

Paul Murphy

THE FLEA

I am the life of a flea — for many years I warmed
the bed of my master
Niccolo da Tolentino. Some years ago I was mistaken
and inanimate
Until I finally escaped, for at the Battle of San
Romano
He shook his head and I dropped into the mud and
menure.
I am intoxicated by perspective and the languages of
the dead.
I dreaded the dead sounds, I drew inwards and
tightened.
I don't want to make out that the lives of such
creatures as I
Are exciting or that I illuminated certain aspects
of human nature.
All I wanted to do was to survive. I hate death.
When I crawled out
From under Niccolo's body I was drowned in paint, I
felt pain.
My lungs burst. Now, if you look in my dead eye
You will see Niccolo's everlasting grimace frozen.
My Master, Patrician, Polyarch, Patron, Patriarch —
Niccolo da Tolentino.
I felt the immortality of fleas, I will outlast my
Master.
Niccolo's interest in the armoury was such
To have no time for fleas. Now he is atomised,
fragments persist
But the life of a flea persists. For though he had
many fleas
Niccolo's Elmeti, banners drenched in Italian
sunlight.
The deadening perspective was my addition.
Because of that I fastened on to this moneybags,

Now I lie dead on the field of San Romano or died
afterwards

I am the final Ps, I am drawn in the margin with a
red line beneath

Goodbye to my ignorance and to the ignorance of my
Master,

Patrician, Polyarch, Patron, Patriarch — Niccolo da
Tolentino.

