

# Parables for Rodin

*by* Bill Yarrow

## PARABLES FOR RODIN

### 1. Portrait of the Sculptor

His beard is an eighteenth-century forest  
in south central France.  
A wife's thin fingers stroke the tired eyes  
of an old man asleep in a hammock.  
No sounds issue from his lips.  
He is made of bronze.

### 2. A Letter

Rodin is writing a letter.  
Everything points toward this fact—  
the sheets of paper, the bowl  
of ink, the light from the east  
window shining on the pen beside  
his hand. The letter is to one  
of the illustrious dead.  
"Dear Claude Lorrain,"  
it begins.

### 3. The Rodin Tableau

The Hand of the Devil holds  
Woman. Fauness kneels. Adonis  
lies dead. Headless Woman  
bends over. The Secret is  
passed between Victor Hugo  
and Puvis de Chavannes.  
Pulitzer, Clemenceau and  
George Bernard Shaw are  
called upon to mill. In  
the absolute center stands  
The Man with the Broken Nose.

#### **4. Guests at the Banquet**

Miss Eve Fairfax  
Mrs. Potter-Palmer  
Madame Eliseieff  
Madame Fonaille  
Renee Vivien  
The Duchesse de Choi Seul  
Mrs. Hunter  
Maurice Haquette  
George Hecq  
Pierre de Wiessant  
Jean D'aire

#### **5. After the Ball**

The Burghers of Calais are hungry.  
They are clamoring for food.  
Feed us, feed us! they cry.  
Rodin in full dress  
rushes to his studio  
to take from the highest shelf  
Head of St. John the Baptist  
on a Platter.

#### **6. A Vision of Love**

A young girl shifts her smooth bronze thigh  
and crosses her young bronze leg.  
She waits, silent in the studio  
amid dust from plaster, blasting,  
carving, sanding, and casting.  
Enter her lover  
with goggles and blowtorch.

