

1971

Van Gogh

Kenneth Rosen

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WHITE FIGURE

Out of my childhood appeared a contender
in a white sweatsuit cruising the familiar
hills of my forest. Aaron, his last name
a strange spelling of a German city
where after a war a notion of crime was
established, the idea of “higher” loyalty,
not to mention “common decency.” O I know
all about obeying higher loyalties, and the
indecent of obedience. All is twisted.
All is withheld. When I inquired I was told
he missed the four minute mark and ran his mile
in the upper three-fifties, still going. How
could there be a mark of time? Hardly were
those words spoken when out of Spiritus Mundi
tumbled skulls, leg bones, brooms and handles.
Out of my thoughts come white faces like mushrooms.
There is no magic to clarify reflection. Love,
make do with stupor and hurry, have courage.

VAN GOGH

I'm glad it rained yesterday. I needed
some rain. I'm glad I ran that two mile
race and came in fourth place. I needed
to get sick to my stomach as I sought
to stretch it across the flat. I'm glad
my wife lay next to me in bed coughing
last night. I needed to stay awake. I'm glad
I saw you yesterday and glad you smiled
and glad I keep getting everything I need.
I need the light to become muscle, the god
to uncover my passage, give me my talisman,
the rain to come like money, my hands to
compass the horizon, your tawny pasture,
the weak to become strong, inward, and endure.
The wind is a terror to dry leaves. The
tree trunks turn blue. Engrossed by a woman
black and green, approached by another, red,
her apparel and parasol—tell me, love,
which lady, leaf, red, green, are you?