Repentance

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Repentance

I repent the actual. It has never got me anywhere. It is nothing against principalities, against powers. My father will die and I will carry on. I dread his death more than mine because it will come sooner—knowledge I repent. In lies he will outlive the liar. And that’s me. The lie itself will carry on, is itself a child, a separate life, a blow against the gods of objects. Who are not happy with me or with their densities. They are not worth their flawed kingdoms. And neither do I love them. They are dangerous. They are too stupid to be insignificant, too proud of their ability to blister my hands and make them raw. I repent letting them, and I repent logic, which has no god: it will do anything, it will go anywhere. Tell it your destination and it will take you there. A taxi. This is the nature of evidence: how could you prove the meat you ate last night wasn’t horse meat, goat flesh, or something I had, the night before, sliced from my thighs? Or that it was meat at all? Or that you ate? There is no bottom to what we will believe, and no top. So I have made this vow. Never again will I insult you with the actual, something that has no birthday, while lies are born six times a second and each with a festival. They are the gifts we give ourselves, like morphine, a change of clothes, a piece
of apple pie, a black chrysanthemum, a job—I could go on. I am ashamed when I remember whom I have attacked with actuality. My mother with her cheapness. My wife with black and purple dress—you should have seen it!—and her infidelities. My friend who steals ashtrays. My brother’s avoirdupois. I repent that blade and I repent my skill with it. When blessed with falsehoods, I will tell them. When told a lie, I will believe it. I will not doubt a word you say. Forgive me now my finger in the wound, and knuckle deep.

JUDAS, FLOWERING

Everybody has a hero. He is mine. Who would I be if I hadn’t polished evil, like a pair of shoes and walked across my life in them? And though I’ve long since worn the bottoms through, the tops are bright as bulbs. They light my path. Without them I would be barred from restaurants. But, Judas, do I have to be quite so human in my brilliant shoes? I’m not complaining. Lies are enough. They are the grease that slips a camel through the needle’s eye. He doesn’t even have to touch the sides unless I say he does. Thank you. And lies are just a start. The world is rich with penny-ante lies and frugal sins. Since I am wrong I want to do it right. Or wrong. I confuse myself. I want to be spectacularly wrong so I may, in the crowd, be noticed, lifted out, preserved, redeemed. I need the big betrayal, the perfidy that Botticelli knew but didn’t understand. In Calumny a prince has protracted, pointed, velvet donkey ears, and to those ears—those gorgeous ass’s ears!—cling Ignorance and Suspicion. They love those wonderful ears! And there is Calumny, her fingers laced into the hair of a man.