

EMBLEM
LUCY MERCER
MMXXII

The heart has its reasons, which reason knoweth not
Pascal

Emblem

Which is to say about being encountered by a book – an obscure cloud which has engulfed me in its shadowy context and unreadable language – a composite mass that scarcely resembles the author’s intention – iridised by light, moths, woodworm and bacteria eating – raining remade pictures and scattering its reprints – meanings running like deer into the grey shadow of a wood – like a string I pull it this way – like how wax melts into the gizzard of a turkey – alarming and brightly strange – or the near-fluorescent fractals of a complicated Romanesco broccoli that contains small amounts of cyanide – or something so amorphous it is like what cannot be known – which is also what the divine would be – this lumpy ball thrown into the future – unopenable door appearing in a wall – long phonecall between two ghosts – are these images pillows? – are these images mirrors? – how different my spectre looks within them – while all around a border of tortuous scrollwork brings the inside to the outside, this folly, fol-de-rol – *Festina lente* – ‘make haste slowly’ – by taking one thing and putting it alongside another – stay, *Invenio* – you move the hand that makes this – a thing of words that calls itself – myself –

The ball has to drop to go up
says my analyst

it is still dropping
like this book into my lap

like the image of a family
into a dark well

I am an analyst too Maryann
an interpreter of maladies

like Mary I bring them about
so I am prepared

can I believe you
little book

that the wisdom of god
is folly to us

that the fool who is silent
is no different from the wise

that what is elusive
can be caught in a leaf.

Why these images
these voices?

Why do you trouble me
branching vine?

Who can I believe?

The grass carries a sailboat
which is a quiet flower
the everlasting pea
its one-sided magenta sail
full and ballooning
as the left ventricle
in times of trouble
or this voice in my head
call it thoughtlessness
reanimation is possible
as inertia is impossible –
only smaller movements
as when a boat becomes a flower
on the patient grass.

And will you, unseen fish,
your touch still spreading
circles you cannot see –
will you show yourself
to me, if I wait here?

Invagination

Had to make special curtains for my son's – well our – room as the window is so tall; blackout material behind falling starshapes and silver scythes; the whole fall of the curtain – I realise sitting here, waiting for my son to fall asleep – recalls the heavy drapery of that tent; before those stiff little velarii with their green and red socks drew it open to show her; just standing there in the shocking light of the place where there is no outside; covering and covering and covering for

Rossalia

The son turns his sleeping ear towards me
scarlet from fever,
how the thermometer's light goes
from one ear to the other blindly –
in turn, I cannot tell this face as
it appears attending, only
write as light soundlessly in the ear
seeking the structure of things without respite.
In The Palace of Dreams of the Red Siècle
crimson angels and knights doze (but oh
so cautiously) in their plush pink niches
as the conversation inside the great hall goes
anxiously on, *marmor marmor marmor* –
my son, we have given you our two
priscae gentilitatis obsoletum errorem –
two old and outmoded pagan
understandings.
And now you are asleep, I am fearfully
examining them with this little battery light –

Zero

I have undressed myself with salt –
look, a body of uninfinitesimal holes
plunging unbearable things inside
like the patient-doctor relation.
But I always remember, Ajax.
I also remember on an empty walkway,
how she comforted her child even when
even when, even when, even when
Romanum postquam eloquium –
the fiercest are tamed. Oh landslides' line
as when you see houses turn a hill.
Nothing is clean of bringing absence,
says me, who doesn't want to give up
anything.
There is a gate from which bodies emerge
like an autopsy. I am not that gate...

Single Mother

The sea dropped its findings or unfastened
as two brief-lit hard parapets unfastened;
made a wild chronotope out of my body,
but now, *said Anne*, I am matronly,
my climaxes perverse in their free
zigzags of melted sutures, these stiff fingers,
aliens of no beginning, alone with me,
another evening in spent moving them
across my picturebooks: watching *clouds*
dream spray and spray across the silver sss
ssealed sea

*

Fell into the matricene *hour* problematic
ten thousand years of thorny overwhelmed
mothers flighted spinning in such spheres of fright,
mothers repeating *Polly-Polly-Poly-glot*,
mothers sealing ears with moly the plant,
mothers levering scabs on legs earliest of the sofa,
mothers plucking hairs like shot birds
preparing themselves no eschatologies Ω

Obscurity



Poetry: she moves like ivy
every word re-encoding itself even after
the hostile earth dry as paper
becomes uncontrollable ivy

Unclear

Where can the eye open without memory?
Where is the squat grey octagon church?
The garage? The shop, its glittering repeating floor?
And a girl running down a drive
to a house?



As We Sit in the Dark



Over sewer-silvery seawaters
the decapitations of the past
are watched by pink champions
two birds loop like a medallion

This Thing is the Cloud

It can:
do nothing/ become a flower
interleave or wait self-enclosed
die and disappear

