Self Portrait as Fuseli’s Imp

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SELF PORTRAIT AS FUSELI’S IMP

A vicious whimsy got hold of my scalp
and the root of each hair, encased in its fatty sheath,
became worthy of attention.
A millennium of that and I was ready for a new voltage.
The Treaty of Homunculi provides some distraction,
though my diplomatic work goes mostly unappreciated.
I do love a good street-lamp, I squat in its glare for hours.
About my ears — the ruddy whorls, the sweet black tendrils
within —
I can say how sound shivers across their private membranes,
and I feast on it for days. By the way, the Bride of Frankenstein
was my idea.
If you sip an elixir of any thought I’ve ever had,
I feel a sting in my talons, in the stony nubs on my head.
No nerves grow there, it’s true, but I can’t escape the impression,
and indeed seek it out. It’s like being someone else,
someone with skin a few degrees warmer than mine.
One time I dreamed I lived in this apartment with great décor,
sort of Louis Quinze meets the cave paintings of Lascaux.
I was happy. I was also dead,
but still appreciated the landlord’s oceanic gentleness.
I woke up content, and often wonder why.
You know, I have always loved jaywalking.
For a long, long time I thought that
was my problem.