

I, RUBENSTEIN

picture you awakening, crying, in the early hours,  
reliving what was done to you. A brute's ditty  
was all it took to cause an eruption of tears  
and contorted face as you lay collapsed

beside the sidewalk, beside yourself. I see  
your picture on Facebook, playing  
the alto saxophone at our high school reunion  
and I Google you;

you have studied music and recorded CDs. You  
teach jazz improvisation. You are vegetarian,  
channel your primal rage into music,  
and contain what's left with whole grains and berries.

There are no wives, no partners. You live alone,  
and always have.

I am ill equipped to sublimate my rage  
to music—

I eat meat, embrace women, and I, Rubenstein  
am aroused

by the heavy metal rush of degrading  
a mama's boy.

I bathe in the throb of war.  
I march with Greeks and Romans,  
and their bugle blowing brethren.  
I am as rank as the rest.

## RUBENSTEIN CONSIDERS HIS FAITH

I'm sitting on the pew wishing I had abs like Jesus.  
If I accept Jesus as savior could a six-pack be in the negotiation?  
The promise of eternal life is tantalizing, even titillating,  
when compared to a six-foot-under final destination.

I think I'd have to be terminally miserable to try swallowing  
that horse pill whole. It has the decided funk of hype.  
Is it essential to forgo all vice to dodge undying damnation?  
Could a confession and a few Hail Marys bring absolution?

I'm sitting on this hardwood bench, which is killing my hemorrhoids  
that combined with my prostate could cripple a conversion.  
I've worked on my abs, but now I'm limited to planks.  
No more sit-ups or crunches with the shape my back is in.

Jesus was, after all, a much younger man ...  
he didn't live long enough to contend with middle-age spread.  
So I'm back to assessing my workout routine and recalling Milo  
and the calf; *the more weight you lift the stronger you get.*

That's something I can half count on.

## RUBENSTEIN REVEALED IN THE CAFETERIA

I sit down next to this shorthaired blond chick  
a fraction of my age.

Sarah Yah-dah-dah-dah-do-ski from Milwaukee.  
“You from New York?” she says.

I’m not wearing my “Rubenstein” tag,  
(that was the first night).

I know the code, I know what she’s asking,  
stating, really.

And it makes my skin go wormy.  
Then she turns the conversation

to Woody Allen, Larry David,  
and other members of the congregation.

Oh, but she likes *them*,  
so that makes it alright?

She asks what I do all day  
I tell her

and it doesn’t include work,  
so she figures I’m also a rich one.

I deduce she’s kind of jealous of the tribe  
(as represented by me),

‘cause we’re also smart and witty.  
Dontjah know?

She’s feeling real small  
next to the big fish

so she looks for some way  
to fry it.

She says “My favorite movie is *Lolita*.”

I've got to give it to her,  
the kid's pretty smart  
and good with the knife.

I see myself like a thrashing tuna,  
hemorrhaging on a gaff  
that she clutches with perverse amusement.

So I get up,  
stiffly,  
feeling I should have been sharkier.