

1.

burin you, dredge, disembowel
the sphere-house soul! trowel
the ache and the stomach's weight
of loves which adumbrate
desire, pleasure, lust-consent!
this nakedness present
as the gauge-face gravure of sex!
a fecund, linear complex
and emblems trace!
brave damage to this space!
go less of Love! do deep of Lust!
drive as the burin durst!
mark image of the edge of me,
passion's starved reality!

eight-legged Lust pegged to a cart
put his legs eight ways to go,
but though he showed of Love the chart,
could not follow;
not for his eyes, or his desperate heart,
or his fierce sorrow!

2.

the kapok bred beyond a shame
of gourds hung passionless, unfed,
when your young vehemence came
in like containments to my bed,

she made of them guiltless array,
her bright progeny to the sun,
as yours, in innocent display,
seemed borne for this One.
the air achieved slim fragrance
and the lascivious breeze
brief partnership of dance.
and I, the lover, did not squeeze
(though summer must secure the stream!)
that gourd's incarcerated cream.

3.

surely as the politic age remove
without acclaim, cold, dully sane
behind defeat, as sure as these attain
their putrid airs, we have no Love.

I am, of Love, the wanton superior,
pledged, in crime of this, to crude decline.
you must, to Death, and me, be junior,
for 'he' and 'I' would have you 'mine'.

in mystic I have met the clutch
of your corpse's hand; coddled stiff adieus
from unresponding lips; that was so much
terror of me.....your sagging sinews!

so now, defend the body's pure conducive,
and exhortate, not Love, but that we live!

4.

in this parliament whose votary the price
of your conscience is, and is its right,
who has the ayes? good-laboured malice?
the censure of your slow delight?

or, in the counting out of hates,
one hate? I would not see that won
from the cold internal of your just debates,
and me a plaintive demagorgon!

where the due motion of the house
should make directive of me, do I go?
or all the nays of your allegiance rouse
by loud dissension of my 'no'?

I give you general nay, and care not,
but that we burn this house before it rot.

5.

Art shook Her from me, (Love reclined
in the rigorous space, behind.)
where all her images had lain,
my limping culture to sustain.

nor did She raise 'fare-well' within
Her expressive cheek, but held a thin
and rancid unresponse to it,
that no meaning could commit.

Her gown implied, merely, as She went,
the cloth moan of entombment.

Love, the naked young-born, spilled
into the place where Art was killed.

I did not pause, or mourn, to start
acceptance of this newer art!

6.

should these, relished of light, my eyes,
their slim coverlets finally close
to you, like purple skies
subjugant to the sun's repose,
their prominent fires; or vault
in circles on themselves to lose
the twin; by self-assault

their synchrony depose;
or be the twice-dug, worm-pit drink
of slaking Age; or be Death's dose
which overruns, in dust, its double brink;
or, (agony!), be all of those,

then slip to each and one of them your tongue,
and they will vivify where you have stung!

7.

your youth's imaginative plant,
its slow lip, its baulking pace,
its isolation like a slug,
the limbless crouching of its face,
this will my maturity assist;
and upraise gently from within
its tender imperative to come;
and inspire its breathing to begin,
which, by ardent nurturing,
imposes on your will a whim to go;
and presses with a natural speed
your maturest flower into show;
and as your green endeavour finds the air
I will be happy to have sent it there.

BRUCE JAMES