

A decorative border made of marbled paper with swirling patterns in shades of yellow, brown, and blue, surrounding a central white rectangular area.

TOBY MARTINEZ DE LAS RIVAS

CRUCIFIXION: TRIPTYCH

MINERVA / SERIES I: MATERIALS

3 REQUIEMS

ECLIPSE



Doves court on the sill in wintry light
with bristling breasts & sumptuous trains in tow,
now gorgeous, now abject, filthy in white,
a last dance of the day before vespers.
He, a Hakluyt's pale Francis, bows, parades
a gallant ruff. She, coy, gazing upward,
might convulse in laughter – instead maintains
her organised desires, the ritual decorum.
Behind coloured glass casting its glory
into the high, cold darkness of the church
I watch their stately courtesies embrace
a mutual violence of adoration,
wings that thrash through gradations of violet
& gold, a deep blue encompassing Ararat.

Requiem Triptych/Crucifixion: To you all flesh will come

What covenant might equal or surpass
the burning rainbow that surmounts the dead
like a kestrel perched upon its pierced prey
but this radical idiom of passion?
Like a rising tide, the pure, ahistorical
light that breaks in waves above Calvary
breaks here, too, upon the familiar
gaunt frame of his alterity.
& you, wandering among the empty aisles
late in the day of your perpetual winter;
will you turn your face away from those eyes
closed in loss, the collarbone aglow
in a final flash of sun – that stir a culpable
tenderness in you, desiring & fearing?

Now the dragonfly breaks through the grey
shell of its body on a stalk of mace
& climbs into the world on that burnt black
flowerhead bobbing in the pretty wind.
The river flows, her deep dark oils & swirls
swell up & slide away; whose waters
shadow little depths; whose thin green weeds
unfurl their hair like a lost Ophelia.
There is a rainbow rising slowly through
the multiple facets of his single eye,
a wind that dandles the white of his wings,
a blind & burning cloud upon the hill.
He dries – his Arctic blues & molten golds
solidify around copper lamé.

Requiem Triptych/Crucifixion: Let them not fall

In *Corpus Hypercubus* I cannot see
if the curled palms are really pierced by nails,
or if the crown of thorns still sits atop –
jauntily atop – the unrefusing head.
Hé has gone free of that dread assemblage;
there is only the beauty of the body
released back to the infinite peace of space,
& the sky blackening over Port Lligat.
No time redounds there – we, watching, are time
incarnate: breaking & broken, suffering
all things between the sea's distant breathing
& the stare of the Magdalene until
that quiet voice that is the cry of love
shatters the night with its *Laudate Dominum*.

Here are the crucified: I know some of them.
Some are being crucified as I speak.
& all, little daughter, step in their turn
to that sorrow that blossoms in the crown.
Are these, Love, the εἶδωλα of History –
the threshing floor in Matthew three twelve,
or a memory of no memory
where the dead instruct the living in hope
& these children genuflecting before
the golden statues begin their journey
into the same ignorance I know
so intimately, those familiar terrors
where the great blind god is a god of death,
& the image is always broken?

I have dreamed that body a thousand times,
the death that rolls across it an eclipse,
a black sun fringed with burning coronae.
In whose self-denial the bleak orbit
of a whole culture adapts itself to hope,
& more than hope – to history, worlds beyond this,
knowledge, carnality, love, joy, the dawn
that breaks upon the city of the dead.
I do not despise the world; I know
it a thin wish that each small thing be restored
to itself in final reconciliation:
the swifts at Lullington re-angling their wings
among dandelions in the yard at dusk –
my children, too, step up from the wreckage.

Requiem Triptych/Crucifixion: Do not forsake me



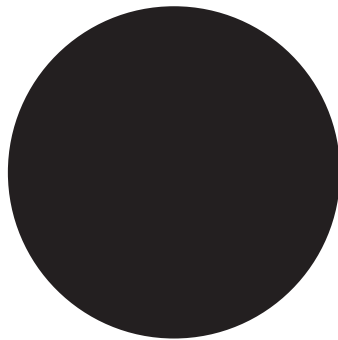
Will you know when the time for your kindness has come, and a light betrays the walls of your Sodom? I summoned my heartland under the sun's blinding rim. Nothing. No Las Aeterna.

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SOMERSET / ANDALUCIA

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