

PIZARRO'S UNDISCOVERED ISTHMUS

--Some Gypsy dada

Don Eulert

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For W.T.S.

That other traveler
who never felt at home
found Pizarro's helmet
in a poem

reported it filled with
golden butterflies

His own cask was possessed
acrostics of art sex death

As to this last he lay down
below frosted grass
red-apple littered

we go on

A MONASTERY

Two candles divide the dark

Hand-washed sheets

we smoke
after washing each other's feet
and wait for it
 without insistence

my head on your side
your breast tipping gold
my eyes warm

Firewood I chopped
in the nun's yard before supper

THE BONES

The fishermen of the delta long-bearded priests of water
build their houses on stakes and never go back to land

They strain green alcohol through black bread and drink it
raw wanting a blaze to run desert through their bones

never dry bones that wash after them to the sea
when no more they ride that current in black tarred boats.

They scar their throats with hieroglyphics of fish bones
swallowed for breakfast which teach them no new tongues.

From the level of water they watch white cranes ride
bright air above the rush-walled canals. Their mouths open

and closing like carp they pray and finger the knots
of their lives in nets let down to where sleeping sheath-

fish drift whiskered and open-eyed in arithmetic dreams.

Sometimes one fisherman without a woman at home breaks
the night's membrane and pushes into the water's dark:

He looks for the sign of what moves under him pleasure
or something darker but cannot find her eyes

among the stony glitter of broken stars on the water.

CAPRA THE GOAT

Bugles tat a throated knell
Music rapid carnival

He breaks up the dancer's ring
old goat Capra hung with bells

Ungainly one he staggers through
midnight crack between the years

Dips his head shakes his horns
clapp-clapp-clapping long wood jaws

Brays and charges snow-capped hills
cloven footprints in the grass

CHANGES

We are surrounded by water
Last week light broke on the Atlantic west of Ireland
Tour boats cut under Paris bridges
Romanian Route E20 was flooded at Urziceni

I am surrounded by something like water
high places dip into it

When I opened the elevator door
I thought to look out the window
over the plaza full of rampant fountains

---nothing but hills with horses running
and the sun going down behind them

Three blue dogs run at me
I take one of them up in my arms
the largest of them a hunting dog
leaps flying a red cloth from his mouth

Thus according to the old woman who watches the door
my enemies will destroy themselves

Yes, we can go to the edge of the sea off Nikitas
and watch again obliquely in clear water
a convex of jellyfish beating purple silent bells.

CHARON

The soft worm
with no noise in his tail
toccata
the oaken bell

can he
drum the dying
roar of lions

can he praise can he
beat out oh my friend
can he understand
can he forget
what his tail says can he

feel like a lion
somebody's
soft grey bullet in him

FOR R.K.

Stopped
beside a tobacco field
in Bulgaria
to watch

A kind of fuscina
molten sun
go down

It was large
it took 2 minutes
58 seconds

It might
for all I cared
have taken
much longer

GOODBYE AT LINDBERG FIELD

Afterward under palms
in the yard by the wood fence
you walked and stretched
your unsheeted body

was the sun really coming on you
through moving branches or was it
my eyes splintered the light
from you or my mind's want
streams of gold rippling across you
like hands

what was I when I lay with you
boy old man brother child
disembodied and animal
uncle father teacher and subject
to a new rule

what was it I seeded in you
that only grows there (if I am not
in that field it is famine) or
"I think that when I loved you
I fell to my death"

and I hear strange long cries
in the plane's climb

Now I see your eyes
the ocean curls white under green

& tilt to the gold and life-ribbed
mountains where we fed birds
after we filled ourselves
with bronze motion under the sun

ah, the veer the rise the
Going back I tear
a palm branch from the trees
wrap you in it carry you
where I go

GRADINA

Please, gypsy sing for me
I'll give you my coat

we have the same longing

Please, gypsy, sing for me
give me your music

I'll give you this glass,
strong drink that I have

Please gypsy, sing for me
I want only to sing now

I was in love
once in my life

“I ANNOUNCE THE UNIVERSE. . . MIRACULOUS”

for Olga Maniu

If I rub one finger against the other
it feels sweet like bees to leaves
The vanity of spurge rubbing wild strawberry
grew so loud the sun put a shoulder
over against them

The leaves shout at each other the sun
cringes "Are you born
only to behave like plants?"

