

Jennifer Compton

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

I had an awful dream
that it was 1984
there was a mirror in my room
with cages of rats
& rooms full of moths
flying in my eyes.

Cities of proles swarming
down the streets
pigs with curly tails
standing on my feet
& somewhere above the city
two masks on a silken ribbon
the moon, Comedy & Tragedy
two sides of a silver coin.

Hippolyta & Theseus are translated
— These are the forgeries of jealousy:
'Thou painted maypole?' screams the little one.
'You counterfeit, you puppet, you!'
Bottom brays in the thicket, extempore.
'Lord, what fools these mortals be!'

A young actor shot himself in Munich
& the Wall was censored in Berlin.

Ah dreams, ah the daring young man on the flying trapeze.

WALK AWAY ON THE ROAD BENEATH THE TREES

Oh yes, walk away on the road beneath the trees
Like the final fade out in France after the war,
You're not leaving anything behind.
Oh yes, toss in the heated childhood sheets and shiver,
Your Mother will always come knocking at the door.
Turn your face to the wall. Her picture is there.
The Child may drop from the clouds in a godlike machine
But we are ordinary men.
We clutch in our dreams for the faceless one
Who rides in the night with an eye like anger
And call for a name. Call for a nameless name.
We stand on the edge of light as a moth circles the music
Trapped in the quivering walls. Lay your head down.
Whoever said that you could walk away?
Speak the name inside the circle
Turn your back to the ancient Child
Tap out your message on the silk and steel
Shriek into the storm between art and passion
And summon up a curse. Or a blessing.