

two square verse notes for Mr. S.

by strannikov

braying in the rain

mind heart soul will blood sweat tears muscle, and bone,
and then always something else—not more, just else:
the custody of perspective and of place,
the man's moment, the only where he can stand,
the only there from which he can hear a thing,
his unique path to wander from or to walk,
his setting for soliloquies, acts, and scenes.
Lear can be his own fool, never his own fool:
the cap of bells is its own distinguished crown,
always fits who wears it, whether tight or loose,
never conferring wit but naming a tongue.

once the stage is staged

actors do not grovel in gravel, in fact,
their clean feet are polished with thin smears of mud
only for the mute camera to record:
the mud and clay have scarce time to stick or stain.
the habit of dirt is foreign to the face
paid to be enlarged by the projection booth.
who would dare permit grit to penetrate pores?
actors' nails are seldom manicured with grime.
Shakespeare does not say what's left when all that's left
is stage—when all worlds have been staged, there's no world:
“what, violate verisimilitude? what!”

