

steel canticles

by

M a u r i c e

R o w d o n

First Canticle

In first love he or she is  
 looking through the face of the  
 other and beyond the symbols  
 of agnosticism scattered about  
 the city in the form of houses  
 cars alarm clocks

being in love is an exclusive-  
 ly christian state The modern  
 city's walls of secure steel  
 are dreamed away in this state  
 of ecstasy which is never re-  
 peated in quite the same form  
 because it is in the nature of  
 a revelation

(a)

the queen

at this time 'she' is a student  
 Powerful incubatory growth  
 takes place in her at night  
 Her present role is to be in  
 love with him

from the reservoir of night a  
 girl awakes ('have moved  
 across the sky my hooves on  
 the clouds In light I van  
 ish Must stretch to get/spend/  
 take' (alarm clock for seven))

'reservoir of night return to  
 night Promise to move-me across  
 the sky again King help me get  
 and spend today for tonight I  
 come back She promises that'

home again/'in love'/the re  
 servoir of night is punctual black

(b)

the king

'he' is a computer clerk not  
 yet nineteen

he on the other hand finds  
 only in light his meaning  
 His worship yawns awake

his light lies in train win  
 dows dusty leaf on bright  
 brick 'am getting closer'

(or what the philosophers  
 used to call immanent)

newspaper rustle is for him  
 the music of getting/spending

a number 17 steel gel lights  
 the stage of life for him at  
 waterloo station It is cur  
 tainrise as he emerges from  
 the 7.32 'tonight I shall'

(a number 17 spot creates the  
 glitter of sunlight)

he and she drink elbows on  
 the clouds She waits to be  
 queen of the night but his te  
 deum is the clatter and the

boom of the 7.32 upline He  
feels he is getting closer  
through the music to the score

the being-in-love experience  
secures the christian against  
a relapse into savagery from  
the state of barbarism

Second Canticle

love is a runner sent  
from the gods a glimpse  
of what we could not  
tolerably enact The  
steps of love climb sudd  
enly up to the light

(Diotima to Socrates)

like Heliopolis whose  
stairs rose out of chaos  
to the sun

she discovers in her sleep  
he in the 7.32 this  
escalating stair of love

titania on receiving a runner  
woke to love an ass And like  
wise he awakes on mellow rail  
way line The runner is act  
ive he never forgets He is  
the only time gods speak to us

love opens our eyes to the  
resident light

ass love must however break

(if the gods will not come down  
to the earth to play with us)

if love could not be entirely  
here The world would roar with  
it would burst our windows split  
with joy the leaf grow up before  
the root the gel 17 gas the sta  
tion with celebration we would  
dance off the 7.32 kiss the por  
ters waer the morning paper round  
our necks cast off our shoes

(Socrates to Phaedrus)

the runners discreetly come touch  
here and there her lively hair  
poke this one's sleep and that  
one's war to help derange to plant

our ass love therefore grows ti

tanic belches babies dripping  
napkins hot beds naked cities  
nights of gazing decades of  
wanting shiploads of condoms  
that make ee-aw and later war

pain is to the degree  
of the pleasure

Third Canticle

war is an unfolding for  
men who will not grow  
They who will not grow  
are already in war If  
it breaks outside whin  
ing spiralling to crash  
land it is his whine it  
is the crash of his stage  
lit by a number 17 gel

or it can happen without  
a sound or a sign outside  
Can pass behind still eyes

your war can either come  
in hoards of the dead who  
rise like a hand from the  
sheets of the land of the  
night or else it can come  
in your night not disturb  
ing your neighbour's light

depending on your degree  
of helplessness i e desire

but in either case outer  
or lonely it is the same war

do you understand me? if  
you won't grow the war has  
begun though you may not hear  
you may never know the day  
it broke It may have been  
in you before you woke Or  
else in something you nearly  
spoke But the war is the same

in his case the war broke out  
on a certain day in september  
that being the month planned  
for its peace some thousands of  
memories ago and the arrival  
of the sweetest fruit It broke  
out then precisely in order to

the clerk received his call  
up papers

achieve sharp contrast i e  
number 52 gold plus number  
17 steel (sunlight on a sea  
son of mists) dashed suddenly  
by concussion of bomb behind  
the dressing rooms where only  
a moment before he and she  
walked on their way to the play

(the number 52 spot adds  
mellowness to the 17 glitter  
denoting autumn)

his army number was 53847

53847 dug with his fingers in  
the earth the night was rain  
ing hand grenades and singing  
mortar bombs After the bombard  
ment he manicured his nails  
that were full of black earth  
and sat thinking about growth

Fourth Canticle

to reiterate So many millions  
fallen in war mean that so many  
grow into death are unfolded in  
to it while others whom it may  
have spared are unfolded into  
further aspects of the war i e  
for some death is the unfolding  
they may not speak of it may only  
know where to look for it and  
suddenly recognise the place the  
whizz that is theirs the meeting

others are gripped by study of life  
They cannot leave it There is so  
much to do no time to bother to hold  
the head in place for the schrapnel  
on its way They are on a journey in  
the land of the ass So much to settle  
they cannot even look up to see what  
shrewd figure it was that passed (but  
it does not matter he will pass again)

some like to study him so to speak  
from this equine side preparing the  
acquaintance slowly not rushing in

But some rush as if all their wish  
had been since birth to fly to his  
shrewd arms Dare I say that we are  
free? And some stroll smiling to him

the time of death is  
chosen as a step in  
development

Fifth Canticle

choosing means 'what I have done'  
My will is heaped up for all to see  
it is vivid behind me what I decid  
ed These memories are your will  
They are its pictures An event is  
the will unfolded To read your will  
read the event Item a fornication  
item another one item a nightmare  
item some pain unaccounted for item  
a yearning item a burning item a  
war item a wound item a happiness

i e imagine an endless display of  
objects any of which you may choose  
Now the items you choose will sure  
ly display what your interests are

dare I say you are free repeat free?

you may notice also that an event  
is a number of dots in the past which  
is brought into composite picture by  
the desiring mind Therefore in this too  
the will is exercised unfolding itself  
in what it snatches from the flood

first I have acted thus selecting  
then I have remembered thus select  
ing a second time Will is selection

when the force of circumstance is  
great and we are all but crushed  
our selection has been dire (deter  
mined) a stark and absolute narrow  
ing of the flood to the point of rage

This is none other than the rage of war

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Sixth Canticle

the queen of the night said good  
bye to her king now a number and  
began to forget him the instant  
the glasgow fog caressed his boat  
and then expunged it from her light

thus showing that she too had chosen  
her war For with her mind she  
knew him still but no longer in her  
night where war began to wage She  
promptly took a downline train ir-  
regularly a 7.32 and from that time  
she spoke of him as 'was' and 'did'

She made the mistake of thinking that  
only his number had been wrong and  
that somewhere lay a Bottom with a  
different number on it or even a num-  
ber of Bottoms waiting for titania to  
open her eyes and fall in love again

she realised she was  
no longer in love

Titania now saw that  
Bottom was an ass after  
all

That was her war and she waged it  
night and day It was done with bull-  
ets of thought and shrapnel of de-  
sire The plan of campaign was cool

and number followed number in Bott-  
omless succession until titania the

discharged sheets the shellholed  
pillows the recce parties shot up

Seventh Canticle

53847 in battle

The black night he saw the blacker not  
because of the blackness but men in the  
blackness in their thousands waiting like  
he to tear the silence not with music but  
screams the wail of projectile thump the  
splash the crash and none wanting it but  
everyone enlivening it with bayonet flash  
with splash of foot with flesh with schrap  
nel flame with gasp as if they were hearing  
only now the voice they had spoken with  
in all these years the thunder the shout  
the crash of their words to their wives to  
their mothers the splash of their aims the  
bombs in their sleep the choice made sil  
ently and satisfied now in too terrible  
manner and all at the age of twenty or so

Eighth Canticle

the earth woke groaning its live  
 men moaning the trees mourning the  
 animals dumb the rivers stained  
 the air remembering The new veils  
 of light that came that morning  
 seemed not to wish to know acknow  
 ledge the steel tantrums of the  
 night before the splash the gasp the  
 spurt the unbelief of the hit and  
 the unhit's terrible belief in black

the morning after  
 his first battle

Dawn was his teacher. It crept a  
 cross a haystack he was leaning on  
 in golden veils it came it melted  
 with the whirling russet mist that  
 came from the blood in the earth  
 of men like him who unlike him had  
 gone beyond to find new teachers  
 leaving for some remembering time  
 their flesh to fester before it  
 grew again in haystack mist and ri  
 sing sun to teach the other flesh  
 that had asked to stay to hear what  
 message might in the light convey  
 itself to live men groaning and  
 trees mourning and the animals dumb