I walked over fencerow branches
cut from trees that grow again
for the wild roses to climb
and blaze with red seedpods
to light the village hunching under
winter-grey sheepskin robes

A huge rabbit ate the sun measuring
with the warm pendulum of his ticking ears
how he swallowed the season

In the next hour he ate the blue flowers
full of the sweetness left there
by gold honeybees

Then on the half-iced road the cart
scraped past me a foolish strange person

I fled to Africa in February
and found a purely decorative burro
standing on a 20-foot-tall
red termite mound picking his teeth
with a collar nobody thought to put on him

A lion killed a cow
The Maasai women carry away
bony parts slung on their backs
With the men I brush away the flies
and savage the roasted flank

Oh, stopping on the road

that the giraffe
might finish its meditative stance

head at the crown of the acacia
an old alchemist
its teeth grinding away

IASI CARNIVAL

Their cries curved by wind
or night

Crows
rasp a time or place
Crows cry up darkness
where we are
where are we
then

it is fall winter asking spring
or
it is my hand pushing the forest
of your tangled hair down
that sets them off

Some sudden caw-ing, a
moment of alarm
a black corolla opening

flinty phrases
wet from their throats

The wind curves and hardens
under the wings' stroke
under the scare-crow's galactic
sleeves.

ICON FOUND ON A MOUNTAIN

At the frame of this picture, sage
folded in the shape of a cross, an
unfinished inscription tacked by a thorn:

*my daughter was priestess to my act
with the horse, who lay as I rested
on one of its legs. Roseheat. Held
the melt to a shudder of thighs only
as was meet and right to do. Then
meeting their eyes calmly, each. Later*

*I talk with you about mating with the horse
about what you wanted or feared to do.*

*Dark when we came to the place with a wall
where a well had been. The horse waited
in its shadow, only I to prepare. Picked
plants in their order, arranged on this
otherwise clear ground, dropped them
over the fire. Will you take this horse
as male or female? In the small light
I wait for the sign of readiness: water springs
from the old well, and sheets the ground
in a sanguine shine and*

The picture itself, wedged between blue
granite boulders, looks up the cliffside
where a ragged black bird once hung
on one of three remaining limbs, a burnt-
out jackpine. *That* purification, they say,
swept in a single flame up the west fall
of the mountain, until it rose into sight
of the ocean, and

LATITUDES

From a red candle white roses cast shadow
on the wall where the moon erases shadows

conifers go tall the limits down I am
hungry for something

dogs are barking like they always do
you tell me how *love is like an operation*

it's possible to endure for the experience
--but if the doctor makes a mistake
I'd kill myself before I'd do it again--

said in the night when the mordant moon
was a generator powered by the dogs barking

You discover the central image for our novel
or else the key to the room where we slept
last year with live candles on the tree

beside a ram's horn stuck full of dry calices
and wild rose hips from up in the hills

and I was drunk I fell asleep under grass
stolen out of redolent haystacks

Steve was beating a dormant apple tree
to death because somehow it threatened him

even empty of geese the covered creek
had a voice to cut through night-time fog
with ice slicing off the tops of hills

in the morning the sun melted everything
its gleaming railroad running south
into the seas off Tanzania

LOSING THE EDGES

... like the edges of snow
or bluer the hills blur

where the triangular firs, mime of sad arms,
hold snow not yet fallen down
we stamp our feet

step out of the way of a wagon
pulled by a horse wearing his shiny bones
driven by a man with a long coat of snow

A humpbacked nun comes toward us
inside her whitened hood black eyes and teeth
white is breaking out from inside things

lines reverse knobby apple branches
sketch underneath their white shadows
one behind the other as far

as you can see the haze grey or
the color of bruises goes back without edges
where the mountains are dark

Bears too have finished with one thing
and hibernate for the next

Trees float into the air's body
the basilica heaves three once-red turrets
to lift the girl ringed by smoking candles

