

The Memory of the Drift

Also by Paul Holman

The Fabulist (1991)

The Memory of the Drift, Book 1 (2001)

PAUL HOLMAN

The Memory of the Drift

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The Memory of the Drift

The Genii of a Secret State

I

He selected the great
closed helmet: it
might have fitted god
or hobgoblin. The
borrowed tape of star
music pleased him:
his trumpet of Helium

This blur of angels:
 the trace
 of a more brilliant
 language. Some
 diminish into cloud,
 too rapid
 [] birds' flicker
 []
 find a common shape
 in flower,
 star, Medusa's head:
 their sign. It
 shed that precision
 [] us
 no first loved site,
 no haunt []
 their note on space
 must fade
 []
 [] leave
 these altered folds,
 turn wild
 among hart's tongue
 or catnip. The
 ghost we dismantled
 is silent:
 even the underworld
 fails us. Each
 masque of shepherds
 []
 that looked trivial
 once []

3

I
were roads
upon which
one
sleek
monster
of
but
the true
of

I believed
there were roads
upon which
one might meet
not the sleek
monster
of some child's
story, but
the true carrier
of flames

4

My course is serpentine:
even the rich field
that I made too little
of, still held
back by the austerity
of my childhood's
eye, was never clear
but phantasmal

their code of romance
each lover forced
upon that sacred blue
note the dragon's
how some who received
into London. Even
enough to be a medium
powerful I raised

their code of romance
fail. The kindest
are led into the trap:
each lover forced
to select noose, mesh
or leash. I tread
upon that sacred blue
still to be found
beneath stem and barb,
note the dragon's
path. It is no longer
dangerous to tell
how some who received
the divine signal
sent their hooks down
into London. Even
to number them turned
me stupid, docile
enough to be a medium
for their angelic
discoveries. The most
powerful I raised
coughed fire, circled
reeking furniture

6

or kill the oppressive lie
to destruction. I set
[]
[] her face
on her world is accidental:
with liberty []
immune to the satisfaction

to release her unhappiness
aside from experience
of both to let fascination
a decade since I last
[] possess a temper
a companion to desire:
by a newly deserved recoil
but do not ever spell

is curious and indifferent
[]
and prefer to keep nothing
to gain love. My hold
how demonic I might become
of an alien []
how I split the text apart

or kill the oppressive lie
that I might help her:
to release her unhappiness
into a regulated life
is curious and indifferent
to destruction. I set
her scar and her split lip
aside from experience
to turn upon a starry axis

7

absent | vacant || erase | dissolve || vanish

8: *Herdsmen*

too severe to accept
some woodland
king for his model.
In delirium
the yellow waste
bag became an animal
and delicate red
bird life crackled
in the harsh
air of the isolation
ward. Of course I
am no better than
a declass   market
trader. Horus:
This wine is corked

9: *Stargazer*

fucked up. In 1979 I
had no idea
that Pam Burnel
was a name
used by Allen
Fisher. He counted
the letter K
three times in the design
on my cigarette
packet. The blast
must have damaged
that witches' launch
pad on the Isle
of Dogs. Each leaf
game that my daughter
invented

10: *Het Up*

the alcohol behind each chocolate
| sketch: eye | more beautiful
in this migraine glitter. I tell
her that the Greenwich axeman
is a sad | scribble | hair fixed
in a chopstick halo no weirder
than a biro or two. That smashed
cat head is just wood | space |
painted some kind of elfin hunt
upon the second

11: *Sally Day*

it is shrouded | hood |
but the other siren
is kind | haze hedge |
taught me to construct
a bomb: match
head and nail varnish
| deluge | bird catcher |
her crayon spectre upon
the blackboard