Ninth Canticle

the origins of steel

steel was indeed the new reality A  
million voices were raised girders  
unsprung themselves from tight spirals  
wombs in the earth deep concepts love  
The air with straightness formed new  
platforms going skywards supported ba  
lanced sustained taking the strain

steel was born it was hoped for  
dreamed about Steel cities shown  
long before its birth in many minds  
in tents and caves and brick hall  
Songs were secretly sung to sustain  
ing to straightness supporting to  
taking the strain to surface gleam

steel was a concept  
nursed in the mind  
centuries before it  
came to material  
fruition

steel is a sight for the eye not to  
forget it is higher than dreams its  
surfaces hum so tense are they They  
can soar propel they can drill It  
can contain it holds it shatters  
it makes scream it is the jagged piece  
in the leg the gasp the end of ass

steel can itself scream it can rush  
towards a steel or fleshly objective

steel can itself scream it can rush  
towards a steel or fleshly objective  
always with the same steel intent It  
can wail in the night cause winds and  
hearts to beat and mouths to wait It  
can split the air and all impediments  
remove to its impeccable government

steel is indeed the new dispensation  
it was not formulated in a night it  
grew was nurtured suspended for a  
time and taken up again Fresh minds  
applied to it until one day the flower  
was cupped in the hand and dawn was  
loud with steel music steel spheres

steel can be tempered to various de  
grees of hardness for cutting sustain  
ing It grew with the growth of hard  
thought Bronze would not have done  
nor honest iron nor copper sounding  
brass would have served this bent of  
hardness Nor would stone have done

Tenth Canticle

the night after the  
battle The dead have  
not yet been brought  
in They can be seen  
through binoculars by  
the living

stillness comes to the field The dis-  
tant watchers sleep The trees drip  
there being rain No one notices how  
the mist rolls not preuming by so much  
as a touch or a nudge on the trees the  
wire the four men lying face down exact-  
ly as they were shot their conversation  
still in progress in silence close to-  
gether for protection the untalkative  
sky quite dominant now its praise se-  
cure while these four men lie no long-  
er in pain so they choose to remain  
their rifles in no fighting position  
nor their lanyards more than water con-  
ductors now and the stillness adamant  
the sleep complete the mist unhindered  
the river in flow (not one drop was im-  
peded one gurgle suppressed by war)  
while those men are alive and asleep  
who might be lying face down and those  
face down might still have been asleep  
and both in stillness this adamant night

Eleventh Centiole

early there is militance he finding he  
 is not loved she finding it is not she  
 he loves though he loving and she lov  
 ing yet love there is not it does not  
 lie between them and there in the gap  
 the military enters the shocker the  
 iron interferer stakes his camp despite  
 and although and notwithstanding the  
 love desired the love intended There  
 is early strategy early aforethought

a glance back to when  
 he and she were nineteen

early there is sorrow he finding that  
 something said led to strong effects he  
 did not intend and she in her dreams a  
 ware that roots are blindly putting down  
 that grow to entangling weeds although  
 she said not a word intended nothing  
 They walked as always arm in arm and  
 the passers by said how young how bright  
 the love how it tints their hair and  
 lifts their feet and smiles in them

early there is recognition he finding  
 that what he desires is not what he  
 wills that what he desires in her is  
 not what he wills her to be and she  
 finding that what she desires of herself  
 is not what she is what she wills  
 Early they recognise that someone else  
 is there at their side an iron third  
 a maker of verdicts they dare not ex  
 press but which they know are their own

Twelfth Canticle

and so new dreams begin new bodies  
are conjured up the nights are full  
of unexpected armies on the move to  
unknown landscapes Voices are soft  
with new invitations sophistications

they leave each other  
before the physical  
separation takes place

the flesh that seemed only yesterday  
young is obsolete now discarded by  
the dream that has advanced to other  
camps and these in hard deployment  
mud confusion alarm in the night

the kiss that not two days before  
was fertile now gives dust it hints  
of operations skirmishes The heart  
is surrounded now the wires are out  
and no communication to the rear

the bed that gave its flowers fruit  
is divided into secret campments now  
with undeciphered flashes muffled taps  
of sappers underground It is cold the  
flesh quivers The war has begun

Thirteenth Canticle

to go back to the beginning did I say  
that war was in precise degree to the  
love? that ass love mounted its own con-  
ditions of aggression infiltration its  
unsuspected propogandas heard in dreams  
in thoughts quickened suddenly in the  
bed? alarmed prostrate the panting heart  
because caught out though party to?

did I say that the smack of kiss the  
thud of the rump the nights of skir-  
mishing the hands the bellies the cries  
of infants and the sky seen by lovers  
at a windowsill like a jewelled cloth  
and then the lonely one who is touched  
by so much touching moved to cry by so  
much crying did I say these are warnings?

did I say that detonations heard in the  
dead of the night then forgotten in turn-  
ing back to the ass's side are the first  
telling clink of metal on hip the move-  
ment of men the starting of trucks the  
flares the muffled orders in the dark  
the arrival of important leaders whose  
faces we do not like or recognise?

what connections has been made what se-  
cret roads? what agents paid messages in  
cipher diplomatic channels can conjoin  
so opposite stations as love and war?  
so different climates languages abodes  
one to the exclusion of the other as  
black to white? But do we not make war  
on those we know? Is battle not a link?

I mean do we not understand each other's  
smallest pass and stance do we not share  
our weapons explosive powder type of  
gun the uniform the colourful map do we  
not need to know the enemy in ourselves  
indeed to love him if we are to win?  
Is there not some intimacy oath between  
the two that binds the lovelorn ass to kill?

Fourteenth Canticle

did I also say that ass love augments in  
times of division danger civil suspicion  
that fear is its spouse that the man with  
nudes on the wall is longeared with war  
that the soldier's dream is heavy sad with  
promised fornications that the enemy and  
women are become the same that the sexes ~~in~~  
lie in the grip of battle barbed their kisses  
bristling their eyes with armament their bed  
treeless under patrol disinfectant quicklime

in times of ambition is ass love the irritant  
comfort bane? Does ambition cut forge  
make a straight line waken in the sleeping  
night does it shock spring surprises am  
bsuhes? Does it study the unexpected make  
demands storm the house the bed Can it  
stop gorging devouring what the quiet night  
gives i e the sighs of othersttheir art their  
desiring? Does it only yield to sickness  
sleep and death which are its evil trinity?

is war ambition? ass love the fruit of am  
bition? desire the body's ambition hate  
the same? So let a moment of ambition enter  
the child and there you have strategy the  
battle lines are set recee sections put out  
the oceans sounded quiet nights explored for  
enemy the paths wirematted mined the white  
tapes laid for guidelines sentries out all  
movement cautious fires damped the eyes a  
forward observation post directing fire

Ambitious society is ~~ways~~ military in the  
end Make ambition the centre the mark of  
the man and you bring forward captains ad  
visers on deployment generals hungry to en  
gage large forces get on the move NCOs re  
sentful of higher command officers in their

nice gradations bent on getting to nicer  
self-displaying grades You get the mur  
der unheard in the middle of the night the  
failure of hearts due to causes unknown

ambition loves what the other man requires  
It requires his disruption sometimes his  
dismemberment liquidation Its battles are  
private its tactics to encircle what the  
other will supply an embrace or a place or  
a pair of dead shoes It aches to hold to  
stake a flag its desires are operations  
It is hate It is ceaseless war no entrench  
ment satisfies no new line or breach can be  
counted victory Its battles spawn new lines

it chooses a wife by her parts but on her  
side too her parts have their planning staff  
their quarters in the blackout heart Am  
bition has its unseen maps its wild territ  
orial claims its busy agents who work at night  
for their appointed parts they do not trust  
they wake in the trusting marriage bed with  
masked soft footed commando thoughts that  
do the sabotage and then are gone And when  
they wake they ache to find no love is there

