

Bosch's Garden 3: A Translation Into English:

Vivek Narayanan

Right Side Panel

In zigzag pattern, top to bottom

What looks like sunlight
behind black mass of clouds

might just be
the pure rage of a city fire

on the march Skyscrapers in grids of light
but dark filters through makes its knowledgeable felt

Waters of the moat are red Militias siphon
over bridges All will burn All will fall

Bodies in the air as always
Bodies in air as if lost to it

bodies on narrow sky-framed walkways or
balanced on the implacability of rope

Ladders everywhere They hate us
Somewhere there's a forge

from where industry proceeds
but all rest

crawl on each other in the public square
or on the avenues right into the graveyard

Public midnight processions of high
and mighty – judges police

chiefs mayors city councilors
all will wear a mask and let the body

be offered
in naked foreleggedness



lamp will show us in silhouette
lamp bathes the dead afloat

*

The giant's lopped ears
pierced by wire and needle spear

become, with his blade
our vehicle of war

One climbing down from the noose
One held in lynch keyring

Naked one riding spotted toad
leads a second army of darkness

from the right and the solemn circle dance
of person beast nun trident

Man's only world
endless campaigns

on lower towers the public torture
elaborate ladder-filled

procedure fish man
handles the skewer

long wolves eat
from an armoured soldier's chest

the best audience sits below
where a cad rides

a woman like a pony riles
the crowd on

planked side benches
the wise and the witty confer

*

With a little flag of the bagpipe
of the gut It's me

doing my shrug contemplating the hatched
bleached butt bone where the staff dine



where the maid looks wistfully
out and the laundress

rolls her barrel Fossils
are habitats like this

Not just for acrobats
but hooded men gowned wizards

naked slaves
butterfly crows

Lower where my feet bones in boats
have been heeled and hollowed of their marrow

by time itself The solemn monkish
lesson proceeds Bodies are disposable

edible bodies for traps and clocks
Musicians dwarfed by harp and lute

Black swallows leave my butt I'm nothing
but the early bird's morsel

Platypus archer at ancient hunt
why certain faces remain why certain cries

ring through eyeballs and endless flags
of domain The thermometer the clock the ancient

measurements of our doom the lady of the die the nun
of expectoration the simple backgammon of cubs

*

Sheet music on your skin I'll sing my song by it
Some of us still fall from the bubbled thorax

The spaceman will see you now
He is a tree and given to the longest embraces

Raped on the rack by the squirrel-faced manta ray
Sucked at the teat by the emperor's dogs

Fondled by a pig in habits
pricked by the arrow through the palm



or by a head in the oversized mask
of the conscience

knowing art truly as
perpetual penetration the fallen jug

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Vivek Narayanan was born in India, grew up in Zambia and lives and teaches in the USA. An MA in cultural anthropology from Stanford University, and an MFA in creative writing from Boston University, Vivek has earned numerous fellowships and grants at Radcliffe, Harvard, Cullman Fellow at the New York Public Library to name a few. Vivek has been working for a while on his magnum opus - a booklength poetic meditation on Ramayana, the great Indian epic verse. He had edited and co-edited online journals and anthologies. Vivek's essays, criticism, and poetry have appeared in Agni, Granta, The Village Voice, Harvard Review, Caravan, etc.

Sketch: Dyuti Mittal

