

Apollinaire & Saint-Pol-Roux

translated from the French by

1913 & 1901

Joe Milutis

The Edge

(Guillaume Apollinaire, 1913)

O Rime! Tranquil in flight an inverted mirror
Kneedeep in air
At the very end of things but still warmed by our sun
Lower your second sight for this new world
Will astonish you

For myself depraved sombre and terse
A janitor brooming the dust of obscure verse
A hand in the shape of a man covering my eyes
A ceiling between my head and heady illumination
Estrange yourself Milutis in this dumb milieu
The delineations of the rays will guide you well

O Rime! Tranquil in flight an inverted mirror
Kneedeep in air
At the very edge where memory gives way
Lower your second sight
Not because of the sun nor the earth
But because there's a crazy trapezoid
Flying at you and getting brighter
And brighter and at a certain point
Will bend the direction of space-time
Into some lunatic dimensional deviation-singularity
Kind of like in those books by Stephen Hawking
But maybe more like something in a Devendra Banhart song
You know what I mean

Sure
 Back again Hi
 It's me waiting
 For my other me
 I said to myself
 "self"
 you are now totally bi-dimensional
 If only my me-me
 would get a move-on
 me-me-me-me-me
 Hey I know you!

Boy are you sunk because I now have x-ray vision and telepathy
 All I need to do is get a look at your feet
 and I know if you've taken a shit
 or stolen a million
 Your feet are panicked now
 but one hair will tell me just the same
 From your mouth agape I will extract a crafted confession
 From your infant's ear I will pull the future
 Amateur orifices!
 Of birds who flock together only a feather
 The bluff of the blind
 The *muy* of the *bien*
 From a good core sample of vocabulary the total style
 Or from anyone over twenty just a scribble
 It is enough for me to sense the odor to know its church
 And for each river's smell its village
 Give me a perfume and I will illuminate the meadow
 Ancient Alchemist! In the stink of a wet dog I can reanimate
 Your twilight strolls in a metropolis I never knew
 But which is doubly forgotten by the inspired errors of your oeuvre
 Fame no savior although I can savor the laurel I sit on
 And love and be ironic
 And touch your sleeve to leave no doubt about your feelings

Cunning ocean of my acquaintances
 All I need is your knock-knock
 To determine who's there for all time
 So sue me if I believe I have the right
 To resurrect what's not there
 On the day I waited for my my-me
 I says to myself "self" come home
 And with one lyric step from out of the void
 All I loved appeared
 But, as for me, I was not to be seen
 Covert legions of sea-kraken and even algae
 Arose, heretofore untainted by the sun's underwater tourism
 The sea has its own brightness, called the "depths"
 A cool milk, blood of my veins, pitch of my pith
 Who are all these white people
 Doesn't everybody know that holding a rose doesn't give you the right
 To make shit up as you go
 True I came from that pumpkin patch and still talk their talk
 The parade is ending and my corps is nowhere in it
 Surveying every krewe not a sign of my self
 From man to man were passed little bits of my self
 Pitching in they gradually built me like one lays brick
 Then everybody bizarrely entesselated and there I was
 Formed of all bodies and all human things

Time passes but trespassing, the gods made the *me-myself-and-I*
 I do not live as negation passing just as yours is no mere passing eye
 And yet I detourn in a maze avoiding the future the void we strive
 And in my self see only the past's vast vaulted archive

Once you exist you never die
 What has passed is a shining bird tomorrow's sigh
 Is only information like the promise of ice cream
 Presented in a jumble by a man in a dream

Gentilles Alouettes

(Saint-Pol-Roux, 1901)

The snick of shears ascends skyward.

Already the crepuscular shroud flung by lunar spooks over
the terrain fresh with life, already this tenebrious crepe is rent
above fields and fief.

The snick of shears ascends skyward.

Listen to the soft cloche tone of the good lord chiming, its
rime rousing eyes, dewy bluebells which cower despondently
when blotted out by black.

The snick of shears ascends skyward.

Come out of your coma where as if kingdom come we
slumber, oh my Heart, and air out on the windowshelf the
lilies, the peach, and raspberries of your self.

The snick of shears ascends skyward.

Let's off to the heights where windmills spin their sails of
white, and higher where one may eye gushing from the
perpetual energy of deep space, a single spiritual jewel.

The snick of shears ascends skyward.

Topmost, where abundant herbal aromas—the thymescents, lavenders,
and rosemaries we attend—a caress, your dress, the bright and
shadowed riot of moments in each golden hour which holds our
recollection, and looking over the valley there is a little smiling dakini,
chased by evening's long-faced ward.

The snick of shears ascends skyward.