

five shards of the ancient and the antique

by strannikov

the timepiece of Zeno of Elea

impatience could well overtake your day:
might sneak up beside you just to crawl
on multi-tasking hands so full of deeds.

what if you can't respond to it in time?
what if moments arrive so crowded full
with choice you could not squeak one lone response?

moments in hours invisible to time:
observing no sequence of sight or sound,
what is it that tells us events occurred?

chronometers lie to us all the time:
lone moments are never counted by clocks.

odyssey from nowhere

I'm better off lost without the pretense
of knowing whether I've ever arrived:
"Outis of Utopia" my found name!
I'll inscribe it soon as the tide goes out.

my mighty name I carve into this beach!
examine the skill of these serified fonts!
they chisel black dread into snoring souls!
(you can tell from the jolts and shrugs of sleep.)

we'll torch those sleeping eyes awake today—
we'll wake the day with burning sacrifice!
you've much to do to park those bones asleep,
one resident per hell the limit here.

cultivating demons' tastes

may demons delight in eating me dead!
my carcass for them to gnaw and chew:
my carrion—me, carrion—a treat!

red devils will learn my care for their tastes
the moment they taste a lip or some tongue:
“tasty! garlic—with laziness infused!”

they might want to make a relish of me:
I suggest they add a dose of cayenne
—it must be great when spread on leavened toast!

who knows what flavors soon might flow
from mastications of our souls?

the martyrdoms of Maximus

when Maximus had his tongue plucked out
Earth wondered at obedient tools:
Byzantine pliers and pincers in hands
instructed to extract not faith or love
designed with skill to kill an old man's tongue.

when Maximus had his hand cut off
his stump cauterized or ligatured tight

too late to lock his writings in his arm
centuries of grace kept up their flow
the dark inks of his blood made sure of that:

to the penitent mind God's radiant grace
the sun that obscures all stars where it shines.

the Telchines' treasure, the Dactyls' dream

on this side of those sliding sands:
my timbers all ashiver quake
my gast is fully flabbered.

if poets could fix you who'd want their cure?
repair your tongue to taste spiced blood?
ears slammed from sleep into waiting dirt?

your nails never clear of smeared gobs of grit
your nose inhaling watered earth dry dust
in sequence past your eyes squeezed tight slip sights—

each excavated generation dug—
“—but where's the skill in knowing where to look?
horizons I've not walked for many years—”

considerate of horizons you are:
what is the spectrum of word-will-deed?

re-forge your tongue and horseshoes for your jaws
chisel channels new betwixt your ears . . .

with ancients and immortals take a stroll
down crests of ridges up adjacent troughs
climb descend steep slopes attaining views

forsaking views another ridge astride:
perspectives change in moments counting steps
in hours of climb hours more of descent—

this earth's locales allow but this world's views
regardless of our every vain intent.

our globe now squirms in reddened grit and dust—
our dreams of Telchines' spoken skills forgot
stay buried remote and filthy forgot:

let bones relax when you don't retreat
when attacking the remote alone.

once lodes and veins play out dig more
to find the mouth of that mountain mine . . .

Telchine treasures lurk in buried shafts
Dactyls dream their songs deep from their depths . . .

