

OVATOR

I.

TWOMBLY

At length we rested where two seas met. A night bird unfurled itself like an ancient scroll shaken by gloved fists. We drew in chalk on the flat slates we'd carried in our packs, from the city of sorrows. Rather than build a wall. Rather than build a wall.

TWOMBLY

House sparrows in the crabbed ebb of the quince pecking at memories of one another. Wind stirs me like a gruel. Light frost. Vertigo has learned my secret name again.

TWOMBLY

From the deck of images, your card, a pilgrim's smear against glass. As if someone inside were looking out, or someone outside looking in. But you weren't, were you. You drew a circle around the name. And left it there, as if it could roll itself away.

TWOMBLY

Emigrants planting little pockets of ash in an otherwise barren plain. Are they following orders. What do they suspect. Are they in league with that traitor, the sun.

II.

TWOMBLY

Nobody cares about your sixteen shades of miracle. Photographs of a draped cloth, a chair. Something hidden. Something to wake with, something to soothe the bone.

TWOMBLY

Church of smoke mistaken for an alphabet. Now how do you pronounce it, Senator.

TWOMBLY

Small house rubbed almost out. The hero, fresh from his bath, his war. He sets the metronome, settles himself into a low chair. Listens to the map behind the veil.

TWOMBLY

The light gathered in the little ship until it sank. Then the light built another ship.

TWOMBLY

Each year, time set out a dish for him. He photographed not the workers but their labor, the muscles they made in the gears' depths. Next to the eclipse he placed another eclipse, then asked what "separate" meant. So what does "separate" mean, he asked. The seasons leapt, surrogate sails. LOOK this time we will teach the wind, we know what we are doing, thickets. Autoclaves. A vast hand pointing. And then, at each year's end, another little dish, carved as if from some saint's wrack or braille.

III.

TWOMBLY

It is possible, via refraction, to display time's dreamwork inside-out, as if the seams were showing. But those aren't seams, what you see, then. Not seams at all.

TWOMBLY

- i.* Orchestral setting for architecture, trumpets, and unsuitable ghosts.
- ii.* A ship in a cage. Variations on the ship. Variations on the cage.

TWOMBLY

Some of us were blind & then some of us were not & what are you going to do about that, patrons of the axe.

(We are going to build a tower with it. We are going to call that tower The Sea.)

TWOMBLY

Pretty little map the mind left, first in the rain, then among soldiers at attention in ranks along the ancient, dusty avenue. Crutched orchards, almanacs. A lapsed mean.