

MAKING A PUNCH AND JUDY



i

New under the knife they are old,
Their presence growing with each chip
Of wood removed. With only one eye cut
He watches for the 'crocodile';
His uncarved hands itch for the big stick
And the wife to beat and kiss.
Sans nose, sans chin,
She's almost up to all his tricks.
Enlisting public aid at once
For the poor baby, yet unborn.
Punch-drunk already,
She suspects she will be powerless
To resist.

Blank-faced, devoid of paint or hair,
Each succeeding head suggests
The Hangman; stuck with his last ditch
Defence against the crowing psychopath
His mouth turns down, his teeth are bared;
Our's is the vengeance he prepares,
Our's is the neck, our crimes unfold...

New under the knife we are old.

ii

They crowd my table, silently intent.
Nothing is said, but my whole being's bent
On keeping order in my head;
For there is power here. Here there is more
Than I have made. More urgency, more stress,
More life than I, their maker, could possess.
In moments such as this
I know of God, His state
Of simple unbelief, that these
His creatures lend themselves
To such unholy joy, such grief.

iii

Novice mid-wife, now I ease
This crimson glove from my tired hand.
I've slapped and heard the new-born cry
I waited for through reek of Evo-stick
And stabbing thread, through remnant cloth
And gaudy paint, (faint now in my fingernails)
But when it came, that clack of wood on wood,
I couldn't make him speak until
I lost my temper...and myself.

Anger is his catalyst.

Mid-wife novice, from my hand
I slide his beatings, his cruel kiss.
Head-bowed, I read his manic glance;
He does not need my little skill.
I have a calling, I have blood to give;
His wood-block will has only to assume me
And he lives.

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