

THE TORTOISEBIRD

(A Scatological Eschatology)

by Michelle-Leona Goodin

I sing of arms and of a woman,
Of armor new my shell,
Of beatings and a man;
Under covers, we yell:
Look! I'm blinded by the light!
Right, the blind card again?!
What?! are you listening to me?
Deaf too and mute
Nice. You unfeeling—
No Touching! Feel Me! No Touching!
Here's mud in your eye, in your ear
Stop banging on my eardrum you earwig!
I'm Not taking on any more blame from you
Not going blind or even lame for you
No more playing Helen for you
Not just another pretty face
Launching... A thousand shits
The Great Schism, a whole fleet of feces
Thanks. Oh my god!
What god. No Gods here
Satan then? How cliché
How many heads on this beast?
Are we the whore of Babylon?
Have you no sense of decorum?
We are not discoursing thus
You beast, you brute, you barbarian!

Goddamn this endless stream
Of conscious, antagonistic, agoraphobic
Paranoid, paraplegic, verbal vertigo
You're hen-pecking my liver!
You've strung me up with all those bitches
Horny handmaids hanging there
Like doves. More like ravens
Some birds of prey
This mindless mouthing eats my heart out!
This sparring speak is oppressive
This war between us is epic
Debilitating. Deliberate?
Why? It is not desirable
Not a homecoming or a win
Not even a funeral pyre of possessions
Of yours, of mine of our determinate history
Armoring now, slow & hard
A chimerical force with fleshy innards.
A Great Bird of Prayer:
Oh God (Which God?) Please
Guard the guts. Keep them soft
Let not the soul matter calcify
Let not these eyes turn to stone
Listen! and you will hear—
What? a trumpeting of last days?
No. my retreat into darkness.