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from Feasts/Week 16

st expeditus

boxes of ashes
smudged in toxic-black letters
emergency stash

st bueno

I blat & bleat but
these abominable brays seem
always beyond me

st theodore of sykeon

idolatrized sun
& these crocodilian eyes
long-trained on its throat
Author Notes

Mark DeCarteret’s work has appeared in the anthologies American Poetry: The Next Generation (Carnegie Mellon Press), Brevity & Echo: Short Short Stories by Emerson College Alums (Rose Metal Press), New Pony: Collaborations & Responses (Horse Less Press), Places of Passage: Contemporary Catholic Poetry (Story Line Press), Thus Spake the Corpse: An Exquisite Corpse Reader (Black Sparrow Press) and Under the Legislature of Stars—62 New Hampshire Poets (Oyster River Press) which he also co-edited. This past April he was selected as the seventh Poet Laureate of Portsmouth, New Hampshire.

About the Work

A few years back, I was given the gift of a feast-of-saints desk calendar by a friend, and figured there was just enough space for a haiku (I’d written a dozen or so sonnet-sized sagas already and felt the need to purge even further!). While syllabically they were faultless, suspicion-free, in most other ways they went against both their better natures. Lives were irreverently flipped through and crossed up, pilfered and fingered from a write-up not much larger than a pinhead. Miracles were claimed while their bunkmates slept off spiritual funks, tamed demons. And untimely deaths were mixed-n-matched--an oblate once deep-fried was now lobbed off a freighter into the sea, a devotee rife with boils was now felled by a mob, left to spoil in the sun.

But this wasn’t mere lip service. Or verse-lite. I was trying to return these poor souls to their self-flagellated frames for a few glorious seconds where they weren’t lousy with sin, seemingly marred. And instead were all desirous, full-sensed. Was trying to summon language from somewhere deep within the lungs. Draw up some words, rung-by-rung, until the bones sang back the flesh. And to be clever as all hell. Their fun-facts and trivia transformed into something both tactile and uncalled for, lit-from-within, blasted out from the silence of their tile-white tombs. All three hundred and sixty five of them defiled in the most innovative of fashions. In one failing voice.

Mark DeCarteret on the Web

www.elimae.com/archive2009.html
beardofbees.com/decarteret.html
www.horselesspress.com/wintero8/decarteret.html
www.origamicondom.org/IssuesPDFs/OC.08.pdf
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