The Trumpeter
Journal of Ecosophy

Five Poems

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Volume 39, numéro 1, 2023

URI : https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1109629ar
DOI : https://doi.org/10.7202/1109629ar

Citer ce document
https://doi.org/10.7202/1109629ar
Satyr’s Beard

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

Joe Fletcher

One effect of contact with mystery is to increase the insignificance of the things people say, such as its name, which, when mentioned, ensures 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 glistening 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

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.