

The Land of the Gods

Because I was no man to turn the world aside with a sigh,
 Because I was no man to turn the world aside,
 Because I was no man to turn aside,
 Because I was no man:
 Crossing the wilderness
 To ruin distress,
 I craved to whiten, my heart did pine,
 (For so to be was a thing divine),

The only memories I treasured
 Were zigzag memories uncensored:
 Witches and churches
 Psalms, war-marches
 Bamboo huts and cities
 Savages and beauties

Phoebus came pale and cold,
 On the morning that followed,
 In flocks they came,
 From vermilion to emaculate
 Swarming around still late.
 Bundled they came,
 Their smiles were lame,
 They rushed by one another,
 And none a sound would utter.

From theatres with collars
 In coats with tails
 And ladies and fairy tales

They lunched around their altars.
 There were no fires, legends, nor naked feet
 Nor music, nor dancing in the ancient street
 There were cars, money mere silver
 Wine, waist and lips so eager,
 Heaps of paper—love
 Blowing high above
 The springs of Cheuser
 Spread like tea on a saucer,
 It was place for thanks, excuses,
 For sex, courts, orgy-abuses
 Gayness, pride and vainness
 With wars, love and kindness:
 Like festive rice void of hart
 This was place without a heart
 Alas I began to wonder, to ponder,
 That I longed so much to blunder,
 For I had learned such game
 As to fake a smile, say a name.

My spirit dead, my mind castrated,
 My weary body suffered frustrated,
 Then painfully I began to reckon:
 Though with a jeer, a sigh, a scorn
 I could not turn aside the world,
 My banner patrimonial unfurled,
 I could turn aside and build my pride.

Vincent Tjanji

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