

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 asceticism  
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*