

Kaleidoscopic

Reyher, Ferdinand, 1891-1967

Gondolas with white freightage
Passed,
And muted barcaroles
Destroyed old houses.

The iridescent plush rope sways
With the rhythm
Of an old canzone of Genoa.

He died.
Let us dance elegant fandangos
In blues and golds,
And consort
With blinder things than parchment bats
To gather dripping garlands
Of mottled toadstools
To show the hate we loved him with.

Weave together delicate preludes
And stitch in faint cords
Of simple colors
Like gray,
But let us not be betrayed
Beyond beginnings.

The hunchbacked windmill
Grunts,
And the crows caw and creak
Like old leather
And buffet the twisted gnarled darkness
Hour on hour.

Trinn! Trinn!
Do you hear it?
Like a crystal ball
Split into diamonds
And flung like hailstones
Against tarnished spears:
Trinn! Trinn!

Fourteen queens:

Seven in gold,
Five in green,
And two
Are covered each
With an old-rose
Silk sari
Dotted with vermilion discs
And fringed with dusty gold.
My knees
Crack together when I would go
To one or to the other
Like the fray of slave oars
When two old Asian galleys
Clashed.

Twelve years
Through the mandarin's red coat
I pursued
The white thistle,
And bit at swaying ends
Of snapped gold threads.

Four jaundiced ghouls
Hide in your gray lips
Where the red plum-tree
Is bent
In a haggard arch.