

REPENTANCE

I repent the actual. It has never got me anywhere.
It is nothing against principalities, against powers.
My father will die and I will carry on. I dread his death

more than mine because it will come sooner—knowledge I
repent. In lies
he will outlive the liar. And that's me. The lie itself
will carry on, is itself a child, a separate life, a blow

against the gods of objects. Who are not happy with me
or with their densities. They are not worth their flawed
kingdoms.

And neither do I love them. They are dangerous. They are too
stupid to be insignificant, too proud of their ability
to blister my hands and make them raw. I repent letting them,
and I repent logic, which has no god: it will do

anything, it will go anywhere. Tell it your destination
and it will take you there. A taxi. *This* is the nature
of evidence: how could you prove the meat you ate last night

wasn't horse meat, goat flesh,
or something I had, the night before, sliced from my thighs?
Or that it was meat at all? Or that you ate? There is no

bottom to what we will believe, and no top.
So I have made this vow.
Never again will I insult you with the actual, something

that has no birthday, while lies are born
six times a second and each with a festival. They are the gifts
we give ourselves, like morphine, a change of clothes, a piece

of apple pie, a black chrysanthemum, a job—I could go on.
I am ashamed when I remember whom I have attacked
with actuality. My mother with her cheapness. My wife

with black and purple dress—you should have seen it!—
and her infidelities. My friend who steals ashtrays. My brother's
avoirdufois. I repent that blade and I repent

my skill with it. When blessed with falsehoods, I will tell them.
When told a lie, I will believe it. I will not doubt
a word you say. Forgive me now my finger in the wound, and
knuckle deep.

JUDAS, FLOWERING

Everybody has a hero. He is mine. Who would I be
if I hadn't polished evil, like a pair of shoes
and walked across my life in them? And though
I've long since worn the bottoms through, the tops
are bright as bulbs. They light my path. Without them I would be
barred

from restaurants. But, Judas, do I have to be quite
so human in my brilliant shoes? I'm not complaining. Lies are
enough.

They are the grease that slips a camel through
the needle's eye. He doesn't even have to touch the sides
unless I say he does. Thank you. And lies
are just a start. The world is rich
with penny-ante lies and frugal sins. Since I am wrong
I want to do it right. Or wrong. I confuse myself.
I want to be spectacularly wrong
so I may, in the crowd, be noticed, lifted out, preserved,
redeemed. I need the big betrayal, the perfidy
that Botticelli knew but didn't understand. In *Calumny*
a prince has protracted, pointed, velvet donkey ears, and to those ears
—those gorgeous ass's ears!—cling Ignorance
and Suspicion. They love those wonderful ears! And there is
Calumny,
her fingers laced into the hair of a man