after he'd been invested with laurel and cup (thanks again

to all that offstage action by the usual gadfly)

for his day in the life of an irish jewish odyssean everygnoman

flat on his back drunk as a skunk kicking at the chandelier.

Maybe it was Aristophanes they had in mind without the scholasticized croaking of transatlantic puns

for these spaced evenly as votive doves around a vessel though amphibolous are mute, concrete, larger than life

no water at all except when it rains and then not enough to transfigure the green paint peeling off the sides and bottom.

But still it's not clear exactly who the joke is supposed to be on when no fauns appear to sing against in the half-light

no crystals show up on the floor of the pool to bring into focus the lover's submarine view of the world inside the closed garden.

Yet it's the thought that counts. Sometimes a frog is just a frog and it's hard at this late date not to picture him stopping here

after negotiating the steep *salita* from Sant' Ambrogio on his loose-limbed way to the conjugal flat downtown.

## Coda: After the thermal devices

After the thermal devices a cold war of nerves some and some of the youngest brightest *etcetera* tried to be cool with and some didn't come back from

grad school dropouts hipsters country boys GIs pacifists

each to his own self taking
what he could hear in his master's voice
high pitch or low falsetto

or basso profondo sharp as an accidental inhalation or flat as a city street

familiar spirits airs apparent immediate in the word made world made *templum* 

the first generation in ages
without benefit
of classical education

the lonely crowd between their ears listening to itself reiterate itself

all means of making a living the academic most obviously means to political suicide

> distasteful in the extreme to a fledgling consciousness wanting to consider itself

free from, of, to in the sense that America promised we the people freedom

speech movement thought conscience more than mere opportunity

# to be a dead president

in somebody else's pocket changing hands in a bloody market owned by a vicious bankers' trust

where interest lies in *status quo* pursuit of treadmill happiness on an easy installment plan

romantics all inclined to believe that poetry is about loss suspecting that reason is *contra natura* 

that vision intuition *poesis*exceeds mere rationality,
that something like intelligence

or Shelley's *unchangeable forms of human nature* remembered
through metaphoric and metamorphic

rearrangements in the mind of the people our everlasting repository is carried by saws sayings gnomes

> and old wives' tales into action, that politics is linguistic a branch of ethics and an art

subject to aesthetic custom government by the fittest *viz* those qualified to have an opinion

a dispensation of social groups to achieve the greatest degree of individual happiness

> gladly confessing when challenged a soft spot for Paterian tastes in passionate intensity

> > *intensity* Yellow Book code for a spiritual dimension

## a tensile enthusiasm

all arts aspiring to music even though it come to be caterwaul and cacophony

> the individual the measure of all things an epicurean sensitivity to presence

present at the focus where the greatest number of vital forces unite in their purest energy

war-torn in the womb, eyeball to eyeball *mano a mano* twitter of ghosts in the narrow cell

unabashedly isolated in the midst of urbanity fiercely individual

subjects subjecting their own will to measures disciplinary as men of the better kind are said to do

while hoping to escape the utter selfconsciousness the solipsism at the end of his *Renaissance* 

> by participation in the new order of things bequeathed by remote laws of inheritance vibrations

of long past acts informing the general consciousness said to unite past and present individuals

to make the non sequiturs make sense by fiat leaps of faith dint of personality

instant by instant: each line each image a new coupling

## each to each *instanter*

dead air from painted caves a whiff of gull-pecked cod left too long in the sun

Dionysian transport Emersonian soul-light imagination all but worshiped

> believing like Childe Harold before he knew better that it may be the last and only place of refuge

freedom in an existential sense love under the circumstances allowing opacity to others

descent as immersion in the lost voice a *felix culpa* investing return with airs of triumphal ascendance

polymorphous word play mind games stage directions ludicrous perversity

from do your own thing expressiveness to Kitchen Sink School pastiche pinning up what comes out in the wash

looking for a way out from between unannounced instant extinction and being nickel & dimed to death

> a poetry of key changes inspired improv performances mystery words blown free

more emotional than discursive the argument less legible than oral less logical than tonal

art a crutch to be thrown away when at the top of the winding stair

# built with alphabet blocks

true consciousness is truly reached—
epiphany theophany
satori peak experience

or what you will the sublime non-discursive primordial state amniotic suspension

satisfaction fulfillment at-one-ment unity of the self-consciousness in question

> bundled in its touchy-feely manner with a sense of accomplishment achievement mastery

an egoless egotism ordinarily considered to be a contradiction in terms

self-expression less a goal than a be all and end all foregone conclusion

> beatification of atomistic individuality one self & one's cat

family friends community last resort & refuge shooting up under the radar

the whole mental gamut — ideal symbolic formal real intellect reason dreams

emotion memory feeling archetypes tokens presences evaluation exchange deposit —

as a way to escape and shape domination of mass public

# impersonality

a chaos troping through history but for that capacity the Greeks called poetic

to imagine define form
intuitions concepts reasons
liquid glass within the flame

language not an arrangement of abstract ideals but a parent to culture voice establishing relations

out of a mouthful of air sd Yeats divinity ex nihilo ex voto ex machina

> Man most real in speech not deeds sd Dr Williams imagination the tool to achieve reality

intuitive syntheses the mouse hole at the bottom of death through which we escape

things secure in their own perfections intensifying our perception of what it means to be alive

so little depending after all
upon the load of horse feathers
piled on a lawn ornament

beside plaster barnyard fowl glazed over with good intentions on the road from the civic hospital

the town where how anyone lived a pun of nostalgia on syntax in hopes of getting something for nothing

a consciousness say from *kitsch*dance music from fiddlesticks

a timeless here and now

energies or moral forces inherent in acts of perception a new world always new

a poetry of forgetting, the mind released from the old subserviences to history: no recurrence

