

When the show was over and they had cleaned up the mess one of the kids outside asked what had happened. "It was just a poet," said the prof. "He shot himself, pissed on the flag, cut his eye out and nailed his hand to the speaker's platform." He gave her a piece of the skull adding "it looks like a chunk of coconut -- sorry I can't get it autographed."

-- Ben Pleasants

Beverly Hills CA

The Exorcist

When you see him, he may
or may not be the same man,

but he will be consistent in age
and size; suit recently pressed,
wings elegantly groomed,
(both black), quick to vanish

when you see him in the full
of your eye, but at quarter glance:

clearly the one man living
who can grab an irritable ceramic flagon
by the stem when it hovers
at half the height of the door
on the fury of jagged wings,

before it lunges, lashing half
a pint of black strap molasses
from its tilt in your face. And he
will seize it, even when it rockets
to the roof of the porch and clatters
its impertinence against a column.

Close Call For The Secret Agent

The tiny quintets of toes that had spattered
the parapet, as if after intermittent
catfalls during the preceding night,

disquieted investigators,
who wondered why they were indelible,

what type of marking substance had etched them there, and what sort of night had happened anyhow.

If anyone had told them of the correct gentleman in the impeccable suit, who had walked up and down the length of those neatly fitted segments of granite, folded tightly in upon himself with the severity of a furred umbrella, and who had tapped out his impatience with the tips of his fingers on the rock, as if the gray of it had merely clouded the keyboards of several petrified typewriters,

they would have paid no attention at all, but if they had heard the slightest suggestion of fingertips, left there by the secret agent, they would have had those blocks rooted up, hoisted, crated and trucked off somewhere for insatiable testing

and, as like as not, would have lost a whole police force in a manhunt for the secret agent, whose only crime had been the temporary dislocation of an aspect of cultural faith.

They were not told. The timely intervention of a sparrow easily distracted them. The infuriating spots soon vanished.

A Covering Letter

Dear Editors,

I am sending you five rocks. They are overstatements of weight; too solid to stare into immediate dust; too quick with pyrite and quartz to be tedious, yet sufficiently conglomerate to confuse you, if you are normal;

too much given to erratic winking to leave you in peace. Infusible, insoluble, and entirely untractable, but just vivid enough to make a vague blur out of anything you choose to set beside them.