

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

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.

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 spindrif
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

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.*

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

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.