Geoffrey G. O’Brien

THE EXCOMMUNICATION OF SPINOZA

I grew up in a place troubled by leaving ships, the parish of sunset, particularly stubborn flames lingering on the ocean, the sudden gold abdomen of the ocean or a bed laid out with the bachelor’s stillborn evening—with nothing to do but be roamed by late light he is murdered there by heaven. I had to listen to the behavior of flames with my eyes closed, had to drop a cup full of red wine on the blue carpet, had to take that carpet into my dream and wake to an anemone laid over my eyes but my eyes were closed it was only the shade someone had painted it red

I grew up in the powerhalls of the sun, fingertips parented in light, the light itself extending tea-like realms as the ships left, their holds filled with empty eros modes of optician’s glass or bottles waiting for something not of themselves. I lived in a demonstration of flames not far from the sea, gold beacons beckoning the surf for amber folds as inside the house sconces rang, the walls tinged with unsteadiness, all the yellow childhood gerunds hastening towards red and dark, through dark and sleep. I was dressed in blue and told to stand there against the wind off the sea, stand there and repair the abstraction of our foe or simply imply the loved one’s absence across the sea, where all rest is missing and evening hails an endless splintering from its candle.
To take on that kind of responsibility
was __________________________
and I lived as two people standing on a shore,
the left-behind tides returning there to be read
as a white cargo supplied to the hour’s lateness
and stranded on it, as a family would fade
for the lone observer who draws a cloak close
across that hour of pacification,
no jilt sun going down
in which the sea didn’t turn slightly
in the mildness of its wounds, the waves still verging
on being—overcome—from blue—to red—
and so shingly without the usual guilt
_____________________________ I
could not be wrong or right, but accurately there.