

THE EARLY PART OF THE WAR

The anarchist forced his rosary into the monk's ear, shattering
the tympanum.

Little children singing nursery rhymes bobbed the nose
of the Virgin Mary.

They burned the churches, women hitherto pious threw
their beads and missals,
Their candles, crucifixes and holy water receptacles,
Pictures of saints, statues and pious reading into the flames
Of communal fires, chanting revenge.

Atheistic revenge consisted of burning priests alive
and burying them alive

And sisters and brothers and simply the pious
Whose piety offended, who wore clean collars to the rich
man's funeral,

And some were simply shot for daily communicants.

Robert Joseph Rosenberg

AT THE VILLAGE GATE

The trembling of a lamp, the sentimental horn moans,
A black bull of a man in a ruffled shirt offers his tenderness,
His essential loneliness to the moon goddess.
The subtle gray shadows orchestrate a splash of violins,
A horn protests the shortening days, chewing the cud of melancholy.
Rose leaves pressed in a novel, withering, lovely blood of thought,
The wonderous winged stars drifting in their burning frames
Are the silence of what might have been.

Robert Joseph Rosenberg

THE TANG HORSE

Aiee! Blood sweated hands, each crisscrossed line singing with pain
So I can hardly grasp the sword.

My hat lined with monkey fur is blood spattered, too, so much
red paint.

The harlots have fled with the baggage.

We are at the Pass of the Black Jade.

The snow covers the corpses of young men and fallen horses
covered with smoking entrails.

A man's hand clutches for his sword,
The fingers frozen in a lover's knot.

Robert Joseph Rosenberg

ASYLUM

The little gray mice leap from sack to sack in the cellar
of the madhouse.

The mullato attendant with the little mustache declaims
the fall of Lucifer

That beautiful morning, I scrub, I scrub

The sick excretions from the immaculate linoleum

With strong ammonia that makes me cry.

The faeces like little, bitter candies.

They go to work on another one, the face, the groin,

He is like a pulp before their white uniforms.

I must keep silent or they will ^{find} out about me,

Cross section of an eroded city or a blue world in vortex.

The silent spiked sun beyond the world and almost the orient -

The handsome blond belts me in the stomach

I bend double over the raop bucket and cough.

Cold, greasy water flows through the ringer.

Mickey Mouse is smiling through his tears.

I see him clearly.

The brown river gods are rolling cigarettes of broomstraw

And smoking; Mekong, Indus, Iriwaddy.

No matter, soon I will be running messages for the Heavenly
Intelligence.

Robert Joseph Rosenberg

MUSEUM

A leaf descending like a bird, whirled into the snow.
The chops and cuts of my silken yellow dog.
A weed of frost, the sweat of crystal.
My friend has become a silhouette of black felt,
A clandestine valentine for dogs and birds!
Once the laughing Roman maiden of golden hair sucked his white throat
But she is, oh, no more, lust and dust swept under the hard cot
And he is become a silence, keen as a stiletto,
A dagger of the inmost mind where the old man and his wheezy horse
Wearing gas masks emerge from the limestone cave
And the woman with the many breasts is ugly again, sitting
 on a red stool
And the young lord reclines, concerned for his purity,
 which is a vapid lie.
After having betrayed his love, the entire company and the
 sylvan star.

The thin arm of the great, mad general, brandishing a flashing
 cutlass
Arrouses the brown horses to fly in battle
Across the charging horde of the levantine desert.
His arm wears a blue sleeve torn at the famished elbow,
Sporting gold lace, imperious command to rise up,
Ride again through the brown dust.
Round, smooth creatures shaped like tiny blimps with grotesque
 faces wait in roofless cellars.
Two ruined china dolls with staring darklashed eyes recline,
Their springs broken, their joints empty
An angel will leave a silver ring set with four turquoises

MUSEUM (cont.)

for my mother.

Robert Joseph Rosenberg

THE LACKEY OF LOVE

The clatter of a leash of steel,
The spokes revolve and tear the breast,
Where were tears when tears were real
And to love meant my heart's rest.

Whips lash from the harlot's breast,
Painted eyes and hennaed hair,
Borrowed love from Sister Pest
Tears a good man down, arse bare.

Lechery's a hungry food,
Flesh alone won't satisfy,
Weary of what we knew was good
Hungrily embrace the lie.

Putrid, as most corpses are,
Who could love thy bitter jest,
Who forgive thy crimson pride,
Know the heart within thy breast.

Who could take thy hand with love,
Kiss the tears awa that run
Like saliva from above
That the wicked looms have spun.

Who embrace thy rotten waist,
Tell thee thou wert all to him,
Kiss the gelid lips that taste
Carnal as the Devil's whim.

THE LACKEY OF LOVE (cont.)

Find me such, he would I find
To forgive our fantasy,
Our nightmare of the bitter mind
We ate and knew twas sophistry.

Robert Joseph Rosenberg

THE SHADOW OF THE WAR

The shadow of the war moved across the campuses,
Dim death would cut down all our flowering,
Would kill us wherever we hid,
With foulest breath of machines would kill us all
Death's fingers tear mother from child, spouses apart,
And striding across the seas in a minute or two,
Blasphemous or silent minion,
Choke the song in the poor man's throat,
Steal away the honeyed kisses, drown us in hot hysteria,
So all men may be poorer, until our strength gone
We whisper no more.

Robert Joseph Rosenberg

LEWIS CARROL

Alice, adventure is for thee,
Chess becomes monotony.
Kitten-cat is very warm.,
Sleep becomes thy little form.

