

MICHAEL McCLURE / Four Poems

skaagi the salmon

for jerome

WITHIN THE FACES OF HUNGER ARE FACES
OF HUNGER within faces of hungers
and tadpoles and teeth surging
towards souls they devour. DEVOUR
AND NIBBLE
and chase laughing through waves
AND THE AIR FOLLOWING THE GREAT FACE
with jaws and smiles and growls
ON THE POWERFUL TAIL. Fins
of lives turn to sunset over
misty islands
AS WE SPEED TO THE FEATURES
of love always alight as we create delight
ahead. Crumbs of meat in the wake.
THIS IS THE TRUTH
OF THE HALF-LIE
of speedily moving with no splashes.
Even the adipose fin has an eye.
NO REASON TO CRY
F
O
R
LIFE

it is coming and going.

*after a Haida drawing
by Bill Reid*

MEPHISTO 2

MY
GOD MY GOD!

NO MY GOD!

Don't MY GOD!

DO
THIS

to me!

I am a thousand years
making an old man.

ALL
OF
THE

MOMENTS OF THIS

pleasure are just one. Made of the flesh
of your shoulders, and your eyes
looking up at me.

Your sloping breasts
and pink nipples sail
(into my consciousness)

like little ships over my erection.

The vast elephant seal on the dark gray sand
in the crash of green-white, translucent breakers
by the ragged black rocks
is a body of hope for future
sexuality

and tiny sand pipers rush
in the shallow ripples.

MEPHISTO 3

“INCOMMENSURABLE
and incomprehensible are the best of poetic creation,”
the old man sings. The galaxies are a river
seen from this direction. The child knows
it is all black behind the eyes
and that flesh is a swirl,
whirling out of the nothingness
as I hear your toes’ voice
and the muffled hoots
of an owl in the morning canyon.
The burning smell of frankincense
creates the room
and blue, red and opal cars
create the freeway.
I chase a giraffe
(IN KENYA)
as it runs with long,
stiff-legged strides
looking
back
at
me
without fear,
—and there is
A TURQUOISE
stone
in my hand.

MEPHISTO 4

THERE
IS
JOY
IN
THE
ROOM

sometimes it is solid
for a sixtieth of a second.
Moments supercede the pain of muscles
and Laughter is the prince of the gods.
This is ordinary as tiny green frogs,
perfectly striped
with black, and knowing,
and)) mindless eyes
in the marshy field grass.
Neighbors are close
and there is a scarlet fire
in the fireplace.

IT IS FEARSOME
to have intelligence threaten.

The calico cat hides, waiting
TO RUSH AT ME
in a gallop. Now her eyes
are aglint with delight,
in the midst of her dash,
as she slides on two paws
around the hall corner.