> no prior experience reverted to or recuperated a poetry of revelation

centripetal illumination without memory rhyme or geometry that jettisons restraints

on rhythmical balance insists on unpredictability pulverizes imagery

> abandons verse itself that angelic ceremonial of beginnings and endings the ground of wisdom

the entire justice of prosody the signs and spells that allow the mind to forget the blank of unknowing

a poetry classroom taste was manufactured for by post-war university networks

teachability the main poetic excellence — *Nothing too subtle, Paradox,* 

*Irony* — concrete image tone and texture *sans* context explicated on one side

of uniform-size white paper with wide margins but white space

## otherwise at a premium

the mystery thus to be found at the top rung of the one-way ladder the spiritual uplift

available to the better student who reading the limits of verbal cognition comes to grips with metaphor

solitary communions with absence form with no content the absurdity of which

romanticism gone to pot readily apparent to some who rejected idealism

dismissed utopian solutions though well aware that their notion of self their sense of a private I

was outdated in the real world of hydrogen and neutron bombs where language itself is bridle and whip

> for a system whose massive institutions pervasive mass media mass of collective identities

eliminate the private domain so make the individual who speaks at all complicit

with the existing oppressive structure leaving the erstwhile poet to choke in a surplus of verbal capital

> disillusioned liberals torn between resistance and reaction transfixed by pluralism

> > splitting the cultural from the social blaming the first for the ills of the second

# confounding cause and effect

so what since they resigned from it they call *adversarial culture* can be denounced in the marketplace

with some credibility
reaction and liberalism teamed up
in defense of the *status quo* 

so the political economics their sector enjoys can with as much right be affirmed a freedom

in the fact that nothing works or totally works so anything goes even the atrocities —

of which was born an articulate cadre
of self-styled revolutionaries
convinced the mother tongue is disposed

by hegemony to keep the public dumbed down with blood and money a dead end running on schedule

so think it their poetic duty to radically obfuscate poetry in order to save it

declare it political as if

problematizing reference
absolved them from institutionalized

social meaning as if deforming meta- and para-linguistic codes let them reach the unthought

as if multiplicity of meaning allowed by precise opacity could come to be taken for granted

and so be of less interest

# than how to treat the poetic text as a force field that includes diverse

discourses or conversations free to comment on themselves each other or on pertinent

political and social events not just to contest the aggressive linear overcertainties

> of naive language but to confront the processes that deliver multiple meanings of every meaning

in order to slow possibilities for sense to be constructed to produce impossibility

as if preprogramming culture would let them formulate the previously unthinkable

> ecstasies of the ear sold short for the eye's distinct silences various oedipal feet

> double time half time running open field in place to call on Grandpa in his cell

notwithstanding letters on white sheets bound in cover stock

reflective alienation ironic symbolization deliberate incoherence

apocalyptic special neoscholastic pleading for personal significance

looking for unity

among equals talking to each other

if

even

that

£

Trying for peace in our own time peace that comes from communication peace would be nice, yes?

that the belligerent god
find himself once and for all
spent in the arms of the goddess

together please with some understanding of what to be human is, the ignorant inclination towards slaughter of innocents it finally is

rounding up to the nearest zero the inconvenient facts of life, confining the numberless things occupying the mind — yours, mine, the gods' —

attempting by a clean sweep of the premises to get to the bottom of things as if a blank slate were better than any conceivable state of affairs, were purity

beyond the finest not to say finite mindfulness of nature human as it were being what it is what it will be

etcetera

were piety beyond the sense of sanctity immediately preceding the entrance of airy nothings (daemonic, to be sure, earth still clinging)

onto the stage of divinity: presences with personalities and names (some my newt some of indeterminate immensity) the luminous spot coming up as the numinous fades into the soundtrack some semblance of ultimate disorder caught in the act of composition

etcetera

as if intellect plus sensitivity
to *verba* were a sign of moral superiority
empty pockets sure proof of fiscal genius

as if being possessed of artist's eye ear touch a scholar's nose a master's birch-sharp tongue would make even one warmonger pay attention

as if intuition resolve and grace would in fact align conception intention feelings thoughts and action with the fortunate nature of the universe

as if being self-reflective not to say
inverted consciousness watching itself disappear
were to go out of this world not to say of mind
etcetera

but trying in any case

despite the legal ramifications
the scales of blind justice tilted
by the weight of coin in the realm

the degeneracy of the fiction slipped into court records that corporations have human rights

the presumption that moneychangers are by right the natural judge jury and jailer of everyone else

the outrageous system by which it's more profitable to make guns than useful machinery or grow grain

the ultimately disgraceful misconception that the state

## should borrow instead of lend

the pernicious rumor that humans alone among higher animals are congenitally to blame

though nothing is new under the sun trying in the ugly space between knowing better yet being deaf

to the whole implosive shebang to follow the good brother's prescription for Eastern medicine

> Sinceritas Caritas Humanitas Hilaritas

directio voluntatis

somehow still believing sweetness and light go together the intelligible light ecstatic

knowledge knowledge in love honoring debts to ancestors (remembering those to be remembered

sharing what of worth might be shared (what one's own eyes have seen (what one's own ears have heard

broken lines like pottery shards rejoined Chinese laundry tickets two halves of the same tally

a mind like that cobbling together from the matter before us (decomposing

matter that is, needlework unraveling, a ring of shells

among the bones the fabric gone only her forms remaining

a field of ample interest a cast of sufficient amplitude

an age-old vocabulary to think in here now

things of moment seen in light of immediate history

but time always this time myself always a question to myself

religion love essence expression always first person present

freedom without freedom from debt not freedom but tyranny

the natural object the adequate subject that government should loan not borrow

form seducing light from darkness (quia impossibile est