

Ode to joy – frank o'hara

We shall have everything we want and there'll be no more dying
on the pretty plains or in the supper clubs
for our symbol we'll acknowledge vulgar materialistic laughter
over an insatiable sexual appetite
and the streets will be filled with racing forms
and the photographs of murderers and narcissists and movie stars
will swell from the walls and books alive in steaming rooms
to press against our burning flesh not once but interminably
as water flows down hill into the full-lipped basin
and the adder dives for the ultimate ostrich egg
and the feather cushion preens beneath a reclining monolith
that's sweating with post-exertion visibility and sweetness
near the grave of love
No more dying

We shall see the grave of love as a lovely sight and temporary
near the elm that spells the lovers' names in roots
and there'll be no more music but the ears in lips and no more wit
but tongues in ears and no more drums but ears to thighs
as evening signals nudities unknown to ancestors' imaginations
and the imagination itself will stagger like a tired paramour of ivory
under the sculptural necessities of lust that never falters
like a six-mile runner from Sweden or Liberia covered with gold
as lava flows up and over the far-down somnolent city's abdication
and the hermit always wanting to be lone is lone at last
and the weight of external heat crushes the heat-hating Puritan
whose self-defeating vice becomes a proper sepulcher at last
that love may live

Buildings will go up into the dizzy air as love itself goes in
and up the reeling life that it has chosen for once or all
while in the sky a feeling of intemperate fondness will excite the birds
to swoop and veer like flies crawling across absorbed limbs
that weep a pearly perspiration on the sheets of brief attention
and the hairs dry out that summon anxious declaration of the organs

as they rise like buildings to the needs of temporary neighbors
pouring hunger through the heart to feed desire in intravenous ways
like the ways of gods with humans in the innocent combination of light
and flesh or as the legends ride their heroes through the dark to found
great cities where all life is possible to maintain as long as time
which wants us to remain for cocktails in a bar and after dinner
lets us live with it
No more dying

Ode: Salute to the French Negro Poets Frank O'Hara

from near the sea, like Whitman my great predecessor, I call
to the spirits of other lands to make fecund my existence

do not spare your wrath upon our shores, that trees may grow
upon the sea, mirror of our total mankind in the weather

one who no longer remembers dancing in the heat of the moon may call
across the shifting sands, trying to live in the terrible western world

here where to love at all's to be a politician, as to love a poem
is pretentious, this may tendentious but it's lyrical

which shows what lyricism has been brought to by our fables times
where cowards are shibboleths and one specific love's traduced

by shame for what you love more generally and never would avoid
where reticence is paid for by a poet in his blood or ceasing to be

blood! Blood that we have mountains in our veins to stand off jackals
in the pillaging of our desires and allegiances, Aimé Césaire

for if there is fortuity it's in the love we bear each other's differences
in race which is the poetic ground on which we rear our smiles

standing in the sun of marshes as we wade slowly toward the culmination
of a gift which is categorically the most difficult relationship

and should be sought as such because it is our nature, nothing
inspires us but the love we want upon the frozen face of earth

and utter disparagement turns into praise as generations read the message
of our hearts in adolescent closets who once shot at us in doorways
or kept us from living freely because they were too young then to know
what they would ultimately need from a barren and heart-sore life
the beauty of America, neither cool jazz nor devoured Egyptian heroes, lies in
lives in the darkness I inhabit in the midst of sterile millions
the only truth is face to face, the poem whose words become your mouth
and dying in black and white we fight for what we love, not are.

The Ninth Symphony of Beethoven Understood At Last As a Sexual Message Adrienne Rich

A man in terror of impotence
or infertility, not knowing the difference
a man trying to tell something
howling from the climacteric
music of the entirely
isolated soul
yelling at Joy from the tunnel of the ego
music without the ghost
of another person in it, music
trying to tell something the man
does not want out, would keep if he could
gagged and bound and flogged with chords of Joy
where everything is silence and the
beating of a bloody fist upon
a splintered table