

THE INVISIBLE NATION

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A sample of four poems from the collection

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Above The Stream

The dark parting of a laurel,
A river contained within
Glides across the dusted green.
A rusted iron sword is staked into the ground
A bent disclaimer rising from solid rock
A song of rust, a sentence of air and metal
Revealed within the crumbling edifice
Of what once may have been a shelter
For the stream below
And a swift conveyance for feet above
Now it is a shoe
For the lowly grazing sun
Or an eye of rock with iron lashes
Frozen like sentries at the gate
To the city of lost elements
Standing bent at the end of the war of purpose
And lit like cigarettes
By a line of fading gold –
The sun's flower closing inside its soft ambrosia
Upon an eye of death which fades
Above the stream

The Quiet Porch

The quiet porch
In the hour of twilight
Held between the wall
And space

Inside, the fire
Outside, the prayer of grass
The spine of the fields
Rippling

In the Autumn breeze.
Above, the brilliant code
Of the incandescent void
Pulsing with dark winds

Richer and deeper
Than the mountain halls of earth
The code gathers in points
Of distant flaring braille

As the night enshrouds the porch
In the secret whisper
Of forever
Music hovers

Inside the whisper
Inside my hands
A cup of distant light
Praying upon the wind

Equaling Zero

Sebald rises above the earthen grave
A frost of flight conjures an Arabic dawn
Gentle mutations nestle in the snow
The glove of fantasy is entered by quiet hands
In the breath of early Autumn
Lost grandeur prays within the sleeves of books
In echo of alpine wonders fallen
A brush caresses canvas to know failed light
To be frozen in the message of soft oil;
The tragedian's quest, nostalgia's somnambulant rite,
A husk of pearl burning in a distant palm.
Oh Ash of life, wonder of cindered promise
Calculation of the heart's timber
Equaling zero Striding towards the infinite moment of loss
A quail of dark feathers floats in the air
Conjoined aspects give birth in the hinterland
Where shadows graze from a shell
The earth at dusk flares in a golden arc
Fantasy dims, pleasure burns
The eye of chaos sleeps
The universe is a cyclops, a frozen palace
Of past imaginings

Of spirits lighting the chambers and passageways,
Lighting the candelabras of Balthusian night
Which flicker in the gentle air
Red storms shimmer in the desert
A grade of light steps onto an immense plain
And spreads through the starlit bush
Internal sovereignty beckons the palms of life
Arcadia flows with unlimited dawns
Cradled, the night empties itself
Into a starless cup of burnished darkness,
A braid of the stallion's mane washed in splendid ether –
A mirror leans towards your voice
Which trails in silver swirls across the ground
I am divided between reflection and substance
Forming in continual interpolation
I am divided, and lost in the divide,
A snail of ethereal symbols
Crossing the plate of zero and infinity

The Eyes Of Heaven

With the breath of old Tmolis
The invisible nation steps
The landscape whispers in its stillness –
Its ears of dust
Listen to the ageless passing
Of furtive cars
Dreaming in metallic stealth
And gliding under
Distant eyes of silver

The imprisoned eyes of heaven
Control the shadows on the ground
As one eye opens
The other closes –
The tides swell
And the ice-floes break
The cars of soft robed bronze
Sigh into the void,
Their fumes of ecstatic mist
Cloud the cosmic watch
Enflaming the ancient iris of the golden sun

The ground is cold
And the sky blooms in a listless field
Archaic, old, stubborn, and lost:
The dish of the hidden stars,
The blue-berry space of freshness
Which invades the mind of emptiness
And curls upon me
Like a flower
Of hidden life

The nation steps
In the motion of old Tmolis
Bristling his mountain conifers;
The anonymous saint of presence
Who stirs the lulling wheat
Through Giacommetti's bodies
Advancing towards non-substance,
Towards the pastures
Where shadows graze
And small suns creep
Like newts of forgotten warmth

Inviolable, the nation grows
Like the plaster of negation
In the Parisian sculptor's hands:
As people of dust
With hands of granite,
Arms of highways
And legs of cratered iron
Their eyes are the sun and moon,
Their breath the Winter breeze –

They are the mortal shadows
Who step in frozen silence
Towards the infinite chain of loss
Buried in their skulls
And concealed in the violet line
Of the distant, flaring earth

They are pursuers of forgotten music
Who in death release their hold –
Like Sophocles who surrendered
To the dreams of thoughtless marigold

Life sways through the nation's pasture,
Each sway a softened lie,

A breath of self incrimination,
A trade of stolen sounds
Whispering from ear to ear

An old man, almost blind, the nation steps
A young woman, imprisoned, the nation steps
Concrete anthems and chants of protest, the nation steps
The slow pilgrimage of growing deserts, the nation steps
Through a feathered field of lies, the nation steps
Under the blazing sun and moon, the nation steps
Upon highways of endless loss, the nation steps
With legs of cratered iron, the nation steps

Into the pit of the fathomless void
Where shine the ships
Of the spiritual sun