Fifteenth Canticle

when shells splash hollow out the  
 earth scorch grass the wounded from  
 their stretchers abandoned by their  
 bearers cry stop please stop but  
 steel permits no courses but the  
 straight no incidental last minute  
 appeal to alter arrangements temper  
 the speed soften the arrival No  
 voice is enough to unmake the glor  
 ious crash dreamed once by other  
 brains and even spoken of by voices  
 just like these that crying in the  
 night are not ashamed to address  
 the steel like children crying stop  
 please stop but flying steel cannot

when lighted bullets spray the night  
 in floating arcs their clatter knows  
 no obstacle their darts are not polite  
 they do not yield for persons trees  
 they only bow to walls of other steel  
 which being consanguineous they make  
 a peace and bullet spent tinkles down  
 to friendly earth. But meeting men  
 it does not pause look back A brain  
 a past a youth is easy for its passages  
 it comes from men to men but is not  
 of them Steel is ambition the cutting  
 thought the dream that does not pause  
 for those who dreamed it being higher  
 faster straighter more consistent in  
 its parts than all its dreamers It  
 does not wither it does not bend a  
 sudden compassionate ear to cries from  
 below It measures It conveys It  
 howls like men who dream of power It  
 is a vision It was made by men was fash  
 ioned in their hands to be unyielding  
 even to themselves It came from trying  
 not to yield It is the end of youth  
 It brooks no waywardness no whim No  
 kiss was ever known to capture it

Sixteenth Canticle

the industrial revolution  
1750-1850

steel too was grown It put down  
roots It germinated Winds  
propelled its seed It shape grew  
by love attention thought in the  
night by care like that for babies  
And then came the birth the winged  
apparition fleet of foot revolving  
unnamed the clean the that which  
did not shit make a mess except  
what could be cleared in a moment  
by fellow steel Like words like  
lullabies it came The earliest  
steel dreams were wafted through  
the fields and mostly other men  
were unaware of them They took  
the silence as just itself and not  
a growing vibrating a fertilisation  
a preparation Yes steel was once  
a loving dream a folly nursed in the  
guarded heart It grew from the  
mating of dreams And then came  
forth from bed from pregnant  
silences a living child of steel

Seventeenth Canticle

Someone is hammering A dog has  
 barked Quickfiring bores are  
 pulled they gleam again Boots  
 are scraped of last night's blood  
 and mud There is work to do  
 Someone is whistling This is a  
 workshop The bushes are thick  
 with next year's fruit Tea is  
 being brewed and enemy tunics  
 turned over in the hand And  
 stained letters found in another  
 language And new letters written  
 on living knees The earth steams  
 Metal gleams Trees drip The  
 field is glad The grub will soon  
 be up It smells announce that  
 the field is home and even sane

refitting after the  
 battle

he begins to finger her photograph  
 and think how the sunlight falls  
 through the window of a house not  
 yet In a place not yet With a  
 person not yet But for convenience  
 the girl in the photograph He  
 needs it as a pass to softness hum  
 ming dreams Having escaped night's  
 steel he now unsteels himself in  
 the ass love of day He thinks  
 when we get back home But steel  
 is watching decreeing Home is a  
 name it abnegates That was the  
 dream it came to shoot clean through  
 the night And now the four men  
 face down no longer lie in talk  
 We call them dead and gone from us

Eighteenth Canticle

This is no place for thinkers to  
collect The evening talk is no  
longer here There are strolling  
patrols they will pick off a  
thinker or two It is best to be  
under cover this is not the  
society for you It is an after  
math of other thought than yours  
These are its squares its sys  
tems shrewd encampments Only  
thought could have envisaged  
such regularity could have taken  
the place of stones The fields  
are hard with them They make  
no room for more They fill with  
flatweight Nothing short of  
absolute destruction will allow  
a fresh congregation of thinkers  
here They gather not disciples  
but avalanches whirlwinds meteors

### Nineteenth Canticle

steel brings its people into the world  
its especially and elect its children  
They cannot be included any more in  
that venerable hierarchy ranging from  
the primal procreative powers to the  
dense rock in all the varying degrees  
of breathing and root-laying creature  
They have broken rank They would comm  
itt on nature the anti-natural law  
They can no longer be relied upon to  
observe the subtle etiquette of inter  
dependent creatures For instance you  
will observe that under attack from its  
own kind the cat the wholf the tiger  
prowling genet will if weaker lie on  
its back to denote surrender And the  
etiquette operates on the muscles mind  
of the attacking creature makes him  
withdraw freezes his action But the  
child of steel will press the attack  
even harder Indeed the surrender is  
his invitation His mind has come un  
stuck from the general plan He perceives  
no etiquette but that of his ambition  
and this may demand the liquidation  
of the surrendering creature He will  
not pause to dispense with what appears  
to him an elaborate finesse and over  
done politeness inbred protocol a de  
generate observance of sweet hierarchies  
he can ill afford and which give him  
the creeps For steel doesn not tempor  
ise it spans projects supports its e  
quilibrium is stout autonomous unwaver  
ing its etiquette is geometrical Its  
courtiers are as highly strung as the  
steel support itself They are hiers  
to a flesh they feel unhappy with  
They feel no safety in this world  
They have to have the support a steel  
design will give Thus creatures of  
steel need conflict flames distress  
not because they love it which no man

can but having smarted from steely  
darts in earliest years they woke to  
its touch they recognised a certain  
unyielding gaze and this they began  
to see wherever they looked and even  
in trees. And their own eyes too in  
seeing such manifold coldness became  
as cold and thus it happens that a  
populace of steel is born and looks  
identical. In self defence they fight  
and promise to get even with the other  
guy. They make him put up his paws  
and quarter is not given or received.

Twentieth Canticle

secure quiet in villages breeds  
 the hope of disturbance The hope  
 breeds the disturbance itself And  
 this (in villages now become sub  
 urbs) breeds insecure quiet which  
 in turn breeds fear of disturbance

with the birth of steel  
 the last silent villages  
 disappear

they become dreamed

thus steel serves both the market  
 of hope and the market of fear

hence its success in places where  
 fear of its coming is uppermost

for proportionate to the fear is  
 the hope These are the male and  
 female progenitors of all steel

in the eighteenth century  
 Enlightenment and Revol-  
 ution were the fear/hope--  
 fear at one moment, hope  
 at another, fear in one  
 man and hope in another,  
 breeding steel for all

the child Steel quiets mother and  
 father for a time but will committ  
 saint julian's crime mistaking mother

for wife and father for a lover in  
his marital bed Remember the anguished  
cry of julian's wife when she saw  
what had been done i e mother and  
father slain by their only son

steel like the saint establishes a  
hospital in penance for the deed  
The cancer-cutting steel is the pen  
itent aftermath of the steel war

Twenty-first Canticle

it is no use looking in the war itself  
for solutions causes plans of escape  
Its steel will only ordain a steel  
peace and steel hearts will ask for  
steel rewards fixed wages central  
heating lifts to the top steel enter  
tainments films television with their  
promise that somewhere hearts are beat  
ing not of steel but steel is their  
source their component their benedict  
ion it is tripod dolly lens support  
it glides on steel it tracks it zooms  
the scene is cut with shining scissors  
in first the mind and then the studio

the 1945 revolution

Twenty-second Canticle

53847 being in the memorandum of agreement named the first part hereinafter called the soldier saw the second part hereinafter called the dying man with holes in his back lying face down at the last gasp

'write a deed of gift  
with thine own blood'

and cried without sound or tears at the barn door while a black shawled woman smaller than he by half mourned loudly in his place it being her inherited rustic duty to do the wake even for a stranger

he of the first part could only make silent water with his eyes because he could not understand he did not see the connection between the love he had made not long since and this dying part

he did not know that these were his desires his nights exploded into deep black holes in another man's back lying stomach down in a barn trying an offered cigarette but the thin white tube swelled red

no man's help no quotation of innocence not the child he had been nor mother's appeal nor city noise could rescue him from the clause of the memorandum in which it was stated that there was a living and a dying part

nor rescue the living part from  
his failing to understand decipher  
the place in the covenant where  
the precise relation had been set  
down confirmed and duly signed in  
his own blood his love desires

Twenty-third Canticle

a glimpse of civilisation  
is a glimpse of the pre-  
steel state

Venice a city settled inside a  
golden lake danced to herself she  
talked to the sky to the reticent  
walls of mist that came to seal  
her off from landlocked enemies

