

XI

Quarantine Notebook

WEEK 11 • 7TH June 2020

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ENOUGH

(After Michael Grant after Albert Caeiro)

Precisely here in what is written
 whatever the pick & mix
 of fade or frill unforced retro
 through totting & skipping
 say I said in what event context
 found or not found
 in play as process
 to not talk about it is to not acknowledge it
 whatever the words
 as a gust of wind
 are saying is less
 than the fact
 of wind's being here
 play being the thing
 to catch consciences
 among dumpster clutter
 cost counted
 evaluated
 it is enough to be in what is written
 stone silent in absence
 of feeling feeling
 being here
 before gone.

DISCONTINUOUS POEMS

The terrible reality of things
 Is something I discover every day.
 Each thing is what it is.
 But how am I to make it clear
 That I take joy in this, and that it is enough?

To be complete, it is enough to be.

I have written some few poems,
 And may write many more, of course.
 But every poem of mine makes clear,
 Though all of them are different,
 That each thing in existence proclaims the fact of its own being.

Sometimes I look closely at a stone.
 I don't concern myself with whether it has feeling,
 Nor do I embrace it as a sister.

I enjoy it because it is a stone,
 I enjoy it because it has no feeling,
 And I enjoy it because it's not related to me.

And sometimes when I hear a gust of wind blow by,
 I find the mere sound of it makes the very fact of having been born
 worthwhile.

I have no idea how those who read my writing will assess it.
 But I think well of it because I think it without effort,
 With no idea of having others overhear me,
 And because I take no thought for what I think
 What I say is said in what my words are saying.

I was once described as a materialist poet.
Not expecting any name at all, I took pride in it.
Even so, I'm not a poet: I just see.
If what I write has value, it is not that I have value.
It is there in what is written.
It has no bearing whatsoever on any will of mine.

RICARDO REIS, TRANS. MICHAEL GRANT

CROWN ME WITH ROSES

Crown me with roses,
I really mean it, crown me
With roses —
Roses which are burning,
Burning on my burning forehead,
 Yet soon put out!
Crown me with roses,
And with dying leaves —
 That should do it!

POISON*

WINE knows how to cloak the most sordid hut
With luxury of the fantastic,
And inflate a magic entrance
With an air of red and gold,
Like a setting sun in a blurring sky.

OPIUM magnifies a world without borders,
Stretching out
To deepen Time, folding the sensual
Dark vaults of pleasure
To their point of brimming over.

But all is as nothing to the poison which unravels
From your eyes, from your green eyes,
To form a lake in which I tremble to see a vision of myself...
My dreams arrive *en masse*
To slake their thirst in those salted depths.

But all is as nothing to the taste of your saliva,
A bitter medicine
Which mercilessly plunges my soul in forgetfulness
Teetering with vertigo
On the bank of Death's abyss.

FACT IS

ground small
between the mill-wheels of the
fact is
no-one wishes on dead light
from the memory of stars
or traces prophesy
in hard rock comet tails.
Blake's angels' bright
bespangles
fallen
ground
small

the dark is very dark.

*An 1857 poem inspired again by Marie Daubrun, renowned for her green eyes.

