

Phil Hall / FIVE POEMS

as of old

a ghost haunts
a house you've lost

buy the house back
feed the ghost

a pillow & a snore
outbid the going rates

a living ear
is what a ghost eats

asleep & listening
weave a nursery

to a child tucked in
tell a ghost story

*the blood on the stairs
would not fade*

*'til the bones in the cellar
were reburied*

& the story told

the day Celan saw Antschel in the Seine
& slipped into the ripples of the bookstalls

he entered *the Zion of the water bead*
(as Dylan Thomas said we must do)

into his mother's wide eye he vanished
(struck-shine fading incredulous against dirt)

her last moist blink *spills*
of mire he sank through the curdled sheen of

trying to smuggle labyrinthine green
back inside grey *Kampf* comfortable tongues

his life-guard psalms sinking
in us scrap iron parsings of despair

the same bookstalls today
along the Seine shimmering

temple gardens
shattered by his repair

fingers rowed
into their own shadows

into shadowed earth
into shadirt

April 1970

grubbing (suckling)
into our furrows

exhume
die blessing-fossil

those men who do
seem devoted
to the ice-rim-lit
muck-filled hoof-holes
bodies are

smear

caul

aside

fly over helpmeats
right into couvade pretense
become epigrammarians

with

one

horrified lest tongues of Babel
go-go above bowed heads to loosen
nooses of exactitude

hand

they idolize & minimalize
the rhyme of the brooch-pikes
in the old king's eyes
(gore is what Tradition likes)

blow

snot from

MAN DIES CRUSHED BY HIS OWN ADDRESS

nostril

or the blindman in the park
beseeching his dog *Anus! Anus!*

support

I am my own ex-wife he says

little

*I am the little pyramids
of paper caught under the staple
when legal pages are torn away*

a glider's chewed off paw

yet here comes that horizon
he had made for himself special

plate tectonics ahem

how a man loves a pact that stunts!

neck

with other

hand

uncherish

fallow

spearing pineapple rings from a can with a stick

piqued by the moment's tenacity — its appropriation of
the wrecking yard around the epiphany

I have unfolded the road map of the axhead
& found even in its wagon ruts & foot paths
the same devotion to flung balance — the same hierophany
a tree displays in its cold twigs & seed tips &

unfullblown asymmetrical ornament-hammered gasket-crumbled

(Father a serial killer of pets
Mother a falsy shielding a prone *tick*)

born joined at the head with myself — *monstre sacré*

hurt into balladeering (take it away boys) — been verified

squat in song beneath the slide-rule bridge
— darkness yellow grass a blip gristle

si! rue!
this day my fathers ye animal gods

how charred hemp binds a spearhead & feathers
to a pray-mole carved from antler

(there is no magic here)

how a red curl of sandstone
is a mother shore bird

& in the valley of her waves
a lake-smoothed oblong limestone
papoose

(there is no magic here)

so try flying dreams
an inner tube of tripe charvoyant

(there is no magic here)

so the fetish maker in desperation
tools a fetish of self & sings

*though our land be filled with enemies
make me precious*

(there is no magic here)

si! rue!
this day my fathers ye animal gods