It only happened from time to  
time that along with the waters  
the refuse lapping against the  
patient stones came thoughts that  
were harder than iron more durable

but then they were laid to sleep  
in gondolas along the flat lagoon  
where no ripple tree no tower  
resisted the sky her courtship bow  
to brother earth her sympathy

but because of the iron thoughts  
she fired the cannon first and  
wrecked the parthenon which like  
cassino fell thus early to one  
man's steel if most serene ambition

hence the fall of Venice  
1796-1950 and the rise of  
Maghera the chemical works

ten kilometres away on  
the mainland 'the poisonous  
heads of whose envenomed  
body have breathed a pesti-  
lence on us all'

Twenty-fourth Canticle

steel is love of a straight line  
of confinement limitation Being  
squared-in it offers the maximum  
sharp angle most resistant frontier  
to winds a shield to imagination  
a hard front to the unpredictable

even a circle in seeming to offer  
concentric repetitions of itself  
in endless ripples that might ex  
tend to infinity is unsympathetic  
to the first progenitive dream of  
steel that beckoned like a friend

this saw endless stuffs to be con  
fined hemmed-in such as thoughts  
and kisses hours lost in the waters  
of a lake at night to give them  
shape a mark to see them by for  
the long unwritten days eternity

+

+

+

steel came for the unsafe the  
unsteady of foot the leaning the  
bent who would have broken sticks  
and staves and stumbled on brick  
on cobble on imperfect stone

steel was the prayer for a moment  
of squared and confined life in

which to settle the terms of a  
 difficult journey to compass-read  
 confer on it within safe walls

the first clear decision to  
 take this journey was in the  
 eleventh century with the  
 first appearance of what  
 came to be called the middle  
 class namely the explorers  
 the conceivers the ones who  
 thought across the fields of  
 the closed domain to the  
 next town (i e trade)

and then to the next ocean

and then to the next planet

all the time more and more  
 encased in steel

the desire to explore begins  
 from doubt

steel was the mineral friend  
 for a journey out of chaos of  
 unsurveyed night out of sight  
 and sound that offered no bright  
 no clearly right communique

the first explorations of  
 Mexico or New Spain were  
 marked by an intense desire  
 on the part of the settlers  
 to make a closed system safe  
 for the Spaniard against the  
 foreigner, for the Church  
 against the pope, for New  
 Spain against Old Spain

from this first insemination  
 steel America grew

the steel mind sees life as  
 things to be done

Twenty-fifth Canticle

steel was designed not to dissolve  
 it intended a perfect projection of  
 the mind neat static not given to  
 the troubles stains the forgetful  
 evolutions of the landscape the  
 known already worked such as wood  
 as rivers pryas stone buttresses

but steel being iron plus an alloy  
 has the mineral property of having  
 emerged from many untiring dissol  
 utions of deep packed shelves of  
 leaves and skeletal structures pro  
 cessed in a design perhaps more  
 complete than even manufactured  
 steel and thus implacably given  
 to its evolutions which lead again  
 to further dissolving evolving

like the brain too like the imagin  
 ation like the nerves which have  
 the mineral properties of emerging  
 from sundry dissolutions over the  
 millenia and will go their way  
 even the perfect design the sure ~~straight~~  
 straight line too dissolves and  
 crooked grows even steel the shining  
 the clear the everlasting to their  
 grave in new delight must emigrate

so it happens that straight dark war  
 with her aimed prjectiles only curving  
 to the degree entailed by curve of  
 mother earth will dissolve her sharp  
 her cutting stripping and blasting ob  
 jectives in the shape of a twenty-year  
 boy who henceforward will not raise

his arm his voice his mind to any  
hurt So that here in order to a  
chieve the dissolving of violent  
intent a disrobing of power a war  
has been engaged a disturbance of  
millions of children philosophers  
and populations of every colour in  
order to beget a particle of peace

Twenty-sixth Canticle

in the meantime women would seem  
the antithesis of steel but this is  
not the case Consider steel's hard  
dependability and her desire in times  
of threat for increasing firmness  
The male and female are the same not  
opposite poles They are one alloy

so was provided the opportunity for  
much exchange of hard penetrations  
deep experiment in the choice of the  
right breeding combination this being  
the natural selecting operation in  
times of private distress and massive  
*panic* ~~public~~ displacement of population

thus when steel was acclaimed it be  
came the sine qua non of the bed  
The male spear had to have a steel  
tip for its thrust to bring steel  
babies forth however deep the wound  
the crying flesh the wailing in the  
night Take the lover of number 53847  
how quickly she learned (in fact in  
three or four days from his depart-  
ure) choosing at once to be what she  
could not recognise in herself namely  
a soldier no less than he She went  
from breach to breach undoing male  
defences claiming heavy casualties  
on the other side and like a man she  
mourned the wounded and the dead her  
triste post coitum being a triste  
post mortem much like that of 53847

in the old days we used to say that  
iron entered a man but the steel re-  
volution in its cleanliness made poss-  
ible not even regret nor a modicum

of bitterness disappointment to  
bring on the state of steely quiet  
the suspended fidelity the isolation  
the apparently safe separation be  
hind gleaming fences of desire

m

Newton was the philosopher  
of the steel revolution

the lutheran revolution in  
Germany, the industrial  
revolution in England, the  
french revolution were  
simply three phases in the  
development of the steel  
revolution

Twenty-seventh Canticle

a period of hospitalisation will be  
 necessary in view of the pollution of  
 the air by combustible liquids the  
 decimation of animals in millions of  
 roaring halls the withered the blast  
 shattered bowel of the earth the corr  
 upted sea the disorientation of the  
 upper atmosphere and thus the displace  
 ment of the seasons the broken weather  
 the broken heart the aborted the poi  
 soned crop the flood the holocaust

newtonian doctrine  
 proved poor science in  
 taking no account of  
 hidden vibrations and  
 radiations It tried  
 to reduce life to the  
 simple plane of the seen  
 and the thought

with disastrous con-  
 sequences when it came  
 to be applied

but revolution is only  
 made possible by a  
 quick corruption of the  
 truth

this hospitalisation for which the  
 earth is at present groaning does  
 not imply a return to nature because  
 on the level of separable objects  
 however manufactured distilled syn  
 thesised invented computerised nature  
 is never departed from in any case

Only the revolution the application  
of doctrine is the thought the quest  
the journey is a departure from nature  
and requires the necessary rethinking

the birth and devel-  
opment of the idea of  
progress is precisely  
correspondent with the  
birth and development  
of steel

under the steel revolut-  
ion the Ganges, Euphrates  
and Nile peoples are  
judged to have done no  
more than languish in  
the picturesque

war is the kernel of the  
idea of progress

the most clamorously  
progress-believing  
peoples are the ones who  
make most war

war is the climax of  
progress because progress  
was a simple contract of  
war on the environment

war is conducted in the  
air, the waters, inside  
the body, the mind

it is a state not a  
circumstance

progress is the achieve-  
ment of total war

the instruments of battle-music the  
shooting up the hollowing out the scorch  
of grass the blasting the chemical with  
ering were each a string on steel's

manifold bow and one day would make  
a total harmonic contribution (given  
time and the right conductors) to  
the production of a final and single  
instrument that would make all music  
rise to one last definitive crescendo

HIROSHIMA

Twenty-eighth Canticle

all the revolutions  
 tributary to that of  
 steel (namely the lutheran  
 the industrial and the  
 french) stem from the  
 mediaeval schools

the newtonian doctrine is  
 a picture of life as int-  
 ellectual for this reason

pure the aspiration straight the  
 flight but a little question of  
 the displacement of air the ex-  
 haust the pollution of conceptually  
 annoying particulars such as lungs  
 nervous system eardrums and other  
 soft propensities were overlooked  
 on the basis of a giant error comm-  
 itted early in the scholastic argu-  
 menta namely that the world was  
 intellectually created grew itself  
 from concepts But this was fast  
 disproved by the very minds believ-  
 ing it and soon it was seen that  
 life is not necessarily mathemat-  
 ical nor infinite concepts the  
 edges of finite facts and that  
 the idea of a fixed creation a der-  
 tag on which it was all rigged  
 and shipshaped into bursting action  
 then launched and let slide into  
 the consciousness was rot And  
 this entails a period of hospital-  
 isation given the frightful gap  
 between the application and the ~~uncon-~~  
 ceived the concepts and the uncon-  
 ceived the given the humming the  
 throbbing of the whole machine

the backward peoples who took over the ruins of the Roman empire ignorant even of the first principle of personal cleanliness (hence the plagues) needed a long journey of self-discovery

their starting point was Golgotha

the concept of the clock (i.e. the safe ticking off of the silent pool of time in regular beats) and the concept of zero or infinity (the silent pool itself) were both mental innovations of the mediaeval monasteries. They were the twin root of the steel revolution. They were an effort to contain life inside a system of the mind i.e. a schedule. It was demanded by the organisation of religious life into community forms for the first time in christendom. The monks gathered together against the darkness of the age (and the barbarian darkness inside themselves)