All the jo of fantasy
Dyes my little melody.
String I my instrument
At your consent.

Each episode is made and stands
"Not the work of other hands",
Men criticize and spoil my joy.
I have made a children's toy.

Robert Joseph Rosenberg

PREMONITION

The rain in silver cadenced streamers runs.

The brittle stars blaze in awful fear.

The end of all things, I await, is near.

Who walks down the thundering sea,

In beauty more ardent than the blazing sun?

The eagle in his eyrie waits,

In patient solitude I give my thanks

This peace will bring a blanket of the stars.

Robert Joseph Rosenberg

JESUS, SAVIOUR OF OUR RACE

Jesus, Saviour of our race
Can I look you in the face,
Was your agony my own,
Did you suffer all alone?
John and Mary standing by
While cruel men did you crucify
And you conquered Hell and Death
With your last forgiving breath.
My poor soul too would he save
Though I've been both fool and knave,
Grant me Hope and Faith and Love,
That are tidings from above.

Robert Joseph Rosenberg

CURLY HAIRD CRIMINAL

As a mirror subtly distorts, the image shimmering upon silver,
So your heart outfoxes itself in the pursuit of truth,
For you are as a glass reflecting the Image without soul.
The tattoo cross on the forearm escapes your perspective, hidden
in the liquid of your soul.
Curly haired criminal! Say rather this was an early Christian,
And a martyred one, surely.

Robert Joseph Rosenberg

TO TERPSICHORE

Terpsichore, you pleasure me
Though I have never learned to dance/.
Your fairy rythms of romance
Are endless
What set them all dancing
So close, boy to girl?
Gentility enhancing
In the dances whirl.
In a circle, couples or alone -
King David danced before the throne of God,
Some dance till they are overcome
And Death dances with the crowd.

Robert Joseph Rosenberg

INNOCENCE

Children gay as little flowers dancing on the grass

Under the smooth garment of Heaven

Beyond the arrow of a river,

Blue vein of a river, it's heart, mother the sea,

In a circle round in bright colors they dance

Beyond the bread of the woods and the dust of crossroads,

What innocence is mine to have seen their sport!

Soon they will disappear, leaving me alone,

To wonder at so much gaiety

Robert Joseph Rosenberg

GARDENS

June brought all life reincarnate again
The spring rains had washed the winter gone
And old leaves burnt in a magic flame
As nature salted in our town.

The roses bloomed upon the branch of thorns
Followed by daisys that adorn
The walks of lovers and the corn
Victorious and waiting to be shorn.

The crown of tulips first to blossom
And flags we collected in our passion
And strawberries so red and sweet
Are spreading in the weeds the summer's heat,

Robert Joseph Rosenberg

A DREAM OF STALIN'S GHOST

Up from the grave rose Stalin's ghost
And all the demons kissed his stole
For he did betray the Sacred Host
And learned men that had no soul

In form of gass, cloud he rose
Like a balloon, treason to preach,
To add to all the poor men's woes
Revolt in deed and speech.

Those he claimed were marked for Hell,
Those he insulted martyred.
He claimed for his own the hypocrite swell,
The treacherous and chicken hearted.

Like a stench in that graveyard dark
He disappeared on his mission,
To brand the lost sheep with fiendish mark
And save them from the Christian.

Robert Joseph Rosenberg

1965 (cont.)

At least a year's more peace I pray
And let the old year wither away,
Like fruit outward fair and sweet
Attractive but poisonous to eat.
I realize the whole shebang may be destroyed
This is a time when we are all annoyed
I, myself, do not wish to survive the act
That revealed our sordid nightmare as a fact.
I'll leave to others the sacred fire
And join the general funeral pyre.
For still the brittle game of death goes on,
The battle of negotiations, the cuckold's crown
And still the traitor casts his money down.

Robert Joseph Rosenberg

MADHOUSE

If there is no Hell, whence comes this strength to destroy my life,
Or was history invented in a madhouse?

I can well imagine God Omnipotent is there,
He never ate nor slept and showed me his penis which was a black snake.

Robert Joseph Rosenberg

THE ASH TREE

The king he saw a beauty fine
And wanted her for concubine.
To clasp her round he's undertaking
And take her to his castle quaking
But up there sprang a hero bold
And stole her from that dotard old
and hid with her in a fairy wood
And ate the ash berry for their food.

The king pursued in hot desire
And for our hero in hot ire
He sprang with his enchanted sword
And killed the two without a word.
Their blood spilled round the gray ash tree
That had given them their privacy.

The king returned to his angry hill
Lamenting oer so sad a kill
For in his fiery jealousy
He had foresaken sweet mercy.

Robert Joseph Rosenberg

BAPTISM

Take this candle, hold it in your hands.

Ascend like the Southern Cross

Across the broad seas of this world.

Take this Host, let it cleave to your palate,

This candle is Christ also.

Robert Joseph Rosenberg

FEAST OF THE NATIVITY

Let us praise the Infant King
Bread and wine to worship bring.
Let us kneel upon the stone
Before the Infant's marble throne.
Worship here the baby King
Whose hol praises ages sing.
Our humble gifts to Heaven ascend
Our sickness to heal and our faults to mend.

Robert Joseph Rosenberg

THE SNOW IS DISAPPEARING

The snow is disappearing now
Like troubles from a wrinkled brow,
The road is full of holes and ruts,
The squirrels are seeking hidden nuts,
A bluejay saw I on a roof
And take his rasping song as proof
That soon my birthday will be here
Because his voice is very near.

Robert Joseph Rosenberg

