1976

Translation of an Unwritten Spanish Poem: Santa Clara

Steven Goldsberry
These are the numbers of the sleepless, rising in the power of their true names:

In the name of crowbar which is 1.
In the name of broken back which is 2.

This is the penis that lugs and sweats like a horse. These are hands in their crust of dead lights.

Let the sun and moon go, the black roof, the seams of the earth gathering water.

This is the animal that grew tired and slept. These are words left out in the rain.

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Santa Clara

Hail Mary, this is not my body, full of grace, but another drunken fisherman on his way home, trying to genuflect before the cathedral doorway, before the other drunken fishermen.
In the cathedral
there is a smell
of oranges
and the bad cigarettes
the old fruit vendors smoke.

This troubles my soul
for it is not
a religious smell.

My soul is the clear glass
of the flask, my body is
the wine. It has never been
the other way around.

Sitting in a brown pew
a slender woman weeps,
and her body is in her tears.
She catches her tears
carefully; she is crying
into her open hands.

The rectory is upstairs.
Its white wall crumbles like chalk.
The paintings are really windows
of clear, thin glass.

There are certain acts, once done,
that make you a prophet.
I have no way of knowing
what they are.

The Dream of Execution / Henry Carlile

At dawn they led a man out and tied him to a stake.
They were going to shoot him and leave him there.
There was nothing anyone could do about it.
The commanding officer stood smoking a cigarette
while the firing squad composed mostly of conscripts