

## DEEDS DONE AND SUFFERED BY LIGHT

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One can glimpse Apollo in the door of each thing,  
as if each thing now contains his oven—  
in vision I open an olive tree and see his earlier animal  
shapes fleeing at the speed of light, the python,  
mouse, and lion Apollo, fleeing so that human forms  
may walk unharmed by the invasion of the supernatural.  
Light increased incredibly after the end of animal deity,  
at the point verticality was instituted,  
and the corpse of one's mother buried far, far from the place  
on which one slept one's head. But the supernatural  
in the guise of the natural is turning us over  
in its fog a half mile from this ledge. Burnished  
muscleless fist of a grey cloud. Sound of rain  
from water still falling from the olives. I have no desire  
to live in a world of nature conditioned by patriarchy.  
I kick off my head and live in the light  
bounding in from my mother. It is her great  
ambivalence toward her own navel that conditions  
the decreasing dripping. The hills now  
writhe with green meat and something should follow.  
Something should be explaining the tuft of salmon bull shape  
abandoned by the other stilled clouds. Something  
should be done with the swatted fly. Something is  
this abyss of unusableness that remainders me  
and pays no royalty. There are hosts of thrones  
directly above. A witch hammer. A cleated enclosure.  
The way a church has of making you puke your soul  
upon entering and then, as the dryness of birth is rehashed  
by nun and candle, of worshipping what has just left you,  
the bride of your chest, the stuff inside you that a moment before  
twinkled with the sadness and poverty of the street's  
malicious laughter. How I wish that this poem  
would birth another, and that the other had something to do  
with unpacking the olive meat of this mountain. No  
apocalypse. An enlargement, rather, of the so-called Whore  
on her severely underfed Dragon. And more wine. More plumes  
of silver azure evening coursing over  
the thatch of the mountainside. More space to suffer,  
more farewell to the flesh, more carnival in the face of everyman,  
less perfection, more coherence. Meaning: more imagination,  
more wigs for glowworms, more cribs for the restless dead

who wake us right before dawn with their bell leper  
reminding us that fresh rain air is a clear indication  
that here is not entirely here. The processions of graffiti-  
scarred bison are, like us, clouds imprisoned to be viewed.  
And then my mother began to speak: "You've put on a lot of  
weight!

Look at your father and me, some shape we're in! We've suffered  
a lot for you these 14 years. You should've seen my left side  
when it turned into a purple sponge and stained what  
you buried me in to the point it rotted. I'm glad  
John Ashbery appeared to you last night reading new  
incomprehensible poems that made perfectly good sense. You are  
much more organized, much more chaotic, than you behave here.  
When I think of you, I see you at 12, stuck in the laundry chute,  
your legs wiggling in the basement air, while the top part talked  
with me as we waited for the renter to pull you out.  
We had a nice chat that afternoon, and I almost liked you best  
that way, just what stuck out of the chute. If I could only have  
that part on a roller skate and let what was wiggling below go—  
it's that part that's gone off gallivanting,  
that's carried you goodness knows where while I  
and your father lie here a few feet away from each other  
waiting for our coffin lids to cave in. Then, even  
the little space you left us to play with memories of you  
on our chest bones will be gone. My buttons are mouldy  
and my hands have no flesh left but I still manage  
to squeak my buttons a little and get into your dreams.  
I'm sorry if I appear both dead and alive to you,  
but you should know by now you can't have it your way all the  
time.

I'm as real in this way as I ever was, sick more often than not  
when I appear, but you're never here, you're worrying  
how to take care of me, and then you wake to a jolt  
every time there's nothing to take care of.

Now your father wants to say a word." "Clayton,  
why don't you come home? We were such a nice little family.  
Now it is like when you went off to that university.  
Your mother and I would sit up and talk about you  
until our fathers came in from the night and motioned us  
into our bed. You were such a nice little fellow  
when we could hold you up high and look at each other  
through you. Ten little fingers ten little toes  
Two bright eyes a funny little nose  
A little bunch of sweetness that's mighty like a rose  
Your mother, through you, looked so much like  
your grandmother I could never get over it.

Why I bet you don't even remember your birth gifts  
a savings bank and one dollar from granddad and grandmother  
Two kimonas from aunt Georgia and uncle Bob  
Supporters from Faye's dollie Patricia Ann  
A Romper Suit from Mrs. Warren Bigler  
A Dress from Mr. & Mrs. SR Shambaugh  
Silk Booties & Anklets Knit Soaker & Safety Pins  
Hug-me-tight a Floating Soap Dish with Soap Rubber Doggie  
I don't see why you don't come home. Your mother and I  
have everything you need here. Why sure,  
let's see, maybe you could pick up some things,  
Gladys—no, she's not listening—*Gladys what do you want?*  
"Well, I know we need some scouring powder and light bulbs"  
"GLADYS WHAT DO YOU WANT?" "And Clayton, we want  
Clayton to come back we don't like Clayton Jr. out so late at night"  
"GLADYS WHAT DO YOU WANT?" "You never know what will  
happen, why  
just last week Eunice Wilson, over in Plot #52541, told me"  
"GLADYS WHAT DO YOU WANT?" "—are you listening, Daddy?  
Eunice said while Jack was getting out of his car parked in his own  
driveway at 2 AM"  
"GRADDISROTDUYRUNT!" "—after his date with Kay Fisbeck,  
this man  
came up to him and said something I will not"  
"GRADDISROTDURUNT" "—I will not repeat it was that  
vulgar—  
this man said: if you don't come with me, I'll crush your cows.  
Doesn't that take the cake? Why Clayton you can't blame Jack  
for going off with him, and you would not believe where  
this man took Jack Wilson and what he wanted him to do.  
Now that your father's lid has caved in, I'll tell you:  
he made him drive north to the Deaf School parking lot,  
and when he was sure nobody else was around, he said:

*Persephone's a doll  
steeper than Marilyn,  
miracles lick her,  
dreams invader,  
over the cobweb orchestra  
there's an ice  
conductor,  
forget the orchestra,  
conduct the pit!*

*Hanged*

*Ariadne*

*giving birth in Hades  
is the rich, black music in mother's tit."*