Thus the steel revolution--- through all its later schedule-tightening convulsions whether lutheran industrial or jacobin--- was always and exclusively a theological matter

Twenty-ninth Canticle

hiroshima exploded history  
 To try to collect up the  
 bits into one order suggest-  
 ing forethought and control  
 became ridiculous

the disturbance of radiot-  
 active balance means the  
 disturbance of all natural  
 processes

you can guard against the dis-  
 ruption of seasons by means of  
 central heating insulated fur  
 lined boots electric blankets  
 double windows fitted carpets  
 sunray lamps pickmeups sauna  
 baths massages and also air con-  
 ditioning for the sudden summer  
 day in heart of autumn not to  
 mention the frost in the dog  
 days But plants require sure-  
 ly many years of indoctrination  
 technical guidance gentle as-  
 sistance in understanding the  
 nature of our epoch in which  
 astonished they find themselves  
 preparing in dark winter earth  
 the sap the root for peeping e-  
 mergence in spring and high per-  
 formance in summer without the  
 seasons being necessarily there  
 having only the poor and insuff-  
 icient guidance of many millenia  
 behind them the technical assist

ance of only stars the moon the  
raging sun and timely irrigations  
made by rain and blind mineral  
activity and busy worms and winds  
that prune decay inseminate

in the old-style weather  
Italy was the balanced zone  
between the harsh Sahara  
oven and the cold Atlantic  
Rome (an Etruscan site) was  
once said to be the perfect  
choice man ever made for a  
city given its position  
between the mountains and  
the sea The Italian sun  
used to rise like a gong in  
the sky and remain steady  
in a blue sky Its steadin-  
ess gave rise to an arrog-  
ance of flesh among the  
people which it is hard to  
imagine now When the old-  
style balance collapsed  
the Mediterranean fulcrum  
disappeared and Italian  
weather became as unpred-  
ictable as any north of the  
Alps And Italy became a  
northern country in all  
senses Latinity became  
an anachronism

when the possibility of  
sound health ceased Italy  
ceased

Italians say 'prosperity  
has brought us anguish'  
The steel revolution gives  
first the sugar and the  
sheen and then the bitter  
core

(n b the communist revolut-  
ion is the steel revolution  
enacted suddenly and very  
late in a feudal society)

for a time America was  
the sugar and the sheen  
for many millions inside  
and outside the American  
continent

alone with two thieves he  
hung During the night  
the thieves understood  
him

Thirtieth Canticle

nations make music Hearts  
in many places sing The  
withered vine the cactus  
burned by cold the olive  
nipped in the flower their  
music make So let despond  
ency not dim your tune Be  
not overruled by these our  
multiple deaths demise of  
chemical initiative in the  
delving root the smile For  
orchestras will ring despite  
the fall Surcease of sap  
cannot stop their song but  
rather make new harmonies

the steel revolution has  
cheated today's child of  
place Hence his burning  
resentment which can find  
no words

the steel revolution was an  
assault on belonging

Thirty-first Canticle

~~is~~ the steel revolution  
~~like all revolutions~~ was  
 a crude statement of some-  
 thing that later looked  
 very much like its oppo-  
 site (rather as the  
 french revolution claimed  
 democracy and established  
 a class)

*Equality*

but in steel we are dealing not  
 with the hard square angled as  
 it seems at first. Not with the  
 neat original scheme by which  
 the wild heart aimed to be struct-  
 ured kept confined dependable

steel was not only a dream to  
 render finite that which threat-  
 ened to escape beyond the due  
 measure or rather the measureable  
 Steel aimed to extend to break  
 beyond the place the hot centre  
 confined circle the home the birth  
 the death the daily sound of  
 work the expected and the accepted  
 the purring silences of truth  
 by explosion thrust establishment  
 of intricate bodies far higher  
 than the eye could hope or the  
 mind contain or wild heart love

steel was what tore up

the old apparently for  
a new fixed order but in  
fact for the denial of  
symmetry

the steel revolution was a  
reorganisation of the  
nervous system i e we can  
now stand much greater  
speeds changes of climate  
situation friend or home  
than any previous creature  
We are not whole as they  
We are not truly made  
We have simply grown this  
layer We have come this  
far to reach where the  
Chinese were three thous-  
and years ago

Thirty-second Canticle

the steel man derives  
great comfort is not erotic  
exultation from accelerat-  
ion Hence his willing in-  
carceration in the auto-  
mobile and his pride in its  
silent transformations  
window-slidings hushed  
spurts at the touch of a  
digit

the man of steel sees the past  
as a successive climbing to the  
final realisation of a now static  
is always improving kingdom of  
steel scalpels engines clever  
computers pills to bring off and  
put on not to say revolvers He  
prides himself on an unflinching  
reaction to anything new prov-  
ided it is of a steel that is  
clearly structured nature and not  
invisible magnetic non spatial  
immeasurable for the cool mind

thus the puritan revolution  
(which created America as a  
steel dream) was the essence  
of the steel revolution  
The puritan revolution in  
England caused the indust-  
rial revolution there just  
over a century later It  
was the adoption of the  
steam engine that won the  
American states their indep-  
endence and their victory  
against the south

the famous disgust of the steel  
man towards his own odours not  
to say his love slime was nothing  
but a criticism he was making of  
his own barbaric state and there-  
fore a rise from it He was shedd-  
ing the body escaping its grip

the so-called dark age  
following the breakup of

the Roman cities and their middle class and their gods and their memory of Greece never opened at any stage into light

some further dark ages transpired At no point was a christian civilisation achieved

the steel man saw steel forms as the unfolding of long historical processes making us the crown of achievement in what might be called his sleepwalk of hegelianism

everything from the spinning jenny to the moonlight is the barbarian's idea of glamour

all his enterprises have been cloaked military operations including TV films the loudspeaker

if there has been any hegelian or unfolding historical theme in our past it was the gradual enrolment of every creature no matter what his village enclave club in the world military enterprise of the last two thousand years

those men most hegelian i e most fixed in the illusion of progress become the cruellest war leaders (the german torch passed into american hands via the british empire)

far from light having  
 grown over the centuries  
 from a dark beginning  
 there was at first a Greek  
 light of Mesopotamian  
 origin (which was in turn  
 of Indian origin) which  
 shone in the deserts of  
 the Thebaid (Paul, Antony,  
 Pachomius) and then seemed  
 smaller and smaller as the  
 darkness of the next two  
 thousand years grew round  
 it. A religion in Christ's  
 name has not yet been mooted  
 let alone a civilisation  
 been based on it.

history is development in  
 time was therefore our idea  
 (embedded in our 'civilis-  
 ation')

the word christian cannot  
 describe a civilisation  
 because it means war

Christ defined this in his  
 'I bring not what you assume  
 to be peace but the sword'

A period of high fever sweats  
 out our poisons

in the east flu is called  
 the cleansing disease. It  
 attacks most frequently those  
 sunk in self-indulgence.  
 They require a fever to shed  
 their poisons. That was true  
 of the barbarians who took  
 over the Roman empire. That  
 is the reason for the steel  
 revolution.

flu is one of the many

private or fleshly aspects of  
Christ's 'sword'

the steel man saw connection  
only in terms of the system  
of his senses I e to be real  
a thing had to be seen touched

the scientists thus superseded  
(to his astonishment) the steel  
man locked in a visionary yet  
no less false version of self

'science' merges into an  
exploration of the non-sensual  
areas

pageant science i e the moon-  
flight is that craved by the  
steel man

moonflight is moonfright

the steel man taking fright  
at himself undoes the hardness  
thus achieving a hitherto un-  
surpassed compassion calm

the adoption of long hair and  
loose clothes may mark the con-  
version of the steel man Short  
is the Roman model imitated by  
those disposed to the military  
version of life.

