

## *the hands of God*

hands so small  
they can't quite reach  
the huge head of the ox  
in the stable:

hands so young and tender  
amidst the wrinkled, shrunken ones  
of the temple's sage:

hands callous'd, strong, but kind,  
chiseling a rough beam of wood:

hands raised to bless many a child,  
to heal many a sick,  
to forgive many a magdalen,  
to bring back to life many a lazarus:

hands sweating blood-crimson:  
hands riveted to the cross:  
hands limp,  
alone with a broken heart  
in the stillness of a lonely tomb:

hands shining glorious,  
more dazzling than the rising sun  
on eastern morn:  
they are the hands of God!

by RICARDO DE LA RIVA

## *the leaf*

on a barren bough  
sits  
a mellowed leaf:

it  
quivers,  
shivers,  
against the evening  
breeze:

detaches itself  
to float  
and fall,

to be borne away  
by a wailing stream:

must it be so  
when  
i am gone?

by RICARDO DE LA RIVA

## *finale*

Now, in seismic agitation,  
His emaciated flesh  
Meekly trembles.

A mournful theologic voice,  
Gasping in anguish,  
Crushes in.

Then, a White Hand clasps.  
A bugle sounds,  
The house weeps.

by CLAUDE AL. EVANGELIO

## *interlude with the noose*

the advent of the noose

let there be music  
wrap the throbbing, mellifluous note around me  
i can choke in its drowning stupor  
let the toes stand the cormorant pirouette  
suffering the nails dug their graves, split their agonies  
the dark tresses are but seaweeds clawing the night  
the opium-drunk eyes behind foggy lashes  
denies the denouement  
which is the corrosion of the flesh  
to that of a wriggling worm  
but i am content.

let there be mirth  
peal the bells that god stole from a spire  
to suspend pendulous in my throat  
the world blooms and bloats and cracks in the lungs  
over a blooming, bloating, cracking, joke  
open the mouth, contort the face,  
toss back the head, shed a tear,  
grow a canker, because life is jest sometimes,  
the diaphragm ripples a butterfly  
fatigued and painful to breath wrought  
but i am content.

then the noose comes

then the noose comes, beckoning furtive  
in its defamed, doom-starved ring  
in seemingly tremulous rapture  
it commences its swing,  
of ballet dancer and juggler wed  
are its grace and finesse:  
to the right, to the left  
a pendulum dereliction shammed  
to the left, to the right  
death deity!  
hallucinating  
fascinating

coding its contiguity ominous  
i stagger backward raving with scorn  
bare a claw, freeze afang, blossom an eye,  
the noose persists, mutely adamant  
so i flirt my toes and twirl myself near  
toy a finger, dart a shoulder  
while the noose is lost in a lullabye  
jerk a limb, jeer a smile  
while the noose is lost in a lullabye  
jilt a seaweed, bare a neck  
while the noose...  
i'm caught!!!

by MELINDA M. BACOL