

Winter 2006

from Helsinki

Peter Richards

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Peter Richards

from Helsinki

In time I came to see death was the hay
binding one soldier to another and my own
death would appear partially lit as during
a nighttime operation the moon barely attends
whereas I with new density carry on as before
again I go razing Atnana so plainly familiar
to me that it does sit upon my own reflection
and about me on deck where my double does
well so the spoils and I can finally make it
just this or that way for a while never mind
the snipers and charges and this lose cloud
of animal gadgetry eating air and chrome alike
until absent any ship garrison or wish to remain
we set out with our lancets on idle command

I do remember as a small boy being brushed
by a black man in the courtyard feeling the small
of my back lightly brushed so that it sank deep
into my imagination and partly the initial deathblow
Helsinki prepared for my boyhood drawing an invisible
orange line at the base of my skull leading to this villa
my parents shared between them each room holding
a portrait of one of my parts and one room wrongly
represents the cyst in my knee another captures my chin
before it was mended a third stretches to the evil side
of the room where this tear sits hard and white and so
I think it must be cold so cold the cold outnumbers ice
from when the ice was young no tear has taken its place
so it must live beyond the great doors of winter and sing
as many flesh and blood songs as a frozen tear can sing

For gulls sitting a score at a time
my mouth carried a broad arcade
and so rich was the slaughter
afterwards nothing could imagine
my body a late plentiful number
saying would that I was your true
cause to love your rose so deep
was the torchlight in consultation
with itself that dawn was that
twice tied odious trumpet
my tent did fetch itself a city
and to his mood I let out the gulls
thinking it unnatural as his mouth
sought out my fingers in the metals
ribbons and bright hooks I undid

She came previous to herself and knocks
those things in ignorance I spoke about
questioning if she were the ghost at play
in my dream and pressing leaves in a book
so that I could observe them not shattering
aging beautifully knowing they were oak
leaves touching on violet but also tinges
of falconry brown the hood that is or glove
though by royal decree not the same leather
for the hood there is thought to be endless
with it's own stars sanctums and fragrance
and a darkness that collects on the finger
in thick spirals of harrowing shade

How did I actually become one of them
choosing polar quarters is one thing I mean
I'm hardly moving here unruffled by the waves
still I do feel other times might exist or at least
another clearing of equal deviation the animals
seem familiar contiguous and at the same time
my column stretches over a range about nine
times the normal range and released at the center
of the clearing gradually there should be no tapping
for five days no interruptions no captures a few
wild ones finding their way back if I could just carry
one and release it to a place very faithful laid in light
growing older it moves about as another direction
THE WHITENED SKY yes but I just want to see one
sleeping fathoms away from where it was done