

Cristian Gonzales GOMES-OLIVARES

4 quotes, one riddle

Like a blind man in a darkened room
looking for the black hat that's no longer there, I confess
not to have drunk distinction's fruit, whether
from silver cups bought at the Polish court or from
the rejects of a Parisian junk dealer:
in fact, the panorama has been reduced, my dear,
to these crummy bars where they confuse us
with the generation of sixtyeighters, as outdated
as our rotten, punky garments: we've spent our
money just for the next glass, in imitation of the holy drinkers'
life (who soon will learn their last hope's always in their next glass).

But oh, my sweet, pardon
the poor taste of this exclamation, yet a high-anguished tone
is needed in the briefness of your feelings: sand
and sun will agree to protect us
from winter's attempts to curtail joy's vast
dominion. Though we're as far from the sun
as from the sand, let us drink: no need for
the waves, nor for the wind if the last glass
can be drunk near enough to the next one.

I want the grapes, bitter on the tongue's tip,
to bathe your palate accustomed to spits of others: so
I gathered the best vine stock, planted it with
my hands (from the skin comes the blend of fruit and thickness
that sets these words apart from any others) that sought out
other firm soils, and with the assent of no other army
than that of sadness. Sunsets are the only sin of nature
that could make you believe (if you let it go) oh my beloved,
my dearest, my life, at least in this poem,
in the beauty and the order of this world.

At least that might warrant
having quoted, among so many others,
from Dashiell Hammett, for instance, or from Joseph Roth
And above all from Malcolm Lowry.
The fourth is up to your wisdom.

the loss of sexual innocence

When law's privileges still were on my side,
we climbed to the treetops with the weak old guard's
nod and complicity, to drill the fortress' backward
discipline. From the bog around our feet
caused by the river's yearly overflow, surrounding the city, we did the best we
could:

to be present at our childhood's inauguration
when law's privileges still were on my side,
and the sun rose later just to let us go out in style.
The first time we made love
a poster was stuck to the wall in front of us
of one of those grease monkey shops (no. 10 Julio, at Carmen)
and the smallness of the cramped cubicle
and the smile from the poster wall
and the stains, records and announcements
of other, previous
solitudes