

Dis(-)

We fear the mother and the father.
Fear of the parents is fear of the first gods.
They make children from their gametes—
how is that not godlike?

We fear the legacy
of the anonymous 14th century poet who wrote
Should I always feede thee / with children meat? /
Nay, love, not so!

What does he mean, “children meat”?
The urchins learn to steer clear of such houses,
peopled with anonyms who ask
what *your* favorite trees are.

But trees are all the same under the skin:
the null hypothesis of the father,
the bark of the tragedy of the commons,
bodily thicket’s

blubbing Other
at the forest’s end, past
the Tree of Trees to the last stand,
copse of white pine, dis-

cordance, incomplete corpse of
a small green world on the brink of *Dis*
manibus,
Pater,

cuneiform buboes,
screaming jellies.

Recurring Boiler Troubles

The realm
of recurring boiler troubles
was laid down on top of

the Land of the Dead,
who still occupy
the lower depths;

thematically,
Milton is Gummo
beneath this floor.

Don't think of death
as an unwelcome development
in a person's history,

but the approved escape plan—

Believe in the simultaneity
of past and present
in navigable time.

Forward is down.
Follow. Something down there
requires an approach

less trivializing
than the end of religion, the end of art,
and the wildly promiscuous

end of history,
everybody's ex-lover.

A tribute, then.
Then a hanging.
Boiler stuff.

Requiem for the Triumphant

I know it's Christmas
by public television.
I watch college
choruses and orchestras
ply everything seasonal
from obscure crystal skies
to sober pleas
for peace on earth—

and swingin' stuff, too,
like you can do the job
when you're in town.

Here, though,
is this great
musical student body
from Gustavus Adolphus
closing their concert with
"O Come All Ye Faithful."

It's a majestic close.
The audience also
stands and sings,
their mouths
round and earnest.
The first face I see
lined with tears
belongs to a woman
standing within
the holiday throng,
her visage
placidly midwestern,

and from her
the camera dives into
the collegiate performers.
The young female singers

have wet cheeks, too,
as they openly proclaim
the joyful and triumphant;
performance
envelops and subsumes
each one of them,

their tears falling
from goodness and mercy,
flowing from above
and through us
into the things
and sounds
of this world.

What a time
not to believe,

what a moment
not to believe
in God,
the Son of God,

in the primacy
of first works,
in eternity,

in men
and women,
in Man,
the Song of Man.