

EILEEN TABIOS

Deflowering Memory With Philip Lamantia

*I claim the glory, in you, of singing to you this morning
For I am coming out of myself and Go to you, Lord of the Morning Light
For what's a singer worth if he can't talk to you, My God of Light?
—from "Morning Light Song" by Philip Lamantia*

June 15, 2001

I. Buddha

Day opens with an appetite

 like that coruscating a man on a desert isle
 or one forced to define "mortality" as mere months
or you who should never wake to an empty bed
or I left bereft by news of cruel-eyed men penetrating the Antarctic
to excavate the only spot on earth birthing blue granite

Met Philip Lamantia at night:

 each second "historical" time acquiring an opulent opal's cast
 corridor raucous with paintings and masks
 Portuguese bicentennial "reserve" wine
 every book ever published (and not) stacked vertically
 and horizon

 -tally to trip

 angels in thigh-high leather boots and kind eyes
 masquerading as leather shadows tangoing with hallway light
Albert Mobilio seated on my left
Andrew Joron on my right
MJ wafting from a pipe
discussing the origins of agriculture
 masturbation as "anxiety, then relief" (male perspective)
 Medical Marijuana
 recovering Xoco who surrounded pink raisins with commas
 the Aztecs' failure to conquer the *Majakuagy-Moukeia*

Philip Lamantia read a poem decadently appropriately *opulent opalescence*
between cigarette puffs adding to the room's dusk:

The day non-surrealism became surrealist

Three poets applaud with the fervor
 of all poets ever birthed,
 the ghosts of those who died,

the foretelling of those to come,
those both (and neither) dead and alive

Somewhere, a magpie manifests Buddha nature
by using all materials available, privileging none over another,
to build a nest—
twig silvered by rain, cobalt ribbon, autumn-red leaf, lemon lie, brass coin—
a 24-carat gold coin—a poem eternally aflame...

II. sideways glances
canyons formed by texts
heaped high

a “beauteous beast” spilled
words yet to be defined

once, he interrupted himself:
“I must calm down”—

“regained/ his footing, securing
us from the sheer drop to the abyss below”

There are no floods here
No mud

III. Uncrumpled Violets
how many words are required to bear
the weight of witness
-ing you sing a poem
the room lavender everywhere

your hands formed a _____ for us
after you lengthened the saxophone’s last note

beneath your expansive gestures a fragility peeks
like a school of silver fish
that disappears suddenly silver ink marks rupturing oceanic canvas
when a shark or scuba driver blinks
bringing night
where coral’s breath
mutates sea into liquid jade

turquoise on Kachina doll hanging on your wall is color of sunlit ocean
embracing Greece while you explored Mexico *is ocean*

To meet you is to recognize:

I have spent 40 years moving towards you

You, the angel Michelangelo sensed within veined stone

who can choose among a multitude of churches for *Home*

I shall stay. No blow shall ever be imminent in this room scented by
uncrumpled violets

Purple air obviates despair
with the scent of non-sniveling youth

No chasm in your room, no movie
that would rupture air with a category academia labels "non-fiction"