The place we walked from shifts
everything loses its
There is water underneath our track

You drift behind the slatted fence
collecting the spaces light
grows and fads Nothing exactly fits

"Love, Certain as a Well-Rounded Ring"

After a strange dispersal
waking alone at cliff-side

Then enough reason
for being here

the sun comes back
underneath the fog bank

chineal spreads
all across the pacific

If you are not here
no blame you are
in the way I see it

pelican shadow
drops a nest of white
on the water's cusp

LOVING STRANGE GODS

Power poles handwrite new legends
on sides of old Carpathian valleys skies

Possibly some Ploiesti grasshoppers
with indefatigable rotary asses
dreamed the hieroglyphics

A metal god inscribes them
tall and spraddle-legged
arms hooked down over amputated hands
watches two men on the hillside below trees

watches the way they bow and rise
put potatoes in a box a few at a time
wrapping each one with earthy fingers

He tries to read any profanation
in designs of red and white potatoes
drying on straw terraces

He passes a cow eating the last cabbage
in a big field stripped of everything else

It is time, then-- to the East
some people got together there
offering floppy-eared hats and camel coats
for places in a little heaven he's constructing
called Ulan Bator

He strides smiles to reflect on his Ministry
in the west

There where he bestowed light
from curacies like Black Mesa
walks across the sacred dawn trail

MOTIONS

Rocking I was balanced
 on the surface
 of the green sea it
 moved

as it happened
 I was alone
 which is to say
 I chose to be this way
 in the salt
 cut clean water

I was in a country
 full of towers
 Cro-Magnon caves views
 one must point out to another
 as curious

they grew flowers
 for a living

I was waiting
 To be alone was
 an obsession I had
 wished on myself
 almost carelessly
 it happens that way not
 all that other

we finished with
 or I too
 finished with then
 last night you were
 in my dream or
 your face and motion
 were on some glowing thing
 I wanted

MUNICH WAITING/ THE BIRTH

1. The wind blows
 between mountains where we slept
 to oceanbeat air we moved with
 its deep laying down of questions

2. Silence and great wind
 Sucked you away i found
 a silence i found
 an old two-towered cathedral
 i found light in the vaults man-made
 and you came 5,700 miles

3. We hold to its old stone
 ask the grandfathers help us
 do the best we can for our way
 i press a hand on your stomach
 your breast

4. It should take us ten days
 to get through this loaf of brown pfalzer
 we have cheese Landrauchwurst
 salty butter and wine talk

on the balcony across an old couple
 with pots of red and purple flowers white ones
 they love them they have been together 55 years

5. Like us they smoke and talk quietly
 rejoice and fear
 once you quickened me
 some sac breaks
 the air contracts and ripples

we both are crying for different reasons

moons rise from us
 tumble over the Mediterranean
 towards the equator

NEARING THE EQUATOR

Irradiated I mutate and gleam with new colors
 a blue-bodied Agama green-footed lizard
 I hang under the bougianvillea
 fluorescent tall sweeping magenta hours

With the hand shading my eyes from the fierce sun
 with three fingers and a thumb
 I close around a burst of palm leaves five feet long
 stiff-edged with clean yellow light
 hold at the tips slowly pull off the corona
 and feed on it

At night from its counter sun five kinds of flowers
 grow from these walls and ceiling
 and a great belt animates and loops
 and paroxysmal I exchange forms

the air inside is the same as the air inside
 through windows it breaks in molting waves
 Mission Beach tide Austrian river
 rippling music through an Istanbul window
 the lions' vibrato at Ishasha
 Asilomar light running green spangles

Ah, that the spectrum's black buckle is closed
 in the circle of my arms!
 That for all the dark round of their huge eyes
 Bush Babies yearn from the euphorbia trees
 such envy that violet-backed sunbirds purr to them
 how close it is to dawn

OAHU

Cactus
and alianthus trees
(spilling orange beans)
grow
inside Koko Head crater
where it has not rained
for two years

Climb high enough
and the sea
on three sides
rises too
(turquoise blue)

Inside here
is a dead waterfall

a bird
(with a red ring
around his surprised eye)

a rock
with a path
cut through algae

where brown ants
have run
undisturbed

for two years
unseen
by anyone

OF HEARING, OF LISTENING

This world is made from sound
it was made rock and blue distance
from the shock of a great breath,
melodic light and matter keening.

