

GROUND ZERO

THIS GIRDER BEGAN
A BILLION YEARS AGO
BENEATH BOILING SEAS

BEFORE BREATH OR SIGHT
BEYOND THE SCOPE OF DREAMS
THIS GIRDER BEGAN
AS HEMATITE...
MAGNETITE...
BEGOT OF IRON AND LIGHT

A RICH DUST WAITING TO BE FOUND
GOUGED OUT OF THE GROUND
AND FORGED IN FIRE
TO STEEL

NOT UNTIL NOW DID I FEEL
COURSING IN MY OWN BLOOD
THE IRON WE SHARE
I DID NOT KNOW THAT IT TOO
COULD BE FORGED IN THE WHITE HEAT
OF ANGER AND DESPAIR

GAZING ON THIS RUBBLE
I FEEL, OH I FEEL

FAITH, MERCY, LOVE
ALL BURN AWAY
HEART AND GUT AND BACKBONE
TURN TO STEEL

NOW I AM STEEL
IRON CALLS TO IRON
AND FROM THIS HOUR
I STAND, IN THE SHADOW OF THIS FALLEN TOWER

I STAND A BEAM OF STEEL
BROKEN BUT BENDING NEVER
FORGED IN THE FURNACE OF MY RAGE
AND CHANGED FOREVER.

STAINLESS STEEL

I WAS NOT BORN WITH A SILVER SPOON
MY SPOON WAS ONLY STAINLESS STEEL
AN UNASSUMING, SIMPLE TOOL
LAID OUT AT EVERY MEAL
TO CARRY PABLUM TO MY LIPS
OR DRUM ON KITCHEN POTS AND PANS
OR DIG A PIE OUT OF THE MUD;
A TINY SPADE FOR TINY HANDS

A SPOON FOR MOTHER'S HOMEMADE STEW
NOT CONSUME OR CAVIAR
A SPOON TO PLAY ON OTHER SPOONS
WITH WASH TUB BASS AND OLD GUITAR
AND STIR THE EARLY MORNING CUPS
OF COFFEE BEFORE WORK BEGAN
AND IN ITS TINY CONVEX MIRROR
SHOW THE FACE OF EVERY MAN

I WAS NOT BORN WITH A SILVER SPOON
A SILVER SPOON WAS NOT FOR ME
MY SPOON WAS STEEL – AN INSTRUMENT
OF UNADORNED UTILITY
AND WHEN THE WASHING UP WAS DONE
IT NESTLED THERE WITH FORK AND KNIFE
REMINDING ME I TOO COULD LIVE
A LONG, UNTARNISHABLE LIFE

THE AWFUL EIFFEL TOWER

MONSIEUR DE MAUPASSANT STOOD AND STARED
AT THE AWFUL EIFFEL TOWER
ITS HATEFUL BULK OPPRESSED HIS HEART
AND TURNED HIS STOMACH SOUR
"I'D TEAR YOU DOWN MYSELF" HE STORMED
"IF I HAD IT IN MY POWER!"
AND A HEAVY FIST HE SHOOK AT IT.

AND YET DE MAUPASSANT, FOR HIS LUNCH
TO THE EIFFEL TOWER WOULD GO
THE PEOPLE CRIED "WHY COME HERE, SIR?
FOR YOU HATE THE TOWER, WE KNOW!"
"WHY HERE'S THE ONLY PLACE FROM WHICH
FOR A BLESSED HOUR OR SO,
I DO NOT HAVE TO LOOK AT IT!"

FOR THE BLOCK SHIPS OF ARROMANCHES. JUNE 9,1944

SCUTTLED AT NORMANDY
INTO A VIOLENT SEA
WE SANK

OBSOLETE VESSELS
BEREFT OF ORNAMENT, ACCESSORY, DEFENSES
SACRIFICES TO THE ROILING DEEP

OUR PROUD DECKS WASHED WITH SALT
OUR MIGHTY HULLS FILLED WITH SAND
OUR REWARD TO SLEEP
SHOULDER TO SHOULDER
AND SERVE
AS WE HAD NEVER SERVED BEFORE

CENTURION...BENDORAN...ATLANTIC
OUR NAMES ARE LOST
AND THE NAMES OF OUR CAPTAINS... AND OF THEIR MEN

OUR FINAL VOYAGE ENDED HERE
AND ANOTHER BEGAN
OF PATIENCE AND SILENCE
OF TAMING THE TIDE
AND LULLING THE WILLFUL SPIRIT OF THE SEA

SIDE BY SIDE,
FORSAKEN
DROWNED
WE FOUND
A NEW HUMILITY
AND FELT
THE RAGING TUMULT CEASE

AND FROM
OUR RAVAGED HEARTS
OUR SKELETONS OF STEEL
WE MADE
A HARBOR OF PEACE...
A HARBOR OF PEACE.

SHIMMER

WHAT IS THAT
IN THE DISTANCE?

SUNLIGHT ON WATER?
ASPEN LEAVES
BLOWing
IN THE WIND?

A SCHOOL OF
SHIMMERING FISH OR
SPARROWS WINGS?

NO OH NO

IT IS THE FLASH
OF A THOUSAND BLADES
SLICING THE AIR

YOU CANNOT SEE THE WOUNDS
FROM HERE
OR HEAR
THE TRAMP OF BOOTS
OR SMELL THE BREATH
OF FEAR
OF DEATH

ONLY THE GORGEOUS GLITTER
THE BLINDING
DAZZLING
SPARKLE OF STEEL

JEWELS
SCATTERED IN MUD
HEARTS
BLEEDING BRIGHT BLOOD

CLOUD GATE

THROUGH THIS CLOUD
CLLLLOOOOOOOUUUUUUUD

GATE

IS

ALL

ALL

ALL

ALL

ALL

THE WORLD

TWISTED

STRETCHED

MULTIPLIED

DIVIDED

SHI-I-I-I-I-I-I-I-I-I-I-NY

AS A

DROP DROP DROP DROP

DROP DROP DROP DROP

OF MERCURY

MY HAND MEETS MY **HAND**

HAND MY MEETS HAND MY

HAND

MY HEAD MEETS MY HEAD

HEAD MY MEETS HEAD MY
HEAD

AND SPRINGS EEEEELAAAAASTIIIIIC
INTO THE INTERNAL
ETERNAL
SKY

AND IN THE OMPHALOS
I KNOW
I FEEL
I SEE
THE LIMITLESS REPETITION
WHOLE AND IN PIECES
TOP AND BOTTOM
IMPOSSIBLE AND POSSIBLE
THE FLEETING
REPEATING PATTERNS
OF ME
OF ME
OF ME
OF ME
OF ME
OF ME
OF ME

STEEL AND LACE

YOUR STEEL
HAS TURNED TO LACE
THROUGH THE SHINING MIRROR
THE RINGING BLADE
THE IMPENETRABLE ARMOUR
RAYS OF SUNLIGHT REACH NOW
AND RAIN
SEEPS

YEARS AND YEARS AND
TEARS AND BREATH
AND BIRTH AND DEATH
HAVE WORN AWAY
LIKE STEPS ON STONE
A PATH INTO YOUR HEART
OF STEEL AND SOFTENED IT TO RUST

I LOVED YOU
IN YOUR PERFECTION
POLISHED, SHARP, TRIUMPHANT
YOUR REFLECTION
SHIMMERING LIKE STARS

BUT NOW
I LOVE YOU MORE
FRAGILE, FLAWED AND WORN
BLEMISHED WITH DECADES OF KISSES
AND FINGERPRINTS
BLESSED WITH A TREASURE TROVE OF SCARS