

LISA ROBERTSON / The Dogs of Dirk Bogarde

For Sharon Thesen

What if I present myself to them
to quietly and agreeably confer
with happiness subtle, fingers fretted with gold wired
minimum theorization of minimal approach
or tired openly fighting
following low tufty path through the apartment-hedge
I do not continue in truth adrift
without any effortful existence
I do continue
then make it scarcely
of their play and their avoidance

In wood and feld and dale and dun, in woods
and to fields, both in field and forest, from
all directions, like a tilework
what I saw was their beau dictation
where parts grouped together at the faucet
like a shadow divine neutral
coloration work at the larynx drowsing

I spoke then as a dog that with the pale flowers groweth in the meadows
and into the game of speech
They are stretched in every street
tumescant splay-foot poodles
Pradaesque-asked: do you have
—like Sir Osbert—
gout? (in the baroque)
or rather mannerist

brought in the earnest olden
and familial atomic
blues

for a pint of honey
pours out
a gallon of gall
for a dram of pleasure
weighs as
a pound of pain
for an inch of mirth
enters
an ell of moan
shakes its collar
as ivy doth an oak
for a man to look for happiness
as fetch it
for whatever laurel is not different
sports a puffed helmet
or what happened to animals in a Europe
philosophically dying what happened
to the animals of Europe

(I
with obscurity, meditation, perfume, etcetera
with slowness and prudence, with seriousness
and accuracy and success industrially with complicity
and glut them with irremedial love while you were dying
and dryness, with disinterest and seduction and despoilment and
obscurity
with resplendence and accuracy
with reality
with accuracy
address

the byproducts
as an object clinamen

They are the twenty-seventh of twenty-nine Lucretian proofs of the
mortality of the soul;
Techniques are stylistic.

This query meanwhile
with intervals loosened my jail-breaking sensation
without any effortful bothering
no Marxian sequence
what if I present to you—flick
the love
philosophically the sexual congress with men's languages
to the maybe there is no such things as a female situation
I won't get used to it
being embellishment illusions
laughing

One of the humans said in his summer
You are not
The emergency of money.
A human said do you do Topiary?
As another absurdist-farcial-tragical
I did this gravely.

It was the spring of my 35th year

of raising a transnational believing class
said raising the imagining animal
or how not to break
after the ghostly simultaneous last ragged
manifesto in breath preens
flat tires of old American cars

and change breaks my heart.
The key-print of a dignity
The key-print of a dignity

Cassavetes in seventy-five describes the pact of caritas
as the natural history of the idea of guts
its trodden coloured bits
in broken asphalt alleys running creeklike
what is world but its screen tightly laced by
a hunger become worthy of turning
founded blame or sparkling befriended feminine
stray Roman dogs
the dogs of Dirk Bogarde
—what I'll call this—
understand
some slackened war

That the sense of the personal
permitting maximal referential variability
a nerve or less
enters poems using, so familiar and scandalous
utopia
chaotically histo-
arcadia
mimetically
there was scented sauntering
Homeric flowers, privilege legendary next
excellent tender
—into two equal portions—
botanical writings —their leaves slightly drying—

II

The animals of Europe went into a movie by Visconti and became people.

You have to hate them and their beauty also, their
Maquillage and bias-cut
thinking.

The wood is out. We're burning
Bark. O please send the animals back. I will put them
In a band dessine
Read on the train
By a boy in a red sweater
Smelling of griffons.

They are living in their rotting chateaux like we lived in wood cabins. Piranesi drew them living this way but some of them don't know Piranesi. They have no water and where do they wash their dishes. Their animals are delirious with all the suppressed philosophy of fascism. They roll over on their wirey backs, on their short chains, they roll in their scraps they grovel with humour and they can open the kitchen door when they smell meat. They simply hopped into the truck. The animals of Europe no longer desire synthesis.

They, antithetical, die in the heat in their kennels on their chains in
the draped salons of over-budget art films
Earnestly
And I plant upon them the fruit trees of the châteaux
Like anyone else
And I have simply stopped reading

One animal says to another animal it is not safe you must not return I love you.
Another says to her sister animal when you go you will never return then she dies in a camp. Another is a child and she stops living because of deceit. The animals in their velvety dressing gowns have thought bubbles. They break the incest taboo during a long cruel close-up and you can't help but watch. The father animal is not an animal he is a person and he is confused about money. They keep trying to return. They are only animals. They have titles and meanings. They ride trains. Dirk.