

Modernity a different animal
from *modernism* a quarter century after
Rimbaud in support of the Communards said

Il faut être absolument 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.*