

On The Opening Of Bishop's University Centennial Theatre

(To Arthur Motyer)

Ralph Gustafson

This place gives shape to life.
A shovel of galaxy down to a shoelace
Drawn to watch an old man die
To make a happy love (April
Being happily of more account)—
God digging his beginning or
That stare at final gravel:
Headfirst to tombstone, our search
Is meaning.

The night plane shakes a window.
Lifted at midnight over polar ice,
The scarps and mountainous green
Plunged where the eye at last
Finds reason for Atlantics—
The sudden testament of great perspectives
Found in the act, alone is profit.
Nothing's more except we measure
Theatres.

A room within a room holds yesterday's
Movement where we put the answer down,
The gesture meant to guard the hope.
We would be glad of help, a clarity
To shape our thought, behind the judgment
Our intent; invalidation
So we have compassion, board and nail,
The rude transaction of
This building.

(Do not disturb the spoon where Michelangelo
Stirs his green. He paints a ceiling.)
The cue we need, to play ourselves; the rat
Behind the arras. This stage, this prompt.
O enter Lear. The stormy globe
Is whipped up rain until he suffer.
All's solemnity, O nothing's got
Until the clown his desperate filbert crack
With sledge-hammer.

Only in this concrete is there answer.
 The fond escape, the tower, Plato's thought
 Are inept use, cliffs for the right foot only.
 God is got-to when he comes to grief.
 At Altamira, anthropos paints his cave.
 Jock holds his Jill for dear love while
 The world tips cockeyed heaven into shape.
 This room, this theatre of our entrance, is
 Our grace.

May our presence here inaugurate
 Ourselves, the truth found out,
 The lie returned, the wig and forestage of
 Our strutting plain to laughter,
 And our grief disposed.

LOOKING OUT TO SEA

Theodore Holmes

I stare out to sea waiting for my love
 Who has told me she is coming by boat,
 As if looking might make it happen:
 I have looked down the saddest city street at night
 Shiny with rain, and shivering with cold
 Drawn the collar of my coat tighter about me;
 Having mounted the battlements of warm flesh,
 I have crawled through the ashes
 Of many burned-out Troys; felt the need
 Of a fire to warm my hands at night
 Walking on the crust of ice that covers so much
 Of the world devoted to human concerns:
 Stared out across the waters of the ocean
 Toward the end of the world, where they disappear
 Beneath the lip of the sky—waited
 Before the endless gaze of the emptiness above
 For it to give some sign it recognized me—
 A wrinkle in the curtain upon God's bed,
 Evidence of life in the unbroken blue of his mind . . .
 Happiness is a speck of smoke on the horizon.