Modernism

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Modernism

For Amy England

And “I” is a conjecture, simile that’s become science:
calyx torn down both sides, the only decipherable word among five

Bird nest supplied by paraphrase, some spurious other, much restored: talents are money, two mutilated words hence the extension beyond lexicography

Death as a gift, a ruin of paper for the opulence of Gyges: “calamitous” perhaps sounds like opening the right-hand half

You have taken a cricket by the wing, mixed thighs and courtly love: papyrus burned at the top a black-butted fellow, badly damaged

The meaning is obscene, Eros’ red balls earlier than arrows: they vomited their mass of pride from a pottery shard The same papyrus gives “ear dripping blood”

This poem is comprised entirely of phrases from Guy Davenport’s notes for his volume of translations, 7 Greeks (New Directions). The phrases have been rather drastically selected, condensed, and rearranged, but only one word has been altered.