

from **Canticles**

George Elliott Clarke

Gloss (III)

i.

Blackness is either
substance or ether,
tangent
or target,
taboo
or *Beauty*.

ii.

History is nothing
unless something dies.
Its lays are lies.
Its constitutions
be elegies and alibis.
Its chronicles prate
serial prostitutions,
Love engrossing *Hate*.

iii.

Musket and cannon
gave Europe "Canaan,"
while "Injuns," displaced
(misplaced),
begged for *Mercy*—
the Gospel
plus alcohol
(a new heresy).

iv.

The epic
must be picky—
if it will keep.

(My hobo pen plies,
vagrant mid strict histories.)

[Nantes (France) 28 *janvier* mmix & 8 *février* mmix]

The Head Slave Drafts His Valentine

I love her: The *Truth* arrives
As unabbreviated *Panic*.
So, I'll be closed-hearted, close down
Her two gold eyes that shame the sun.

I imagine my love's futile—
Like August leaves. It's a mirage,
A ju-ju joke. A dark, pint-sized whore—
A blue-smoke wife—that's who I'll "wed."

If she's wrinkly and crinkly as fog—
And gone—I mean, quickly replaced—
Like any simple slice of cake, I'll grab
Some other gabby, dissatisfied bitch.

Thanks to a sullen *Repulsion*, I want
My white-mare nightmare, her stinging sex,
And grapes pressed to flood. Less apt slaves
Consume monotonous, fishy tarts.

If Lady hates me, I'll spring a tornado,
Spraying blood. She deserves my animal
Services, frankly, and I want to mount
Her white sex as research for a dirty canto.

I do plot to insinuate, in her milky schism,
A sinuous insemination. I have a bad hand
And evil eye. So what if she shows iced
Pallor and icy tears? We two must mate:

Like Frankenstein's Monster and his Juliet.
I'm sure her navel proves a vortex of sweat.
I seem to amble innocently—
Like a pious ape, dreaming of us becoming

Two divine hunchbacks. Yes, yes,
I do feel "my race": It's an edgy sheen,
An amusing tint, and as clean and hard as iron,
Where I'm darkest, and, most hopefully, *hers*.

[Pordenone (Italy) 22 *septembre* mmxii]

On the Conduct of Baltic (White) Slavery (1300 A.D.)

Nothing so recyclable as cunt.

What we Turks sniff out is
a snow-breast virgin
basting her loins in muck.

The yellow-haired women from Suomi?
Each one's a shaft of white gold,
spearing into a bedroom.

So, we set fleet over seething water—
oar-ploughed, oar-played sparkles—
a congregation of suns—
the flight of foam,
crimping, indefatigable foam—

to yoke glossy, Nordic nymphs:

To ply the ready success of *Abduction*
(spurn the hard slog of *Seduction*).

From their *mossynes*
(crude, pine huts),
we thief each chit,

drag em cross seas
to our sun-lamped, Moorish palaces,

to be, each one, a "Lady of Cyprus,"
and relish fiery sharing—

her body hunching, humping,
on hymeneal nights—

her nakedness entertaining,
her very hair igniting night.

No dried-up spinster, no piratical tart,
gleans so fanatically our manly *Spoil*.

[Cambridge (Massachusetts) 29 *avril*/*Nisan* mmxiv]

A Slaver Sea-Chantey

To savour floods of gold rum and heaps of pure gold!
Ha!

To be gourmet butchers who spoon out calves' eyes!
Ha!

To scarf skinny tarts as black and sour as apple-core pits!
Ha!

To bridle fillies that buck like black-fucked brides!
Ha!

To be sleazily productive of piebald, brindled bastards!
Ha!

To slurp drooling twats as pink and sweet as raspberries!
Ha!
To thwack a hatchet into a captain's decapitated lips!
Ha!
To grind scholars with our molars, incisively decisively!
Ha!
To lop bespectacled lawyers and burn up law books!
Ha!
To re-tool Africa and Asia in a Greco-rococo mould!
Ha!
To spurn gaunt wives who won't turn dauntless whores!
Ha!
To be as touchy—or as touching—as light!
Ha!
To be untrustworthy bankers and unaccountable treasurers!
Ha!
To ransack vineyards and sashay through ghettos!
Ha!
To snatch bad-ass, salt-spray haloes for our goodly, jack-tar heads!
Ha!
To behave like imperialists when we act like pimps!
Ha!
To be as terminally triumphant as grass swamping graves!
Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha!

[Bordeaux (France) 1 *septembre* & Paris (France) 5 *septembre* mmmxiv]

Post-Bellum Negro Inventory

Now cometh the intermittent Negro;
the concomitant, impenitent Negro;
the precipitously iniquitous Negro;
the my-way-or-the-doorway Negro;
the two-faced, dual-citizen, double-talkin Negro;
the cotton-pickin, banjo-pickin, nose-pickin Negro;
the recidivist, Republican-Party Negro;

the blue-gum, black-ass Negro;
the tubercular, syphilitic Negro;
the wino Negro, the yes-and-no Negro;
the hobo, itinerant, rootless Negro;
the alcoholic, Catholic Negro;
the dead Negro with high-water pants
dumped in a high-water-table grave;
the Negro doctor, the Negro solicitor;
the bamboozling and/or wham-bam Negro;
the purple-lipped Negro in white shoes;
the Negro who sleeps at your table and eats in your bed;
the Negro of magnificent assets (auctioned off);
the denim'd-down, damn-y'all-to-Hell Negro;
the Negro who departs at sunset for your house;
the Negro of needless sentences and useless explanations;
the green-eyed Othello Negro with Desdemona-smelly fingers;
the Negro who alarms, the Negro who dismays;
the Negro whose sex imposes midnight on a cloudy nymph;
the grinning, easy-going, , germ-carrying Negro;
the Negro whose head is inside a lyncher's robe;
the Negro whose teeth are aluminium;
the silly coot Negro, tomcatting and bullshitting still;
the Uncle Tom Negro, quick with Bible and razor blade;
the Negro spewing Machiavelli and chewing macaroni;
the thankfully soft-hearted, crankily heard-headed Negro;
the Negro who never lets your blushing wife rest.

[Ottawa (Ontario) 17 *octobre* mmxiv]