

Two Poems

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Nested Masks

The center may seem near

Waking to the sun a cudgel bludgeoning
front-desk clerks and taxi drivers crumbling all
to tenuousness even stone can't remedy
Impossible heat making concrete sweat and crack
driving the most progressive town elders
back under thatched roofs

Waking to the inescapable mythological fall
and rounded pyramid watchtowers on the white road
unprecedented forms symmetry insisting upon green

Steep white staircase like the skirt of an obstinate god
animated by a voice at the top a face speculated
by the crook of tree roots and the billowing
behind closed eyes

The center may seem near

But masks nest within masks
The face of every principality contorts
and retreats to centerless chagrin

Appearance is always folly here

The Dance of the Million Veils

Arrayed in the cosmic gossip of ornament
civilization caresses as it thrusts upon us

The dance of the million veils
No culmination nor consummation
only unfolding and arousal

Wherever it withdraws
the vacuum teems with angels
with every divine mongrel
we suspected ourselves to be

Sphinx Satyr Gryphon
None any more elaborate a fiction
than the disguises we devise to enter
this hurricane of specters

and stare into the polyamorous eye
of a great if perverse father
who pleats curbs gutters ledges to leaves
folds the veins of leaves to faces
assigns the faces to saints and dragons
and opens their mouths in awe or just to sing away
a thousand years of rainwater

Even the crushed leaves on honeycomb stones
muster to lithe or haggard faces
and cohere into characters

But the apocalyptic tableau
where the final ghost removes its final mask
and unveils the one true name
is just another plaza on a titillating meander

