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In Our Terribleness

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“IN OUR TERRIBLENESS”
(a LeRoi Jones title)

I

We are not like large bugs
bumping into each other in mid-air.
You are noted for the way
your beard and moustache
set off the shine of your lips and teeth.
Someone has noticed you being
gentle with a young child,
someone has observed that you
joined a flagellant society
the year before we all met
and that you became a Penitente then too.
Someone has noted that you
change your sex from day to day
depending on who you are with.
There is an entire book on this subject.
Ah! ah! your red hair shining
and oh! I despair of finding
a true authority on the subject of you
although some say I qualify.
Let me begin all of this now.
You are not a winged insect
who passes me in mid-air
on the way to some opposite destinations.

II

Identification Manual, Page 241, *ibid.*
This is a way usually used. This is a
way often found. This is. How. To.
The..... is often seen flying past
on the way to a food source; it's known
to favour the blood of freshly killed.
It uses the telephone as a prime weapon.
It uses the postal service secondarily.

III

Translation Manual, Page 241, *ibid.*
It speaks only of itself. It speaks
in hushed and reverential tones only.
Its voice is heard throughout the land.

It is not a turtle though the shell is
such that it can and does withdraw.
The inscription inside the shell reads.
The musical notes coming from within
have been annotated and found to read.
In its working habits it's said to.
All surviving records indicate that.
When the last specimen was alive, it.
At the last, the sounds most resembled.

Carol Bergé

AN ALTERCATION RECTIFIED

Hello again! And let me start
with an apology. Last night I called
you a dotard, a yellow bole on a fuzzy
unripe tree. I take it back. I only meant
to touch your breast unnoticed by the
dormant tramps in the shallows of your mind.
As it happened, you welcomed my hand but
looked askance at the doubtful compliment I
cast your way. And rightly so. Two things
should immediately occur to you from this incident.
One: I am frightfully timid, or rather, have
a cozeningly clownish fright of the direct
approach, which, Roman statesmen tell us, is the best.
More about this later. And two: I am an
amphibiously libidinous Venetian desperado,
out to get into your cunt. Don't take this
amiss. It is neither a compliment nor meant
to be one, although I can't say it is a
detraction either. Simply: the meeting of two
minds (and this has proved to be our case)
requires that after the passage of a certain length
of time, such as four breakfasts, and a mid-
night skinny dip in your grandmother's duck pond,
there should be a reasonable and deliberate
exploration of the senses. I am sure you will
agree, in principle at least.