in the eighteenth century vast  
wigs were mounted on natural  
hair to signify the abundance  
of feeling before it was cut  
short by the steel revolution  
in its final stages

the barber often finds himself  
in an attitude of vengefulness  
towards the hair under his comm-  
and

the more reactionary the society  
the more the barber identifies  
himself with his steel

the first steel men the steel dreamers were the weak disease-prone areas of our body devising a protective system for their survival

without mines air-polluting railways cars factories planes without nervous tension wars costing millions of deaths bombs disposing of entire populations christianity would not have survived

industrialisation was the first clear panic measure of survival

the Church brought in its plainly military arm (the Jesuits, organised under a 'general') at a time when the collapse was imminent The period coincided with the first explorations of the Americas which were an aspect of industrialisation i.e. the mobilisation of resources for war

n.b. that the industrial revolution took place in England as part of a desperate attempt to escape the consequences of the war-blocade against Napoleon She had to produce her own goods All such advances, being aspects of war, whether industrial technological or scientific, take place by means of and through war alone

Thirty-third Canticle

it would be a mistake to assume that the steel men were the equivalent of or identical with or a simple definition of the middle class. Certainly they were its leading lights but armies of simple people not given to steel thinking were prone to their blandishments in the form of black mines eighteen-hour days and the sweating of children. They say that men and women copulated willy nilly in the mines as the mood took them thus showing a choice a predilection for barbarism. Perhaps the steel revolution was more a mass affair than we think a populative clamour for some revenge on the healthy body on history

peasants in their thousands and then millions became scheduled workers supplying so to speak the choreography required by the steel men. There is no languishing in silent unfolding fields but people moving like clockwork

it is often said that the jews showed little resistance in the camps of the last war that they could easily have turned on their guards being millions against an armed handful. But given a certain implacable choice it may be better to choose death. This may have been a decision on behalf of purity. It may have been the

answer of the animal caged who  
will not mate or run because  
he knows he is not one but all

the agreement to become a  
working class implies an  
agreement to further the  
steel decision i e the  
steel revolution was a  
universal movement

in the same way the chosen  
people of the east i e the indians  
might choose their death

the jews chose not only  
death by gas but also  
hitler

Thirty-fourth Canticle

the war that suddenly 53847  
 found before him was surely I  
 am saying his own life explod  
 ing The puff of choking cordite  
 the quick probing action of the  
 shell and then the scream were  
 only the unfolding of that which  
 he was with in Yet he did not  
 know nor approve nor participate

such is the irony of the  
 christian doctrine of  
 progress, derived from a  
 popularisation of the Hebrew  
 idea of a divinely appointed  
 people, that after nearly  
 2000 years we are reaching  
 an appreciation of indian  
 music, namely the oldest  
 musical forms in existence

for we are the people who enact  
 what we already are inside in  
 order to become for other mill  
 ions an opposite enactment

in becoming suddenly a war numb  
 er bereft of his girl home pros  
 pects of all sign of a past of  
 connections even of mother's  
 love our 53847 was doing none oth  
 er than passing into his identity

we are shedding the illusion  
 of you and I The steel men  
 were the creators of you and  
 I in order to achieve one

unified experience i e they refined the You and I to the fine point where it no longer clung to place but made a common life the world over It was a brutal and primitive version of the eastern practice of detachment

the barbed wire the shuffling at night as a recce party passed the stifled cry of someone not even fighting were the steel projections of the fight he had inside

to take an example One day before he ever dreamed he might be taking the pin out of a hand ~~grenade~~ grenade and throwing it he sat with his girl on a summer evening talking about how they had reached a surfeit and must perhaps some times admit a desire for someone else At which she showed a flinching surprise Not many weeks had passed when she returned to him shame eyed and said she had lain all night on a bed in the nude with a boy not himself And from that moment the love he wished the girl he wished the bed he wished were done to death they were no more And was he not the cause? had he not asked her to do what he perhaps could never bring himself to do but insisted must be done as macbeth did but left the deed to his wife? And is it not the same with war? Could it not be that structures of steel of which he disapproved and which indeed were cutting him inside had still to reach their zenith in his blood? Could it not be that while he asked for love he had it not at all?

the manifold steel revolution lies already in the unknowing child

in which case the war was already there One might even say each young man to his own devastation

some to sleepless nights some to bile some to extermination in camps

the child wakes to various  
unexpected shocks accord-  
ing to the role he has  
chosen

he chooses his period his  
function as the pollen  
chooses the flower

it is no good looking for  
'my' or 'his' free will  
because free will is exer-  
cised by that in us which  
is not you or I It does  
not speak or logic chop  
It transpires

Thirty-fifth Canticle

he has unknowingly  
uttered the terms of the  
steel revolution whose  
rational publicity he  
would reject

translated into steel terms  
53847's words to his girl  
were a destruction of place  
They asked for a consideration  
of all human beings in whatever  
home as the objects of desire  
in whatever other human beings  
thus removing the question of  
fidelity from one arena home  
locality The matter of desire  
was thus transferred from his  
and hers to all of ours And  
limitless constructions shining  
infinite had won And steel-  
supported roads that ran from  
town to town were running also  
in him And one place one girl  
one sure fidelity was now a prison

steel structures imply sex  
freedom

homosexuality being disgust  
of (i e self-identification  
with) the woman's softness  
is a transference of the  
steel revolution to the  
sex organs

all this is an attempt to  
dissolve sex difference and  
rise from the barbarian  
desire for assault

collapse and rise are simultaneous The collapse of the Roman empire was the rise of the Christian empire These historian's definitions have to be unravelled, with their tendency to hegelian diagnosis

so he left himself with only a photograph of the girl which he looked at every day to the tune of the guns until it became exactly what it was i.e. a steel idea conveyed by black and white dots He glanced at it in bivouacs at night when screams had died Until her face was gone and all he saw was spots i.e. a steel memento

the melting of sexes was to be seen during Rome's fall as during Constantinople's as during Venice's ('the men are women, the women men, and both are monkeys'---Gozzi, of the last Venice)

they were parts of the same sexual decision I.e. the christian world must also slowly groom its women to be sacred (not simply to be described as sacred as in chivalry)

He now could concentrate on war which was his metier On screams that seemed to be his own And many times he passed the body of a boy and thought suppose that he is me and death translates me from this me to other mes for ever

And home and kiss and warm place died only because they were where he could belong For all the revolution in him said you have no place to lay your head no face to recognise

i e we do not belong on the earth And the steel revolution was one of many convulsion to tear us from the illusion of settling down even while it seemed with its permanent steel structures to offer a security of tenure as never before

every flash of bayonet every blast announced the same to him that never must he pause or lay his head for here was no security no welcome home

the reath (life) is only a medium, a way of expressing it Christ's way of putting this was a Hebrew way ('hate your mother and father') designed to shake the people from a slough of family

thus the steel structures were to give us a temporary support during our first flight from place, from the hot barbarian desire to put down roots They prevented us from succumbing to panic in the first uncertain moments of losing a home And they were the means by which we lost a home

To put it in Sumerian terms, the steel structures were achieved by Enkadu the man, unaware that Golgemesh the half-divine was behind him, waiting to reap the fruits

indeed the meaning of every whizzing car the whistle of airbuses overhead the flicker of screens is you do not belong

i e cars etc being emanations of steel

Thirty-sixth Canticle

one of the ironies is that all these endeavours setbacks survivals explosive fates add up to no golden age nor the achievement for any whole people or time or global state of what might be called imperishable grace It may happen for one man or ten or half to one and all to a million It may come now for an instant or delay a thousand years It may reach what seems a climax only to instantly fall It may be seen for less than a moment or the whole of a life And what for us is a million deaths may be a subscription to something we cannot see but which another may inherit Which is to say that in whatever time or place whatever circumstance the subscription whether of life or death is always to various flowerings of a whole body undivided into one or two or here and now Which is to say again that you and I are not

