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NATHANIEL MACKEY

Song of the Andoumboulou: 108

One thing I could say about
ring was as it went around I
felt uprooted. Ring was all
I knew if I knew anything,
aco-
lyte of not-know of late...
Circling, put upon by he,
she, they and we, Itamar, Mrs.
P, all the pronouns, all the
names,
Anuncio and Anuncia not
the least. I wasn't Anuncio
but felt I was, Anuncia's
hip
against his his would-be
world
without end, thigh rolled up
on thigh, heavenly her atop
him... Nut she might've been
or he'd have had her tease,
pre-
tend, there but not there, grudging
intimate, blasé abandon, re-
mote. Her faraway look he'd
have
seen up close, offhand inti-
mate, nose dilated more by
her own smell than his, re-
luctance their upstart muse...
Nut
she might've been, arced over
him, loin musk opening her
nose but uncommitted, above it
all,
Egyptian sky... It was the rim
of the well or the ring of the
world. The well of the ring

it
 might've been... Thought after
 thought after thought, arc in
 all of them, Nunca's abstract
 be-
 hind his hands grabbed at,
 reaching past the one that was
 there... Ring's farthest reach
 of mind it might've been.
 Round and round, mindless,
 I
 went... I wore lensless wirerim
 specs,
 closed my eyes, not to see what
 he saw, so put upon I was, not
 to see him and her looked at...
 They were the same, Andoum-
 boulou, in each other's face,
 faces
 where their legs met, neither
 knowing up from down. Ring
 was helical shout, the hill
 they went up and down, all its
 choric
 urgency theirs again, not to
 know so they might have
 their way, their gambit, shed their
 regret, have their shot... A
 dawn-
 ing sound they wanted but
 dark and without corolla, solace
 at their beck, they thought, tugged
 from under them, a forwarding
 they
 felt taken back... They felt the
 verge they were on, the welling
 up, the wet lid, noquat lift and
 relinquishment, verge they wanted
 wiped
 away

•

They'd walked in circles
 holding signs, up with this,
 down with that, dream their
 suzerainty the slogan said. A
slow
 dervish it wasn't but was, a
 demonstration, a protest
 in love's republic, love no
 republic yet... Mind at large,
feet
 following, home where whim
 took them, newly named Fasa,
 strewn since who could say
when,
 sought city farther off than
 God... The glad work of
 getting there they called it,
 no matter how grim they
were,
 peripatetic stress of blood
 what there was of it, mind un-
 attached, feet hemorrhaging,
blown
 grit peppering their skin...
 Around and around they
 went holding placards, cir-
 cling some lack they protested,
Nub's
 embassy undone... It wasn't
 Nub's collapse or lost money
 they were mourning, elegiac
birth-
 right's lurch and repercussion,
 it wasn't as attributable as
that...
 Blue sky lay above, ostensible
 benefice, Nut's light disguise
they
 thought

A subdued cry caught in
their throats leaked out, breath
packed in cracks in dry mud...
It wasn't Zār they were in
but
it might've been, Dread Lakes
diaspora they'd come thru
they thought, nothing no matter
where
they looked, flat cabinet, heaven's
cracked integument coming
down... Glimpse and departure
love's
currency they'd read, each the
other's alternate book, lids heavy,
the
look they gave going
away

•

One thing I could say about
ring was as it came around I
said keep out of it, the we or
the
would-be we truly them, no
tune lifted my feet... There
was the world I reminded
myself, Nub's new entropy
not
to be dismissed, I nursed a
low moan in my throat. Leaflets
and confetti came down from
the
clouds, rain the ushering
horns would have none of, trom-
bones bolted my feet at ring's
edge, the one thing I could
say
stuck to my tongue... Ring
was
none other than rung, low
brass expounded, lift I'd not
be given to. I gathered my
anguish in a bag, sucked wind
and
hiccupped, coughed and
coughed again, coughed up
straw...
Rung's doubling back, dou-
bling's bolt it seemed it was,
orbit arbiting light it might've
been.
Orbit arbiting light was another
Nub was all I could see, Anuncio
and Anuncia Quag's two backs...
So
it was the one thing I could say

was more than one, unspun am-
biguous witness, wound unecstatic
stump... Antiphonal whimsy why
they
were so up and me reluctant, fist
in my chest, remote, low brass's
consort, contrapuntal straw
coughed up... The concept slid
and
we slid with it, weeping wrung one
with sweat. Wizen'd voices' rough
concupiscence, toll and tolling's
es-
cort, the chorusing horns' condo-
lences glum... We made a game
of
it, parallactic hub to ring's rim,
rung's perimetric slough. The
concept slid and came back and
we
came with it. Not to get one's
hopes up I warned and the horns
also, also and as much and all
the
more

I was love's own distant
lover, first body and first
head I kept at bay. First
body,
one foot at ground level,
walked with a hitch, the
other foot underground...
Be sold on hope, it seemed
I
heard Sophia say. Why
sold I wondered, quick to
correct. Be souled on
hope, Sophia said...
Rung
was to rim as ring was
to rut. My second body
leapt
and leapt
on