

SONG OF THE ANDOUMBOULOU: 44

Wherever we were it was a tavern
we were in, a bar we stepped up
to, ordered... Stood in front of
the jukebox, bartender at our backs,
rapture

what before we thought ruin...
Whatever we rode it was a record
we spun, wilting strings addressing
us as we looked out from Shard
Café, low-lying mist obscuring
summer,

Lone Coast... Every arrival outrun
by the image we had of it, begged
it be the where we'd been after, there
there be nowhere we'd rather
be...

Vibrating string held us together,
hostage, nubs what before were
fingers albeit we plucked at it
even so, a subdued drum pounding
past
words, words' amanuensis... Packed up,
departed, booked... "Cold water
and dirt," a voice we heard sang,
wasted.

Whatever we spun it was a drink we
took. Goatskin, ecumenical kiss,
runaway tongue, whatever we drank
it
was a drum we struck. So strict a song,
so cerebral it seemed. Whatsaid or
waylaid, no one to say which, the Old Book
an occult, acoustic book... Black
jewel, black jaw, jammed embouchure. Blue,
belated

horn. Heuristic straw... So simple a
song and so sanguine, centrifugal
how it
grew, gouged-out side of a mud house,
more

than could ascend again, sunk... High-
register cry to wipe the earth with,
bumped and abraded, buffed. Roughed
we'd heard we'd be, roughed it turned
out
we were, horns held high, heads back,
eyes
tight, Struff Street promenade,
struck

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Bells and the children of Badawi, newly
named people of Ba. A vast crystal we
stood inside looking out of, looked in
to see what was to come. Lit wicks
lighting
it, hornlip led the way, Callous the
place we came to next. "String my
stretched head, high notes make me
wince," words to a song we heard
sung somewhere in the distance,
a lone
voice regretting itself it seemed... "And
what would that do?" we heard B'Head
inquire, melonlike, infinitely afield.
It was the firmament's opening night.
Everyone was there. Far-flung celestial
seed
patch, each and every rolled head's
wish... Orbiting head, esoteric
body.
Recondite string I plucked, all but
outright wept. It was the soul's
night out, no one within miles,
every-
one within miles, the Soon-Come
Congress's debut... Everyone was
laughing, everyone except me but I
faked it, filled in as best I could...
In the
outer reaches feasting on fruit nowhere to

be found in the world we knew... B'Head's

Belated Melon Patch Epiphany

we

dubbed it, see-thru, sealed on

all

sides

A region of hills it was we came
to next. Horns blew the book we
rode skyward. *Parallactic Hinge*
was an alternate book... It
was a
book we would've, had we been
able, moved on into Albert's
principality, rung. Putative
realm, unanswered
prayer... What, if not
where,
it was was a balcony's
railing broken free
of, the sound of
Portuguese guitar...

It was an elevator shaft,
a steep
leap, a step not taken, two
spoons at stairway's end
were
what rung
was

Others called it namesake serenade,
what we were caught in, Badawi's
new ool-ya-koo. Name no sooner
said than unsettled, it was a
night
in Ethiopia next. It was a night,
renamed
of late, in Rhodesia, the Right Reverend
Frank at our backs blowing "One for
John," endlessly taken one step
beyond,
blue gnostic
loop

A thorn caught in the horn's
throat... Chimeless, chimney-pot
gruff... Blister was the place it
came from, Callous the place
come to next, say-it-again's
last
word amended, endless reminder,
bent
ears of the elect... Onset of
horns like a long-sought
landing, acoustical bank
we
suddenly stood upon.
Parched floor we fell
out across, crazed,
ana-
coluthic, endlessly
dis-
tended
squall

It was a night nowhere near where
we were. Eyes popped, no one saw
me... I bit my reed, it was a black
cat
bone... All I wanted was to
walk with an ushering wind at
each elbow, a bead of blood
poised on the bell of the horn's
lower
lip... The world was only a dream I
dreamt at a stoplight in San Francisco,
Radio
Valencia just up the block,
me alive
again