

# PreFace

*Dear Sir I have known you a million books.*

An I acts out in turns  
each refraction of a Self:

moving temples.

in the psychic garden, three maidens:  
Ardent, Inquisitive, and Impassive—  
I listened as each spoke to me in turns,  
but then they mingled verses and no one  
said what they were supposed to say

nor when

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and this effusion became quite perplexing,  
as if in a bar or a crowd of people,  
so I picked up Virginia Woolf

but she too said all sorts of things  
things I could not believe like:

*Shall I harangue,  
You Sloth.*

and finally, the motion going  
onward, I picked up a notebook  
so all voices would yield

stop  
directly before the pen moves

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there was one.

*we ate nutmeg*

or people watching their own performance

and like all accounts is partial lie.

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AVGVSTVS MMII behind the  
*prosopon* the faces of

*personae,*

the schema skips sequence according to fragment, to  
instances and then accumulates

without every number as a touchstone—for some  
there can be no apology.

1

Charlemagne hold fast your spurs  
ceaseless wind horse writhing.  
you, in shingled hut, wrapped in earth,  
say for us that prayer or  
dare it not cross your lips:  
mold us not into fear;  
lead us not into the weary Old Jerusalem.

moonshine riddles. my bed  
in dark dust when I learned that  
man is no god even in credence.  
He believes often

a fire.

cold in a mild winter—  
signs of progressive heart disease much less.

to think we built roads by which to call ourselves barbarians,  
as if we could implode.

And so a blessing:

*Dante, I do not like the smell of shit.*

*the word asshole.*

*and yet for your glittering celestial rose, beatific but*

One indivisible union—

in domestic sign, Aristotle and I go our ways.

the drumming head cleft.

We have our signature inks  
but now the bone.

First sobriety: damning guise.  
 the bone in my left thigh  
 altered swings freely.  
 a proverbial might say *wine will make*  
*you think what you ought not think.*  
 spiraling hues through vatic elixirs —  
 I mean to say the spiritual swoon, though  
 liquid, not invariably  
 liquid—word turns solid air.

at the marriage

ceremony, groom slaughtered  
 pig. belly meat & feast to follow. the men as thick  
 into blood a tar concoction  
 boiled by earlier Americans: though not alcohol, still  
 proven hallucinogenic.

if Darwin had lived longer perhaps  
 the evolutionary process would have stopped  
 or, conceivably, in some leather notebook  
 is scribbled *manipulate the monkeys Amen.*

Swilling shots of schnapps reminiscent  
 of the old apartment. moldings laced with  
 brown cobwebs where in summer  
 heat stripped the tawny wallpaper. heat  
 the weight of 13, 428 cockroaches seen  
 in the kitchen alone.

*Let me tell you of the Spirit*  
*Charming.*

Shall I croon badly to you;  
 would I be a raucous fellow?

3

Dear Friend— I am mutely sitting and thinking of you yet  
still I have not sent my last letter, or the  
one before and a postcard. We have a new  
plant named Yeller Mule

*Get up, Mule.*

From the interstate our house indistinguishable among  
the rooftops. Little soil, here I have learned  
something about spaces *now you are gone.*  
Paris is not far from me. Graciously.