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# The Temptations of St. Anthony

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# The Temptations of St. Anthony

*Tom Tipton*

Clasped by an incalculable light  
He fretters away the hours of temptation  
Pulled through beams of enfleshment  
To the ephemeral equinox of spirit.

Blasted back to earth by an itch,  
The spiraling center of meditation  
Moves an inch and collapses about him,  
Unravels a slither of thread.

Prayer devolves into visions of breasts,  
Sweat droplets tracing the curves of an exhausted lover.  
Hunger fills itself with phantom food,  
Banquets of meat, debauchery of wine.  
Full! Full! Full!  
His fantastic body sated, he dreams of dreams of sleep  
And within that sleep he dreams again of breasts and food.

Struggling to the surface of the instant  
"No" screams out from some unknown reserve  
To wither and sag the beauty before his eyes  
And worm the fetid banquet.

The comfort of deprivation and numbing meditation  
Returns as he marvels anew the need for a merciful God:  
All this for the eggshell sin of a slipped moment of inattention.  
A humidity of silence and darkness hangs about him.  
Tearfully, he begins again from the beginning  
Searching for the single golden thread connecting him to God,  
To grasp it in prayer, to pull himself up and out of his body,  
A blessed suicide of flesh birthing the spirit.