

# INQUEST

By LAWRENCE LIPTON

Lock the door. Let no one leave the room.  
A crime has been committed here. The headlines  
In their short and ugly words of violence  
Report a miracle: the wine turned water  
And the bread to stone. Cold April comes.  
*Agnosco ergo sum.* We've come full circle.  
Velocity, cohesion, color, sound,  
Waves and radiations: *res extensa.*  
Giordano Bruno chemically changed  
By thermal action; Jesus on the cross  
A rearrangement of the particles.  
The man of science with his final breath  
Defines the event: a thermodynamically  
Stable configuration known as death.  
Signs and rumors thrive. In Africa  
A gateway lonely and tremendous tall  
Leaned one hour against the moon and vanished.  
Divers drunk with rapture of the depths  
Have perished with a strange compassion, and  
Airfaring men have seen God's murdered eyes,  
Burned blind—such is the venom of our fears—  
Dart between the tracers and the flak  
And disappear. We take this testimony  
From lips of dead demonic men whose eyes  
Gaze inward on unspeakable things. And I  
Who cannot witness to their truth record  
These singular events for what they're worth.  
Let each come forward in his turn and speak  
If he is innocent of the crime. Or guilty.  
Tried, self-judged, self-sentenced and self-slain,  
For who is guiltless? then let each confirm  
The primacy of love, lest past rebirth  
We die and leave these large ignoble ruins  
To house the wild and innocent things of earth.