



Viron Erol Vert

## Of Part and Loaf

1

the flesh of the fathers whose gaping shadows like iron cover,  
cling fast, like magnets on blackness, drip without end.

2

a brother's erstwhile crystalline tears of hope,  
now like swords to polished sharpness whetted.  
aim at, beat upon, mutely fall to the depth of the grieving sea

3

like icy planets, floating above, with faces swollen,  
shattered through so much shame.

4

for they knew well what they did as invoking the God of all,  
they held in their reddened iron hands like a tarnished mirror the sickle.

5

silently sharing their lies – they whom in envy they tamed like circus horses,  
they greedily open like bird-beaks the dumb mouths of their slaves.

6

this they constantly sing with the raised brow of the eye, the warm,  
bright forepaw of the wolf, the poisonous song.

7

hastily, hungrily, the open wounds are covered up with red,  
with lustrous snow  
as under heavy quilted blankets, they lie like patterns,  
the bodies, old, new and dead

8

on it they lay the empty shell of their stone-rigid stone-heavy father, on pillows,  
made of the fattened flesh of their forebears.

9

raise to a toast the thousand-and-one bone beakers,  
carved in the shape of tears from the bones of the famished children.  
with a dull and wooden sound they clink them to the beat of their noisy words.

10

are they darning? they are darning!  
are they sewing? they are sewing!  
embroidering? embroidering!

11

on the pallid tight-stretched cheeks of their wives who have fallen silent,  
yarn of the shorn and gold-drenched head, calligraphy of tears.

12

their faces framed in the folds of a face-cloth of stone,  
as in white marble those patterned faces set firmly.

13

dark and gleaming like olives – eyes - set in grimacing powdered faces.  
dull and light like beans – eyes - set in bleak, wax-polished masks.

14

brows above them, brows between them, brows below, brows to the left, to the right,

15

deep-dark furrows, sharp-edged, in shadow they draw  
the lines dividing the senses.  
like tall, hollow teeth, each singly, turned always to their master,  
they stand like old chess pieces in plaster, damp and grey.



16

back to back, shoulder to shoulder, they do their best,  
nodding, to the devil's measure to escape the time's loud voices,  
hand in hand, their old grey tenants,  
they are also called the losers of the game.

17

they look abashed out of aching, narrow windows,  
making no sound, at the quietly sighing metropolis writhing in pain.  
thoughts start to fly, start to fight, start to circle!

18

like layers of potter's clay they fall, heavily, wet on wet,  
bit by bit, deaf and dancing on their old, decaying throne.  
towers of glass – wise, high, hollow – dance, fall, straddle.

19

quietly the tongues of fire move flaring over the white-washed isles of mind.  
knife-sharp they swing the digits of their dulled clock-faces.  
hills pumped botox-full, landscapes, mountains frozen in their laughter.

20

the bodies pasted over with the orders of dark, timorous paper.  
heavily hanging, rotted window-lids, bellied out like ottoman well-covers.  
iron bars, the eyelashes of the odalisques.

21

they sweep the empty steps of their prayer-houses squeaky clean, their stolen peace of mind.  
dark figures, dark shadows, dark creatures, amazed to paleness.

22

are they flying? they are flying! are they fighting? they are fighting!  
are they circling? they are circling! rioting, dancing, the winking of their vacant eyes.  
they sit like stone pigeons on the finger of the hand that points the way.

23

love-drunk they long for the devil's potter's-chair.  
they dent, they mould, they knead anew, over and over, incessant,  
the forgotten faces, the melting breasts of their unforgiving ancestors.