Women and men stood up at the sound
of a voice singing inside them
and slowly slowly turned in a dance
slowly lifted graceful arms in a dance
the rise and fall of melodies from their mouths
made analogs for the world made
from sound, named rock and blue sky.

Now I attend stars that each bear
a note of light in the night.
Can eyes hear such songs?
My eyes can be convinced by canvas
stretched above a small light
my mind follows my eyes deceived.

But sound links fast to the world.
Hearing you, next I will feel you
and I listen for your humming soul
high-pitched, rapid across distances.
Only a skillful hunter can hear it.

As for you and me, believe my love
time is only Great Silence. Listen
blood and breath sigh in our bodies
everywhere goes a tiny singing in us
in each part of the world a voice
while time reels off invisible to the sea.

This world was made from sound
It was said it was made it is so.

Standing high over the sea of Spain,
do you hear any song in this rock,
is this standing too far from the
First singer, is it only wind?

ONE AND ONE AND ONE

An old man on the road to Iasi
 wanted me to take a picture of his cow
 I wish you no evil he said
 Since you go to Bucharest
 sometime before spring
 you can take the picture on your way back
 I will wait here

How to build from silence keeping
 silent keep
 silent fruit holds a tree's season
 right into winter
 bare branches hold stars

What are they building? They
 hacked the arms off the only two trees on the block
 pulled them out of the bank with a grey truck
 They shout and applaud except for one
 pissing on a wall

 in construction with blocks
 can't tell if they're going up or down

In Romania too one o'clock
 a kid shouting just for the hell of it

“...freedom of soul,”
 hangs in the balance

The coyote I remember
 took every chance
 running right along the top of the ridge
 showing clear again and again curious
 just so he could keep an eye on us
 he laughs so loud on the other side
 that the hills bulge with it
 and we don't hear a thing

Silence
 in the inward way holding
 together holding firm,
 holding back

SIGALA LODGE

The big-breasted sweet curled
 Swiss girl watches me
 The Germans are talking about
 shooting elephants with 50-pound
 tusks One of them tells the guide
 we've had a great meal you have
 a beautiful woman and two
 bottles of wine
 the wine makes her go faster
 and you go slow

Over the acacia tree the east
 dark patches of cloud
 What does it matter (mimosa leaves
 open or closed not lonely)
 who I make my mistakes with?

They are playing darts delicately
 the dark men in the white shirts
 The wind carries crickets and
 a waiting down from the hills

Along the road yesterday
 black hands holding out threes
 of pomegranates young to red
 mango melon bananas
 The son dressed in Western clothes
 "Kitanga is going out
 to sell pomegranates today
 That's my good boy"

The succulent heat African
 night one foot touching my thigh

and you slept I hunch
 on the snowpack wind at my back
 rolling a stream of crystal
 over the hills and around me
 beside the dark circle cut
 through white ice watching
 for a warm seal to rise

THAT PAIN, bringing light

you are speaking of pain
your words break and/ spring
you speak and move

behind a broad banana leaf
in ocean wind a green camera
pans you up and down

early this morning
the pepper tree wired
light with its spread of tuft

splatted green light
a spangle of gentle green
hands beyond pain on many arms

moving
light/ springs from green
breaks in on me

would
i had no knowledge but in that
green camera

THE CHANGES

The same
always in another voice

thrust the left leg out stiff step
step-sweep of brush brooms

down every street
Bucharest after sunset

the woman in the sheepskin vest
baba or girl hesitates

her face hidden at the edge
of the old yellowstone building

stack of leaves or
dirty snow

it is impossible
to write a bad poem

THE FOUR

Call up the Pacific
fire light seen sun-
rise heat & fire before
the power of speech

