

## Five Poems

Joe Fletcher

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# Satyr's Beard

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*Joe Fletcher*

The sanatorium to which  
I withdrew was no more  
successful in curing me  
than the previous ones,  
and many years passed  
before I slunk away again  
in search of the gods  
who correct our desires.

I returned to my native  
land and roamed, like  
a convict loosed after  
an eclipse, the high chalk  
downlands and scruffy  
meadows, upturning  
leaves of dog's mercury  
in an ash grove or rinsing  
at the murmuring fern-  
fringed rill running past  
an abandoned sheepfold.

There are in our existence  
spots of matter which  
nourish and visibly repair

our minds. I found this  
efficacious satyr, this white  
agaricon, pushing his beard,  
limned dingy yellow with age,  
from a mouldered gibbet  
from which my father,  
a murderer,  
had once dangled.

While I descanted frenzied  
threnodies and lamentations  
upon the memory of the dead,  
this tubercule penetrated  
the hiding places of my power  
and unperplexed me  
of barren intermeddling  
subtleties, making me  
the gentle visitant  
you now see.

# Trembling Merulius

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*Joe Fletcher*

One effect of contact  
with mystery is to in-  
crease the insignificance  
of the things people say,  
such as its name, which,  
when mentioned, en-  
sures that the utterer  
won't ever find it,  
like those apophatic  
tracts of Basilides  
known only by references  
to them in compendious  
heresiographies, or  
the seeds of the fruiting  
bodies included in a list  
of nonexistent things.

Yet something must  
tremble on the abyss  
in accordance with  
quivering moonlight  
to produce this  
effulgence glistering  
out of its lurking place

in white ash seams  
in a series of  
semicircular caps  
in contiguous rows,  
resembling bacon,  
lacking stalks,  
shelving gradually  
away.

# San Isidro

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*Joe Fletcher*

As for the inner book  
of unknown symbols  
carved in relief as  
against an ocean bed,  
no one could help me  
read it, for to read it  
was a creative act,  
torment the Vedas  
as I might to yield  
a passage that would  
show me the hidden  
path through the home-  
less voice of waters.

Though this world be  
the condensed emotional  
debris of the 36th Archon  
who recoiled in disgust  
from the horrific Yahweh  
she birthed, yet on good  
Saturday nights when  
everything is clicking  
these angels ploughing  
the land can actually drag

out this stuff from another  
dimension and let us play  
with it, which retains  
a state of incorruptibility  
despite our fervent acts  
of mutilation, embodied  
as it is against the flow  
of understanding, the pro-  
visional nature of syntax  
and the moving net of  
language, giggling at the  
pure coincidence that  
our mathematics can  
approximate its dynamics,  
which yields the proud  
and false belief in our  
command of the howling  
Tao. Look how it remains  
steeped in dreams of a  
different color, the blue  
bruises like blows from  
a god we cannot name,  
the matutinal gold cap.