words

the upper limitations
of voice have
not been reached
the lower
hide their baseness
in heavy syllables

we content ourselves
with a middle range —
a common blandness

except in dream
when words no dictionary
has ever housed roam
at random and at liberty
to surprise us as we
negotiate a bannister
leap out at us in reflection
from a glassy maze
nibble our fingers
and devour our tongues

some play leap-frog
on a hand-set page
or undergo (in newspapers)
part-change operations —
emerging with new names

others fulfill themselves in ravishing music
barely imagined by prima-sopranos
as they soak in bubble-baths
trying their voices on
unstoppered vials

whole epics write themselves
repeat each work in parody
reduce large volumes to a single
mute haiku

awake
we’re back to old double-talk
but — dream words are waiting
in the dark —
their
opportunity

the scream

words have a military look
the way — direct from the typewriter —
they stand in straight rows
and columns
each one neatly
following the next
so orderly
and on the pages of a book
they march in step
obey the laws of syntax
or brazen out their uncouth
natures under the disguise
of a spanking uniform

they are all representatives
of country party religion
or special sect
each has its sex
and in the proper season
multiplies
yes — words — we all know
spring
up as young men fully armed

and they can wear mufti
but they never take me in
I want to disperse their ranks
splat them in undignified
attitudes
    as if fallen
from a dizzy height
    all over
sharp spiky surfaces

I need words whose weapons
have been broken
    who have
no pride left    no ambition —
squat peaceful anarchists
    only
because they have no power

words of unspeakable
anguish that moan all by
themselves
    and scream
that shriek and scream out loud
for all to hear
    right here
in my poem

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