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## **CROMWELL : AN ODE**

**as often as the necessity  
opens the doors onto the balcony  
they slide I know you don't believe me  
and why should you  
given the history of this part of the Via  
Lactea I think were on the edge  
of something new, something meaty  
as a gymnast's thigh I wonder though  
whether the soft tissues of desire  
are stronger than the tendons of  
intention how about you things  
are closer when you're small  
you lean against the sideboard  
at eye level with the cut glass dishes  
cranberry sauce a mound of yams  
they're really sweet potatoes  
yes i know but when I was young**

they called pomegranates Chinese  
 apples and avocados alligator pears  
 nomenclature is the lifeblood  
 of taxonomy don't you forget it  
 the way Milton did imagining  
 Pandaemonium a brackish noisy  
 incoherent place, sportsbar  
 under the earth's mantle whereas  
 devils are the very masters of  
 vocabulary, annihilating all that's  
 said into the purple shade of what  
 words meant before you say them  
 to paraphrase another Puritan bard,  
 this one with venery on his mind  
 and wouldn't you isn't after all  
 sex the only cure for politics?

2.

Cromwell died today the ships

desert the foundering rats  
and blonde women stalk along  
savagely hacking at the maize  
after all the ears are gathered  
and their blades leave only stub  
behind and it's Nebraska  
but never mind it builds up  
an appetite and a vocabulary  
why do people think schools  
are good for you when these  
bodies are lexicon enough  
not even sweated in autumn cool  
what my grandmother called Fall  
though nothing fell since all  
the trees were gone and so  
their ponytails whisk as they walk  
side by side like iambs in blank verse  
until the song is done the man  
is mourned by some and blamed

by hectic Romans in the underbrush  
shall we be funeral or Dutch  
lift a glass or hoist the shovel  
what is a lifetime when the voters  
solemnly troop to the voting booths  
and vote dead wrong and there's  
that word again am I the only right  
one left in this jungle of misprision  
I must be and it must be so since no  
one raises a voice to answer me.

3.

Now we dance the whole thing backwards  
employing Aristotelian Analytics  
to prompt the well-thewed limbs to practice  
what they learn inside the music from the tune  
between the tones the uplifted breath  
between the beats there is a name  
for what I mean but they won't tell me

**for i have sinned in dance and song and looked  
with ill-veiled contempt at some my betters  
and there is no hope for me in philosophy  
or sophophily or philophily or sophosophy  
which is my dear own domain though she  
reluctantly receives my dissertations  
sometimes returning them with red ink on  
as if what I thought that I was saying  
only made her bleed and suffer more  
o engines of disparity and blame  
we roll up to the walls of one another  
or lurk with vengeful blades like cat-ice  
in the mrshes of Québec. 19 September 2014**