The first syzygy/ lightning

Wind and water moving
the earthearth
a bowl for ocean heaving
kelp holds me up warm
water/ strokes me to air

THE PRISM

the beating water Bosphorus
you are south/west
 a grey freighter Jugolinja
ghosts through
 my homing stare to you

in Athens the surface
of clear water
lies about its depth lights
 of Istanbul are
 swinging on your edge we

will come here again
the music
 "I wish you were here, I want
 to drink wine from your hands"
water in motion
we love/ will love/ must love

you are with me holograph
 in the water's whirl
 drunk so as not to miss you

THE SEARCH

We left the road,
went looking
for lost cities of the Blanco
striking across sand
red clay

knotted by pinon,
ocatillo, cholla
thorn of purple flowers;
so many mutations vie
against the desert
we cannot count them

We find the old mounds
that crescent to the east

south the valley's swale grass
for deer water at the arroyo's
water-carved pools in stone
where the moon beds

These pinon never have been cut,
these stones lie where born, and
easily the breath goes

We trail a volcanic backbone,
the path of an eclipse upturned

in the moonlight old figures
dance from the hollow log
where the people first came through

until there is only the mist
of burnt stone behind us
the stars' imaginary course

underground petroglyphs

THE SECRET

*This Calypso, who had the Russian poet Pushkin as her lover,
arrived in disguise at the Moldavian monastery of Neamts in
1837, and was taken into the brotherhood.*

And here is Calypso's skull, assembled
with priests and monks in varnished rows
their shepherd's names and their years.

Calypso the small skull with the same
message death, and in it the secret
pride she carried, what Calypso felt to do.

Some image of Pushkin in her bones,
she followed what lodged in her marrow
she carried Pushkin into

the pelvis racked the arms and legs
mixed in a wood chest or lost. Here
is only Calypso's skull as slack-jawed

as her secret when the monks at Neamts
stripped her to wash and dress that boy
come pale from Russia ten years before.

Then seven years they unearthed her
bones polished them lovingly with incense
and chants in the vault that lifted
infinitely above smoke consecrating

an empty skull another and another
poet images young and tragic Calypso
whores again with his own desires pushes
into this tongueless crown his seed.

VERITES

Your message
said nothing about feeling
about how your womb grows
what's in your mind at night

I was taking down the map
showing where the lions woke us up

your tropical body
lay fallow as a deep lake
under the mosquito nets

though the moon blazed red
angled through wefts of acacia

Never a scene with snow in it
now it rises blue-veined
on all the bones of winter

surrounds this sleeping woman
who dreams of children
who speaks and alone laughs
with a baby no bigger than a puppet
his precise child's voice

after two years of playing games
and singing to himself
in the dark there where they put him

I listen to the slapping heart
trowel of the builder
who couldn't finish his masterwork
until he bricked a live woman in
into the basilica's tower wall

THE VIEWS

as for oranges getting smaller
only two weeks after their introduction
and the necessary acceptance of affection
once offered by the giant squid's cuppy arms

he took your declamations seriously

he joined you to gesture on the stage
your laughter had an edge of conspiracy

he retreated into another room
all the books collapsed in a paroxysm
and the air filled with white petals
white petals

Well we have to get some order to this
he said so seriously you giggled

Well he said take things
you half understand and go for the rest

Sometimes? What were you saying to

Myself he said. As for the serious pro-
position that mallards prophesy the night
beating their wings against the grasping water
a certain number of times they

lift themselves up from the dingles and

VILLAGE OF FEAR

Bullet holes in the building
At night a candle in a glass case
flickers on the scarred wall

In the corner of the eye
dark men are running hunched
through the rows of fruit trees

The corn stalks shiver all
the hidden and waiting there

Rain patches down lanes

An old white horse
swings his thin head around
and looks behind himself

WINTER GARDEN

Flung upward
caught against the juttred jaw
of the stone giant

gestures of dreams
of death stone women
with infinite smiles
on the distance of their cheeks

permanent birds
of frozen flight water
drifting invisible upward
through slow leaves
of the oaks

a dark man digs out there
at 2 am turning over slow
shovel-fulls in a rhythm

he walks into the next room