

Tangle of Yellow Flowers

Pyramids are no longer erected.

— *Ernesto Cardenal*

Rainy season! Rainy season!

(at Copan, near the small bridge,
once past the first stela
at the gate of the site, when
we were leaving
– fire broke out in our engine

short-circuit,
humidity no doubt

we had traveled in the morning under storm

and I had even had a near fall
into one of the storm-born torrents
on the road along the mountainside
coming from Chiquimula

((other storms in my life,
ravines and slums in Guatemala City,
Antigua's ruins

the national holiday fell
on my birthday

and I was born under the storm's sign

naïve entries —
cantankerous mother-water
revengeful and wasteful fire

then the pearl of blood at the dagger's tip

——— Beauty,
is too quick
for time

beauty does not wait

, what Charles Olson says

the landscape knew it before I did

and that woman also, later, in that village
laundered by the deluge knew it
well before I did

who listened to her
telling of her son's exile
in Germany, — postcards
on the wall above the radio,

in front of a dish of frijoles
and an enormous coffee pot,
fat and smoking,
and beneficent

I wasn't thinking of you yet, Charles Olson
I hadn't yet taken in all the rainy season's lessons,
tossed from love to love,

counting the bumps in the trail,

having twice lifted the front
of our mud-trapped vehicle —

and I hadn't yet read that letter of yours
where a kind of bird is discussed,
a vulture attacked by stone-throwing kids

“... I have been in the field, away from people, putting my hands
in to the dust and fragments and pieces of those Maya who used
to live here down and along this road.” (Olson, *Mayan Letters*,
Feb.18, 1951)

Rainy season!

— later, a long time later I'll
address you on the Acropolis,
the Athenian one —
guarding their city

among the sparrow squeaks in the bushes, and

O Kingfishers!

did you see that, Charles Olson?
— you saw Copán,
but did you translate
those stones?

forgive me, from the hieroglyphic
staircase
to the Propylaea,
the city
at the foot of the steps

the landscape is every bit as fast,
I who lose myself easily in considerations on
the golden number
and the relations of one man
to another man

I am born of the rainy season
in the midst of lightning-struck stelae,
— great grandson of the sun
at the epicenter of a whirlwind!

having lived in legend:
warrior exploits sacrifices
— I am lying on the cenote's stone
from which they threw victims into the well!

stains on the jaguar's fur

sacrificial knife

bird's entrails

and the antelope's terror on its watch:

from the bush where I hide
its eyes looking at me without seeing —

and I, I see

the altars and tombs you speak of and the sun
in fragments on the steps

I hear the rustling of processions climbing

and the noise of the rainy season fading away

exact sphere of sounds

For Robert Creeley

here and

now

this man

not so

curious

of the

whys

hows

etc

this man of speech

pre oc cu pied

by

the who

by

the what

pre ci se ly

this man

does not

tire himself

does not

lie
his words visit

this man
smells
nice

Nommo

ils avaient l'apparence de l'homme et du serpent,
de couleur verte et le corps lisse et recouvert
de poils de couleur verte aussi, leurs yeux
étaient semblables à ceux des êtres humains
mais de couleur rouge et leur langue était fourchue,
leur poitrine était celle de l'homme mais
le bas de leur corps de la nature de serpent et
leurs bras étaient souples et terminés par
des mains palmées, chacun des deux
possédait à la fois le double sexe, ils
sont présents dans toute humidité, nés
eux-mêmes de l'humide semence de leur
père et le cuivre est leur excrément et
quand le ciel est empli de brume le
cuivre se matérialise aux rayons du
soleil, car ils sont aussi la lumière
étant fils d'Amma et de la terre
et ce fut leur parole qui fut première
celle du commencement

Nommo

they had the appearance both of man and serpent,
green in color and their smooth body covered with
hair, also green in color, their eyes
were very much like those of human beings
but red in color and their tongue was forked,
their breast was that of the human but
the lower body was that of the snake and
their arms were supple and ended with
webbed hands, each of the two
had the double sex, they
are present in all humidity, born
themselves from the humid semen of their
father and copper is their excrement and
when the sky is full of mist the
copper materializes in the light of the
sun, for they are also light
being sons of Amma and the earth
and it was their word which was the first
that of the beginning

Disaster

“in San Francisco Segalen”

In San Francisco's Chinatown Segalen
gets hold of the tools of a man of letters:

the slate cup to dilute the ink
the brush, with its bamboo handle
paper

No gods.

Only the Characters signify.

Where the signs are
there's the meaning.

Studio

The traveler

wen

lone

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