

To Goya

(Castres, September 25, 1980)

L'Hotel de Ville

is sleeping now:

Touched darkly, intermittently,

by street-lit shadows,

you are hanging in pictures

bled from your hands.

Bodiless to me you are:

I do not know

where you have gone,

where they have buried you.

But I have journeyed

to Castres

to tell you

a secret,

though what I have to say

may disturb you —

even as your malformed faces,

derelicts, beggars, lazars,

maimed, bleeding, dying,

empty sockets

have disturbed a few eyes

walking through Del Prado

and the Louvre:

Nothing has changed.

They are still

putting the pigs of opposition

on spits,

throwing guts in the fire,

ripping out groins,

fingering out eyes;

the poor have multiplied,
the filth has compacted
through a few slow centuries;
ragged eyes,
contorted mouths,
the dying generations
are crowding Los Ramblos,
the streets of smaller cities,
the bus-lined beaches,
the bee-hived houses of Lisboa.

What you have told us

to look at,
looks at us still, —
but we are unashamed.

Unacquainted with wrath

and contrition,
our hands are skilled alone
to ape the mind's inviolate diseases.

Perhaps, in the morning,

crippled by figures
of your outraged heart,
a whisper will tell me
how Hope, deranged,
bloated, beheaded,
rotting in soldiers,
writhes upon canvas,
struggles
and dances,
sings and survives.

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