Nevertheless some movements are discernible though not in a graph of getting better or falling into worse

war settles on each area as the steel revolution is required by peoples to burst upon them and explode their past Hence its appearance

in varying degrees in the east

where it does not appear the people have no need of it

the war has various forms from the use of high explosive and the jet flame to the working of gears and the manipulation of knobs The war thus presses home the terms of the steel revolution each moment of the day

the war in its manifold forms shocks the people out of the sense of belonging to any one place

as the automobile drives the jetcraft flies so the TV picture refers us to other places other times always as pictures dissolving into others cut into others

we are in every way transported

Thirty-seventh Canticle

he found when his war was  
over that peace did not come

belief in onself as the  
climax-society of history  
and in advance of the past  
is the barbarian's failure  
to penetrate beyond him-  
self It coincides with the  
infliction of war on undefend-  
ed peoples and the cruellest  
revenges The barbarian's  
difficulty in penetrating  
beyond his own hot self  
creates a strong sense in him  
of 'other' people as separable  
and by implication inferior  
'All men are islands' is the  
height of the barbarian  
philosophy

the barbarian and the half-  
divine present the tension  
of history by their struggle  
with each other (inside the  
same man) Enkadu and Gol-  
gemesh

many times he dreamed it  
then it ceased and dark  
came Once two kings came  
to his black tent They  
told him his business with  
the women giggling behind  
veils outside Then horses  
twice the size of a child

came steaming from their  
 walk and russet red And  
 another time it came in  
 a city by the sea with  
 blinds against the sun  
 And then it was a man a  
 lone in his room And then  
 a girl on a hill in the  
 evening and very still

and so it wove in and out  
 of space and time which are  
 not fixtures of reality but  
 little veils to be drawn a  
 side if so it takes the will

the barbarian is engulfed  
 by the hot demands of his  
 own nature and these may  
 convince him that he is a  
 man of control and even of  
 civilisation

Attila the hun never hesit-  
 ated He swore that wherever  
 his horse trod the grass  
 would never grow again He  
 could not afford to hesit-  
 ate because of the power of  
 his own fears

history is an attempt to  
 systematise the past as if  
 we had no other place but  
 here

civilisation equals no  
 history

history is a glancing back  
 and forward in the act of  
 building When the building  
 is done what-we-are replaces  
 what-we-have-done and what-  
 we-shall-do

Thirty-eighth Canticle

53847 was transported 'home'  
after the war but did not  
recognise it because place  
had died in him He saw the  
faces he knew bu the motor  
centre of home in himself  
was gone

official peace came in form  
of hungry memories stop chil  
dren wandering skies undefined  
by carved tops of houses pal  
aces stop no roads to know the  
truth by nor the expected cor  
ner stop A whiff of someone's  
death a gleam of bones stop  
this peace surely no change  
stop in fact war only the  
curtain raiser stop and this  
peace a first tired scene  
stop the denouement long to  
transpire stop war here to  
stay stop repeat stay stop

not that his own home had  
been blown sky high It  
nearly had The effect would  
have been the same The loss  
of home was no less among  
those who returned home to  
unscathed streets Bombs  
had exploded in people The  
external bombs were only  
the outer realisation of the  
inner decision

bombs were the steel revolution blowing out the last redoubts of intimacy place

(we remember how the streets used to be hot with belonging Now they must be painted planted with trees given vistas We didn't see them before We were simply in them This is how the most unsightly slums were loved)

Not mist these are fumes This not the earth but battle field War has moved to organs tissues air the waters

always remembering that the objective of christianity was not to create a civilisation Indeed that could never have come within its scope given the hordes it had to educate from barren savagery

anechronistic the bombs the screams of women War is now secretions ~~the~~ wages in the cell

Christ controlled the education so to speak His objective was never pockets of civilisation but a worldwide presentation of the most ancient thought, more ancient than Judah This came to him via Greece It travelled along trade routes from the east to the Mediterranean The Jews were its vehicle to the Roman empire

these are smokes of fear the

thunders of engines of dis  
turbed thought These vi  
brations are attempts at  
action The crowded comings  
and goings exchanges at  
airports stamped passports  
gauges clocks pressure  
valves are us heaving us  
asteam with hot concern

what diseases what  
plagues Like a land  
scape they unfold  
What disasters  
End of message

Thirty-ninth Cantic

she has proved that she is  
light by dying. So many  
times she died. By a  
stream on a so many people  
has she been. How this  
mother weaves in and out  
of death unveils her  
self. How like a waking  
and an incubatory sleep  
it is. How we can see  
her when we close our  
touch her in our sleep.  
How all she is how  
mother. How white a  
million times. How both  
she is having the male  
complete. And how light  
she knows how to be  
come how silent.

war is the struggle to  
eliminate as in vomiting  
or diarrhea

(The: is Rali,  
goddening famine,  
plague and war,  
the divine mother  
of creation and  
destruction)

Fortieth Canticle

having lost his place he  
 began to look for it not  
 knowing that this was all  
 designed He looked in  
 faces familiar places  
 but nothing transpired to  
 teach him who he was  
 Even mother and father  
 were now remote Knowing  
 that enjoyment is a  
 sign of belonging he tried  
 to enjoy but not belong  
 ing anywhere he couldn't

53847 'whom the Lord loveth  
 he chasteneth'

he tried to talk to walk  
 but got strange looks His  
 talk was laim his walk un  
 steady His mother gazed  
 at him but could not find  
 her son And he not her

his neverhaving belonged was  
 a fact blown into him by war  
 War was the first drastic step  
 to understanding that his not  
 belonging was far from being  
 an uncanny state the mirror  
 of truth

Forty-first Canticle

the key began to turn in the lock when he realised after many slow steps that indeed he and not supposed implacable forces outside had been making his life i e he had to abolish the archetypes which the barbarian imagination establishes outside itself and then bows down to

for five years or more he looked in the face of an other and did not find his wife Looked for another and another but did not see that the original premise of which 'another' was the supposed variation had been lacking Like a man who never having had a horse was looking for 'another one'

which accounted for much travelling and looking in faces

he tended to cast back glances to the time when 'she' had been there And all he remembered of the original she was a series of steel-evoked black dots on an ageing piece of paper kept in the interstices of extra preservation in the leaves of a book and not any longer in a pocket over his soldier's heart 'She'

was perhaps the nearest  
to the original premise  
of wife that his imagin  
ation could get So his  
tired mind adopted her  
Thus he found himself  
looking into other faces  
for the presence of black  
steel-engendered dots  
And naturally since his  
methods of choosing were  
mad his choice was mad  
too and he landed him  
self with many clumsy  
bed situations and no wife

i e he was now free to act  
because outside life had no  
existence independent of him  
And dethroning outside life  
was a step to dethroning inside  
life He came to know that his  
area of action or freedom was  
not outside or inside or any-  
where It was simply where he  
did not belong (i e freedom  
was not in space and time/  
number/identity)

and when he found her  
he knew she was not  
here or there but every  
where and not a dot

the archetypal figure of  
'other' people began to  
collapse

He began to yield to  
the divine mother She  
rode his phallus with  
flaming eyes

a woman however

much in disguise is always the  
divine mother

She never belongs

'He' in his hunt of creation  
tries to make the earth a  
belonging place. And he  
discovers through a yielding  
up of his flesh that he does  
not belong, indeed was never  
born

But she can see the  
glimmer of the truth through  
the flesh. Therefore she  
rides with such blazing  
eyes

just as over the  
battleground she <sup>flies</sup> ~~passes~~  
with floating hair

Forty-second Canticle

the soldiers have gone home Sickened  
 up now the heroism Rejected the ex-  
 ample of shining valour Medals thrown  
 away in truckloads No longer required  
 the reminiscences with their thrilling  
 tribal suggestions or the speech by the  
 eminent captain All that lay with im-  
 agination flair The smiles of boys  
 won wars A tint of hair could be de-  
 cisive How the general moved his  
 shoulders when he had a hunch could  
 signal victory And men sat singing  
 in the dark But now there is a function  
 clearly marked And if it happens to  
 concern grenades chemical disruption  
 of crops the systematic gutting of  
 villages why other men are equally en-  
 gaged in demolition for peaceful pur-  
 poses in crop spraying even the firing  
 of contaminated areas in the case of  
 cattle disease etc thus showing that  
 the function only has different results  
 in different fields One to life and  
 one to death Which should not give  
 rise to any extraneous dumbshow of  
 sacrifice belief courage or anything  
 on the level of viking atavism so to say

so put up your swords Put up your  
 hard revenges Nothing now but shining  
 steel will meet your victory or de-  
 feat So many have we lost on the way  
 Each death each cry is part of my  
 anatomy How bland has been the murder

and how unpausingly the war turns to  
 other fields Look how she passes in

the street a disc of silver light  
 in her eyes where she has murdered  
 a child The hordes that pour past  
 have each a murder under the careless  
 hair So many knives have twisted  
 in the night so sure has been the  
 slide of steel the gleaming surgeon's  
 eye that stays the kicking child

the climax of the steel  
 revolution lies in the  
 abortion centre where the  
 young committ their  
 first act of premeditated  
 murder which prepares  
 them for the bigger acts  
 of war

