

Howl

Clones of the Bruegelesque demonic
 fasten bibs,
 take implements to a ruddy carapace
 steamed live.

No part of this poem is a metaphor. I give
 the rampant hominid its due, that twigged, viscid,
 pudding-bellied
 brute.

Let's paint
 a Sistine fresco of the *real*:
 Adam, indolent, his infant testes pillowed on a virile thigh,
 his newmade knee propping a newmade arm
 lavish with homo grace
 while dropping something from the supple fingers
 unopposed by God's—
 a body squirming
 live as Adam
 but condemned by Adam
 to precipitous hell:

the cauldron's boil

the seething steam—

Now through our vatican
 strolls a philosophic cap-and-bells,
 pointing aloft its pom-pom scepter,
 trumpeting syllogistic fantasy:
 words equal thoughts,
 thoughts equal consciousness—
 and so we babblers must anoint ourselves the sole
 proprietors of sentience.

We may flay

as we see fit:
 the screams,
 soul-kin to ours of utmost agony,
 emerging from a cat

struggling in a tank of water,
forced to swim
while its skin is peeled from its body—
no death granted
where efficiency prevails:
the swimmer swims, screeching, *swims*
while the humanoid outside the tank
peels, peels.

This is enough to warrant pestilence—
putrefaction of these minds
that boast a self
to the exclusion of all others'
as if no one else, for all those shrieks and squeals,
those thumpings on the cookstove, ever *felt*—
I call down ruin
on this pus-ball
spinning round a sun
that wanes too late. I curse each nervous system
brimming words and words
and diphthongs, phonemes, grunts
of sovereignty,
of scorn
for any human mind
so misguided as to press its ear between the bars
spanning the dungeon of another's pain
to let that white-hot needle play in its own recorded grooves,
dragging the shrieks upwelling from its own track
of pleas
from something shackled to a wall,
stripped of its verbiage, gibbering,
tearing its throat out
howling for its death
from heedless torturers
decked in feather boas and cat-lined coats,
swilling the latest data
on the serotonin rise in rodents
shocked, smoked, swum to death—in treatises
ripe for dinnertime discussion
over steamed crab, foie gras, and milk-fed veal—

who dine al fresco, always:

there they are! there on the ceiling,
looking down,
a thin shellac between them and the beasts,
their living bisque, their fricassee
preserved in skin
toward some eventuality, a wedding feast
or funerary lamentation on the parting of a soul—

cry, shriek
for the contents of the cookpot.

HOWL.