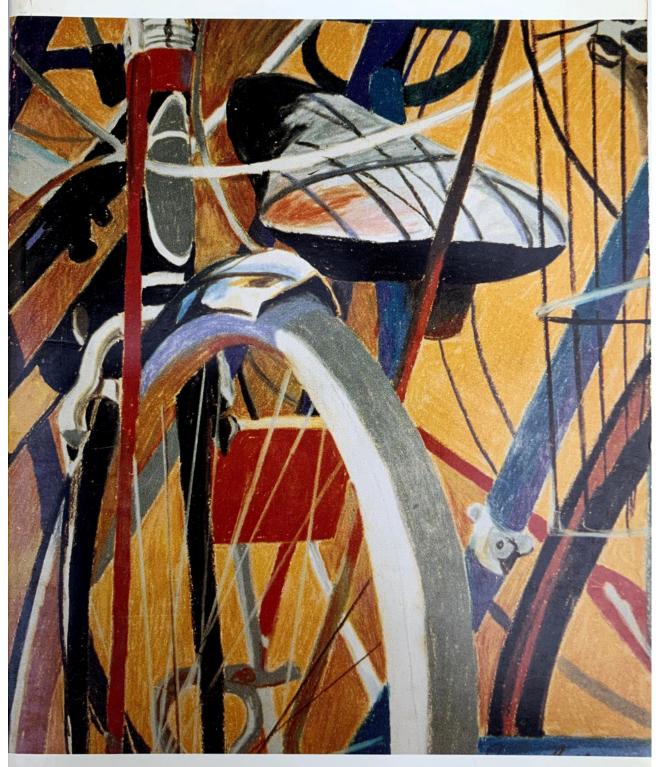
The LITERARY REVIEW Vol. 38 No. 3 • \$5.00





PUBLISHED BY FAIRLEIGH DICKINSON UNIVERSITY

Pythia: the prophetess of Apollo at Delphi

for Eduardo

. . . Who, what man or god, could or ever will be able to tell me what is my life and what is my death, and what isn't? . . . — Juan Ramón Jiménez I

1

Light rises in waves whimpering

in the Name's hushed immensity alone and mortal the Word wanders pierced

the accomplice old mother gropes priestess intercedes

pleads

Ah, night-dweller called up like a pool of pure fear

with your ancient widow's eyes your hunger love-weakened riveted splitting yourself open

and night its every branch quivering kneels at the edge of the abyss covers me frozen like a tear

and we fall down the same slope together accomplices

3

Unlock me with your spittle push to my helpless my inmost self

receive me like a handful of dirt

I the way

Words

short damp

skim the surface like a snake

and the voice knows it doesn't know

5

Avalanche of leaves and its dried crimson complaint

the river bends to its thirst

time moves faster than I do

night rips away
I touch its water-nakedness
and from inside the scream she screams

I burst in orphan I entered the place

where are the words? why won't they testify? why won't they help me?

7

suddenly light in the frenzy of Hades

and still the water like a hairshirt eroding violent

and my voice isn't enough

II

8

the white walls crack

your screams a yellow spiral knot

at the edge

9

In a dream dropping through its own mud the stone falls to its depths

the pounding voice deaf tumbles in an empty sky

and they sowed the land with salt they plowed it with salt and the scribe sealed the words

to purify the stone quarry faith in its labyrinth in its laceration

And she in her longing face to the ground

11

and deep in herself alone incubating

she shudders contracts like a mollusk pale

in the depths of her core lurking

Absolute darkness swelling

in the liquid abyss the fountain gives birth to itself

overflowing straining to hear

the anchor

13

and you and you you

She floats in the earth's belly like a suicide

III

14

Touch me from inside yourself with this overflowing restraint

touch me in the darkness of thought

where I am unknowable my incomprehensible otherness

ah if only you could brand me

if you'd stay there if only you'd stay

like a blind bitch suckled

stay give me the words 15

I ought to rip you out I ought to crush you

you delicate you trembling

restore me to myself so the earth can be gentler with me

I can't go on I've gone dry

where?

what?

sketches for the joy of oblivion illegible tracings

dark dark roses sprouting in memory barely a line on the landscape of thought

it might be a song — or a sob?

17

the scent of ancient rain blooming between the stones

the eternal longing for other things unknown

the rain fades turns yellow like the echo of a reed flute

and this nostalgia that barely touches the flesh but mortifies the soul

the moon's steady pulse slows

can you still hear me?

19

Consciousness stings this dark obedient body like a medusa sea-swimming these words

poor thing defenseless sleepwalking in the end sea-weed covered

or was I the one who lost myself?

Immoderate beggar empty-handed hostess

barren mother

the light dims insidious as a gadfly

I'm not permitted to understand

21

So many years to arrive at this morning the same as any other

to come to this day just like any other

and to receive it like an offering

in what part of me are you crying?

warm inevitable dream like an open lap

like a mother's memory

23

ridges of pale fog in this spring equinox

lonelier than I ever imagined older than I ever imagined

damp ideograms between the anemones and the hyacinths

scattered words that will rise from my ashes one day

IV

24

I am still inside the light but you are the one who must tell me you the empty word

you who watch over the word

Overflowing light where dream-rivers merge inundate the heart

Light absolved in the swelling instant

Only light nothing else loosened smallest at its source

Fractured light harsh held in its scream quivering in my hands 25

and I said your name and the place was made of air

and the word captured

in the waste of faith

and the word doe
in the fullness of silence
plummets
tractable in its infinite contradiction
in its mercy

and the heart closes and the heart opens astonished

Stillest light almost dust

is it you who dwells in the name? you who comes rushing in?

Pythia weighing on consciousness

stammering
I hover circle like a falcon

light harvested in its astonishment

27

ebb and flow of vestal years

here inside the light spills over and the word crosses the threshold

and I filled my mouth with earth to silence the words