

WORDS

These words are steel, bits of ink and carbon burst
across the page in shattered shards each one sharp
as a blade spinning hurling through the brain,
slicing cutting dicing in ways
you don't even see don't even feel don't even know about
until you see your own blood leak out.

These words are surgeon's steel forged so sharp fine and flat annealed
to strike precise the target in their sights the incision made
the flesh opened up made septic exposed
to whatever pours in
from the atmosphere without and within.

These words are grenades, bombs in the hand chucked over the wall
no matter how tall, how deep how wide the handy shrapnel bombs arc into
the inner sanctum the heart of the matter the matter of the heart to burst
and blow apart, to blast and fragmentate, to rearrange and remake and re-create
the notions made flesh so fresh so alive we strive to incorporate
these flying new ideas burst so roughly through our even tougher mental state.

These words are glass, spattering sharkteeth keen, mean, this ain't no dream,
man, no paradise lost just a window smashed to smithereens,
a jagged hole launching spikes to take flight and bite
through tissue woven strong against the entry of the light.

But, after all: These words ain't nothing.
Scrapes and marks and chickenscratch
scattered this way and that. Impotent eggs,
they'll never hatch.
Hieroglyphs on the page.
Where's my Rosetta Stone?
Must have left it at home.
These words lie still, play dead, they don't roll over.
They don't bark on command.
These words are safe. They won't bite the feeding hand.
Play dead?
They *are* dead.
They decompose into bones, dry sticks
etched on shredded wood.

Could be, after all:
These words? They're no damned good.

THE TEDDY BEAR: A MIRROR



See the teddy bear?

It's slumped in the corner, arms at its sides, legs splayed out.
This teddy bear is creased and crumpled and cast-off.

See its face?

Its face is slumped too.

It's a sad face. It's a shocked face.

See its glass eyes? They're shiny, glistening. They watch us
as if we might make a sudden move and the teddy
wants to be ready.

But we know that face is no window to a soul because
a teddy bear hasn't got itself a soul.

Its head is stuffed: cotton, burlap, scraps of cloth.

A teddy can't think, and

no one knows what the teddy bear *really* feels. If it feels anything
at all.

We know why the teddy bear is slumped in the corner.

We know why the teddy bear's face is slumped, too.

We know why the teddy bear stares.

It's because, like its head, the teddy bear's life is stuffed.

Its life is a fake. Its life is a "life."

So it doesn't much matter, does it,
if we throw the teddy bear away?

We know that it doesn't know and that it can't grow.

It can never write a symphony or discover a planet
or say a prayer or cook a meal or cure a cancer.

And it definitely can't love a child or end a war.

We know its life is stuffed
full of nothing that counts.
We know we can leave it there
in the corner
and be ourselves none the worse for wear.

PRIMAL

Every thing that is, that grows and crawls
and walks and flies and births and dies,
and gathers round to watch the dark
gem-scattered stars of empty skies
encompass I, and more besides.

In the turning rounds of death;
in the gentle infant's breath;
in the ancient sweep of time's
tableau too dim for human eyes,

I'm found. Ingrained in the interstices.
Interstitial. Permeating.
Permanent and coruscating.
Infused into interstices
of sleeping ages dead and bound.

In mighty tick of cosmic clock
that measures steady march to mock
affairs of ants who march in lock-
step, blind to tempests raging round -

There I'm found.

THE HAUNTED ROOM

I?
Why, I'm in the room, my love.

There's a doll with glass eyes
over there
in that corner
of the room, my love.
Do you see?

There's a blank
window that sees
nothing.

From across the room
the glass-eyed doll stares.

There is only silence here
in the room, my love.

My mind is
lost,
hanging in
space.

Madness:
the mind's
forever empty
space,

the positive
inverts
to negative.

Smooth, square
floor,
sensible
ceiling,
four straight blank
walls.

Why does the doll watch me from
across the room, my love?

Where's the door?
I came into the room, didn't I?
I'm here, aren't I?
My love?

Flat walls meet behind
me.
Flat inhuman silence reminds
me:
No one can find me
in the room, my love.

Its glass eyes-
why, they know me.
They are coming closer.

The door?

My love?