

1976

Salt

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Seductively beautiful and ours.

A flower, a bottle of wine, a bed of giggles and a date.

This is the abyss between the bedclothes, as gloomy as funeral scrolls.

This is the tender face of a girl, this is a window sill, this is a mirror, this is
a little compact,

This is giggles, this is blood, this a silk sash waiting to be untied.

That night, the Virgin Mary escaped from her frame on the wall,

She wanted to find Lethe and wash away those shameless things she had
heard.

Therefore this is an old story like a *revolving lantern*: sensations, sensations,
sensations!

In the morning, I carry a basketful of sins and hawk them along the street,

The sun pricks my eyes with wheat thorns.

Hallelujah! I am still living.

Work, walk, pay respect to the crooks, smile and become immortal.

Exist for existence, look at clouds to look at clouds,

I take advantage of a part of this sphere.

By the bank of the Congo, a sleigh stops;

No one knows how it slid so far,

A sleigh no one knows stops there.

Translated by the author with William Golightly

Salt

Our old woman had never met Dostoyevsky after all. In the spring she only
cried: Salt! Give me a peck of salt! The angels were singing in the elms.
That year the garden peas scarcely blossomed.

Seven hundred miles away the camel-caravans led by the Minister of Salt
were passing along the seaside. No blade of seaweed ever showed up in our
old woman's pupils. She only cried: Salt! Salt! Give me a peck of salt! The
laughing angels covered her up with a shower of snow.

In 1911 the partymen arrived in Wu-chang. Our old woman left her foot-
binding cloth up on the elms and went off into the breath of wild dogs and
under the wings of the bald-headed vulture. Many voices whined in the
winds: Salt! Salt! Give me a peck of salt! Almost all the garden peas blos-

somed with white flowers that year. After all Dostoyevsky had never met our old woman.

Translated by Wai-lim Yip

GUNNAR HARDING / SWEDEN

from *The Fabulous Life of Guillaume Apollinaire*

and here we have Paris and the boulevards
hum with Citroen Renault Roualt Apol-
linaire and here we have a huge calligram
his heart a flame upsidedown burning the
streets and they become clean altarcloths
and she moans and the Eiffel tower plunges
into her and she lies naked on the washer-
women's raft and it comes adrift and sli-
thers over cobbled streets and she tries to
draw the white tablecloth round her and at
the great banquet aboard the washerwom-
en's raft they ate her and Cendrars filled
his fountain pen with blood and signed his
name on her thigh just before the tricolor
was broken out and pauvre Guillaume with
a big bloodfilled hole in his head fluttered
from the flagstaff in his skyblue uniform
while two sad languorous acrobats stood in
an industrial waste land and a blue dog
loped through the town and drank great
gulps of yellow chasing after that decapi-
tated sun whom all seek and it rolled down

from the guillotine while Fantomas fired
his black pistol out the window and the
lilies hung from rusty barbed wire and it