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from The Cantos, 1

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from The Cantos, 1

ungh. um. mumnum.

Pisa sits all spit visceral, terracotta and dung ochre
I pissed where I pleased and upon whom god damn all, god
damn gun-trade rumblings (circa 193-)
and lo, I kept my women down.
draught after draught, toss it back (sotto voce)
and she doesn't know French and Jesus she's
useless, mistakes désollé for déprimé
but we the unfortunate fit
like content and form, or resource
fork to fork of data.
she is the stuff between my spinal discs
she is swollen lips and circonflex legs
(she is lists that run capricious,
that avalanche like a Yid genealogy
the advantage of the narrow path
to the tuna-net).

in a cage, in a cage all orange dust
and Etruscan narrative, kept like a bas-relief
(my arms and legs, flip-flop, flip
were half-in half-out of the round.)

I chipped a shiv from some
sort of frugging igneous rock
and let the twilight flash like water in its small hollows

and thought of her
and offered sunburn peelings and teeth
to the soldiers and the evening.
so they castored my asshole and Brilled my mad
mad beard, my speckled scalp 'ηπατος
and when a Dane claims, 'I feea nohzing,'
fear him. run, better yet, or beg for a decent hole to shit in.
I clamber about the flat steel on knees and hands.

every petrol station has a 'tu-me-manque, tu-me-

manque' pump, and diesel engines miss her, miss
the railroad-straight and simply-gripped plane
where side is hip, and small of back is wrist
where bend is push, twist shove
hair shock (Russian sheaves of wheat) plattomen
 (we consider Plath's Veronica-bang)
like an oar-stroke, water-thick
like falling asleep.

Keanu honest and stifflingly dumb,
speaks like a wet heat
 e pluribus e pluribus

I would line her sleep-numb eyelids
with the only knuckle in my thumb,
would prod her labia more majora,
and we would bend like semaphore.

uphill pink grit crumbles beige under toenails
atonal gull-shrilling mnhmosunh
 on knees and hands, on knees
a scramble through brush and tumble
like a genotype struggling into a grandchild
a club on my neck, my own spittle-hiss and the last of the Iliad.
I am sucking dust.

it's a coffee-mug, it's a lexicon,
a Heathrow airport prayer-rug and a loo
APPROVED FOR TRAVELLERS ON THE HAJJ
(nota bene : preferred to junk-sick Mexican mop-jockey
piss-turns-paper-pulp Union Sta. it was Neo-Cla.)
I studied aluminium traffic, each mother
guarded, delivered – men and robot midwives move
alike, and now,

| *David Staniunas*