blessed is the woman who has  
 never Long is the path of the  
 one who has ever For she has  
 cut herself You did not knife  
 another in the dark it was  
 yourself No wonder that you  
 cry Some flowers have drifted  
 sullenly down with the falling  
 of night in the body in the  
 womb and these are for you

darkness has fallen in the  
 passages No torches gleam  
 No glad forragers no ex  
 panding of soft walls A  
 candle spits Some murder  
 has been done Silence has  
 fallen on the cave and  
 these mothers will not

the divine mother will  
 not bring forth in con-  
 ditions of captivity  
 She therefore chooses  
 war (technical develop-  
 ment) as her means of  
 escape

the murderesses are vouchsafed  
 automobiles and when they  
 vreathe out it is exhaust gas

the use of the knife and the renunciation of the knife are close by a hair's breadth (the surgeon is a man of nightmares) Henry VIII's protestant revolution provoked a long outburst of poetry in England Napoleon's revolution provoked the same in France

click goes the cattle gun slit goes the knife clatter goes the pulley and the blood flows down the gutters The walls have heard such shouts They hang by hooks These hordes enter by night and by morning are divided Such multitudes have been seen Their <sup>huts</sup> ~~ghosts~~ live up the hill in ~~the hills~~

in the eyes of Atar the sun god there was only one crime---cooking dead flesh

the daily extermination of animals is the war visited on other creatures Thus they too are drawn into the struggle They are not simply edible bystanders

the fear of the murdered becomes the fear of its eater The anger of the murdered the anger of its eater The assault on the murdered the assault on the eater (At the moment of slaughter the animal's terror is said to secrete a poison or acid into the system This becomes the poison of the eater)

the flesh is in such turmoil Its sex erupts in meteors that fly

across the sky The heart beats  
 fitfully in winds in drifts that  
 take whole cities bladders livers  
 with them There is a state of  
 fever in the hills The patient  
 landscape trembles to the point  
 of magnetic attraction Depend  
 ent corpuscular populations un  
 accountably die off or just as  
 unaccountably do away with them  
 selves Night and day and soft  
 and hard and growing and dying  
 and laughing are all mixed up  
 And entirely other forms such  
 as only the stars would tell  
 are lurking in the smiling dark

the visible is an end-of-  
 the-line product of the  
 invisible

nature disasters and body  
 disasters are the same

the earth is equally with  
 ourselves a hospital case in  
 dire stress

the believers in the visible  
 are victims of 'unaccountable'  
 disease

disease is a great or small  
 attempt at suicide

smoking, drinking, over-  
 sexuality, speeding, drug-  
 taking, night-wakefulness  
 are extensional diseases  
 (i.e. outside props are  
 gently or harshly engaged  
 to fulfil suicide) The  
 non-extensional disease  
 often contracted as a  
 result of these extensional  
 ones is carefully separated  
 by the mind from its cause  
 (is 'unaccountable')

suicide is a savage haste  
 for the divine without  
 acquaintance with it

the voice of agnosticism  
 is the engine

Forty-third Cantic

take flies settling on an  
 arsenic-impregnated pad  
 They will mate a second be  
 fore dying in order to a  
 chieve security not progeny

the use of sex for the dis-  
 burdenment of sorrow leads  
 to further sorrow It arises  
 from the mistake that we  
 belong here

death-sex is the music of  
 war Where halls where at  
 mospheres ring with death  
 sex becomes remedial and  
 gives rise to anger and then  
 more remedial sex in ever  
 darkening spirals to despair

hence we have the disarming  
 contradiction much felt by  
 beginners that the practise  
 of sex draws love inch by inch  
 to where she languishes and dies  
 and will not longer recognise

sex is consonant with mad-  
 ness but love is not

Forty-fourth Canticle

it will never be said of the bird  
 that he failed in any particular  
 His pecking will be perfect his  
 hops the kind originally endowed  
 His worm will slide the same in  
 each millennial field And he will  
 sing from the selfsame tree that  
 ever hugged with shade his song

it will not be said that this was  
 wrong much less irrelevant It  
 will not be said that what he  
 tunes his song by can be wrong or  
 what he hops by can be malinformed

absent to him is the present voice  
 that in him sings And absent is  
 the wire inside his claw And ab-  
 sent is the figure inside the gloom  
 that makes him sing and touches  
 leaf to make the warming fire

everything of a technical  
 character has the same  
 function---of telling the  
 story of the world as if  
 it were the only place  
 Heaven and hell are further  
 extensions of this idea  
 on a pre-steel level

the suicide's conviction  
 that life is right at the  
 bottom drab is a recogni-  
 tion of the fact that we  
 do not belong here, with-  
 out the wherewithal to

realise it in experience  
Hence the need for technical  
assistance

the yawning suburbs of the  
Thirties, fat with 'reality',  
produced their suburban  
Beelzebub in hitler He  
was simply their alter ego  
The middle class everywhere  
simply carried out in bed  
and behind locked doors  
what he announced publicly  
The jews were reviled a  
million times over, and they  
reviled themselves a million  
times over, before hitler  
put it into political lan-  
guage

it will not be said that any  
thing of his is his that song  
that claw that peck that pounce  
belong to him Never will it  
be said that he is present to  
himself and owner of his gifts  
Or that the gloom of the leaves  
that holds his song is where he  
only belongs and always rests

the homosexuality and herm-  
aphroditism that mark periods  
of great friction of ideas  
are a withholding of love on  
the sexual plane because the  
race is held up so to speak  
in its progenitive decisions

the drunkard will see others  
as drunk, the sick man may  
suffer the same trick of  
sight, and the homosexual  
sees the heterosexual as a  
'potential' or 'suppressed'  
homosexual He sees the  
heterosexual as suffering  
the woman's constant demand  
for servicing while yearning  
for the freedom of loving  
no one

the armies of homosexuals

are the eunuchs of God  
forming up They mark a  
new turn of religion

likewise a suicide is the  
urgent need for another  
body

~~Removal of the eunuchs  
from the world~~

The idea that the universe  
is dark and cold and empty  
is barbarism defined  
Hence barbarism entered  
the first christian theo-  
logy after the desert  
fathers in this form It  
entered in order to elim-  
inate itself, working  
through the system like a  
poison until violent vom-  
iting took place in the  
form of the nineteenth  
century (i e the disrupt-  
ion of local life every-  
where by the creation of  
world markets)

civilisation is the inher-  
itance by great numbers  
of the opposite idea

by its study of a throbbing  
and alive universe (i e  
radiation and vibration)  
science will now complete  
the process of elimination  
in the last redoubts of  
the steel mind

Forty-fifth Canticle

he saw him throb like  
waves like waings He  
said hullo to one he  
had not seen before  
but was himself and  
now walked shining at  
his side He saw how  
he had killed himself  
had fired his bullets  
in his selfsame face  
had died himself and  
in the field lay talk  
ing silently with men  
face down and motionless

53847

we choose the kind of sheath  
which will serve our slow or  
quick purpose Think of all  
the millions of choices from  
mineral to vegetable

the steel revolution, in-  
volving over the centuries  
long religious wars and  
civil massacre and the ruin  
of the young by work/persecut-  
ion/famine not to mention  
the disruption of the pro-  
genitive process in animal,  
vegetable and mineral,  
was the equivalent of a  
thought in a room

one whose dream all life had been bad  
and was older than 53847 decided one

night in his trench to clean his bed of its wife's lovers by destroying an enemy. The night was silent damp and the enemy too. He needed to remove a man who had entered his bed that night and any man would do. The hated one never has a name and his face and his limbs are anyone's. The morning papers that reached the front the crackling radio were loud each day declaring the official enemy arranged to last for the length of the war and quiet the worms that each man had in his head or his bed by rationing out one common enemy. He drank as much scotch as the bottle held and sat looking at his nails by the light of a candle breathing hard his men all round him knowing that his enemy in this case a youth of twenty or so with frightened blond eyes was on the other side behind a quickfiring gun. Now this young man behind the gun was not quite sure of his hate and only half believed in the enemy's existence on the other side. But when the bad dreamer jumped to his feet and called to his men to follow him he knew that the enemy was there. He saw him suddenly swaying screaming across the night in front and pulled the simple trigger in his hand and to his amazement fear the night clattered with armament and the shadow fell with a gasp in the middle of the field and his men had not followed. They threw the empty bottle of scotch away and phoned to the reare for another officer. This is how a dream can lead straight to its fulfilment. In this case the enemy was destroyed precisely as promised since the enemy was himself.

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