



PAUL ROTH
AFTER THE GRAPE
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AFTER THE GRAPES

BY

PAUL ROTH

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BLANKET

there will be the old cactus blanket
touching steel
touching clouds winding the excommunicated lettuce leaf
toward salts and unseen poultry

the steel the sea's shadow swallowing the red fish
churning
the leavened bullet

the evicted calf
of the hibachi copse leaves the bass corpuscle's tract

what is important to remember

is

the language of the earth's clean raddish
the sound of the turtle's mint pond
the pounding of the snail's swand through nets
the bleeding pulse of the empty almond pond
the strabismus of the seized key
cackling in the zebra black and white marriage
from the timid rainbow of stars

THE INNOCENT

Where cold grain smiles in the stone's ear

When the innocent roam there
are tigers rolling there are palms
coughing in the sunset

Damp blood hovers over the eye
these wrinkled beads of fleash

As tomorrow rises before them
I touch the wind's scarf
grazing in the silent river

A SPRING DAY CLOSES

A spring day closes lingering
where there is water
lingering
as smooth grey spiders spill dreams

Slim apple ash womb wt with spring
whispers the stone the secret

Torn snakes warn dawn's dream

Soft hands touch a bee's paw
seeds lie once the shaved leaf
portrays the rain

The limping moon the corners lense
weeps of lettuce
The tandem stars cart ice cubs
through raw sand

Branches boatless rowing wing
Flat dark hand on soldered womb smears

Stones of orioles

All destiny throbs on cold windows

DANDELION

Was it parting the sand's crow
where
being a place of time
the shadow seething by the
stroked mink ashpond of eyes

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Gentle snakes corpses
rusted innocence
torn limp thumbs
groan the feather of pearls
grown passages

Cabbage gutters clutching
taffeta woven stumps
tarnished the rope's ear

We had lifted the last nail
off the closts of each leaf
through the oak eye of
coughing stones

THE FOOTSTEP

If the shoelace in the river if
ash on the wing if killing meat
twice was the answer than yesterday
running from laughter
I would come of age as silence

Their rain has rusted
the blind piano tuner has hope

The damp flint of the cold worm rising
I spoke to deep branches trickling by
shadowless walls

There are many staying after the last shadow

VIOLIN SAND DUNES HARBOR BLUE EYES

Violin sand dunes harbor blue eyes
eyes
licking sap off olive quenched
growing thorns
from bagged mud

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Writing mathematics in highway brushcuts
singing the wedding next door
of dry pollution
breathing lefelessly

I touch soft earth beneath river stones

I see only hormone tusks
leaping pools
the sand climber's spade
blind siamese church going onion feeders

CLAY MUSEUM

Dancing basements wax pleasure papre eyes
old damp muffins hiss raisins chirping
talmud era waves spectacles baseballs
is it
shoelace petals trample dreams

Cardboard sunglass chimes clip noon bells
leave concrete chewing gum rubber

Asphalt gloves no fingers beef spiders glow

Breathe everywhere with every air is silence

We float muse stockings curled clay
oranges temples holy hats tigers really puffing
wine cellar worship oil black cards

Two eyes for all eyes

White walls red walls training crab tree clay
streams cars through and out of clay
porcelain sunshine after and after only black suns

THE TELLING OF MALENCHA

Arriving he his sheets and goats fed
to the wood spleen of the mast
we could find but the dusted milk
and cardboard bones

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Today I will not form the vacant holes
We have only to learn to lose
They who without time dispute the hours

What everyone was shouting
something
that once marbles were promises

What everyone was shouting
here take it this is yours
he has not given you it

THE BRIGHT RUIN

I t was all there

The tired stone reclining
the smile holding the found torture
of an oat

Fried hands stuck in the laughter of dry thunder

After a while only the secret confusion
of the wandering dark streching through
pealed bone

Today is as if tomorrow
others are everyday

Reeds sucking barren nectar
courted the shadow's foil

A JOURNEY TO THE NORTH

I have been alive behind the dawn
before the dark's slow pitch of the lizard
heard within the deaf bells of the jasmine
folded by the black sheets of fences

When all of us had decided there was nothing
the shadows walked the blonde pollen
the grapes carved rivers in the bones
the ash chanted footsteps in the urchin stones
the hoods and stumps of brown miles paused
silence roamed across every hand that sighed

the child slept by the bullfighter's door
falling through black ice leaving shepherds
with white forests hushed by tears

THE GRAND MEETING

When we were all very young,
we drowned the rain
that dug graves by the wasps.

And now that they are all unable to see,
the festering wells are clinging, murmuring,
to the dry spruce water of shooting seeds,

They know that what they are is really what I am,
and are proud to be my being.

After the grapes bubbled in the lemon shadows,
and only, and always my fingers tasting all fields,
the fresh wheat poured across the husking moon.

Soon the grand plumber of the swollen ocean,
sorting the mackerel and the shark,
will bury the earth and gently rub the seed
with his thundering polish of fleece.

THE WEAVER

Only a part of the wind had dried

Before the ravine crowded
the gnarled prune carriage
veins and mouths
the massage of flesh
strapped bone chipped eyeballs
wet blind teeth

OYSTER

The 'very first stairway
the black clock crouching
with silver coughs

Old shadows camped by the tread
lower fire into the kissed fig
we carted olives and drawers

What is the beginning of beginning

Tobacco banana skins and cactus
hair masts of the wind
oil worms

THE DEATH OF A MOURNER

What are these
What are these

10

What are these
edging the light with their sigh
I keep closing it it never opens

We are staying but going
is not an end all of the
time we are forever
all of the time we are

Can I can you
since the innocent honor of
the baby's midnight churns
the bride of the
hollow locust
rolls over the breasts of naked ash

Things don't belong here the
time I became the eye's fish
roaming the same foreheads

All the tressels that spoke to the
wide wind

ON THE LAND

If I may give to him the uncut grass
the calm smoothing of the dragon loose stones
with the heels of their wine
buttering the bored statues
scalding the shadows that play on the fingerprints
of the dark

Up on the top of the cage the scorched perch
has fallen by the time that I have
down in to the traffic
of the eggs the dry leaves and onions

All of the palms are laughing in the hair of the locust

PUT ME

The specious mirror of ebony breasts
trace the ovoid line of the braille
pronged

By and forever

Diving by the cold and light
bare stone swarms

Lymph from the void pit of all fog
Needles
that line the howling oar
all darkness that has surfaced bleeding
suspends
the hollow the rigid lips

What we had to tough the poisoned infant
Dust has been stroking the fevered basin

Iron wheels chant in the bruise
battle the wood's faint gaily of idle sap

The philtre of the worm knitted sore
clothed
in the bare plunging of bells

The idol's worn tooth glazed in the rupture of jackles
Put me
I as I

CACTUS

12

In the beginning you were a slow clock
whispering
in the last hour pushing through
the stars crusted with sheep's teeth and
sticks

I am no man

Groaning dark hands knelt weeping
to stone ashed in the oriole's
spoken breath after him I will never
call them men

The dark morning's pulse bled inside
the black bones the wandering skin
there is water there is stone
there is laughter there is
there is

Of all of us only the dry fingers
of the cold chaff could be felt and the
wing the indellible savior
could be shown to the chosen blood
of the night

We sat without time
holding us in
afraid of falling
in

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