

## FOR I WILL CONSIDER HAROLD

*Stavros Deligiorgis*

For I will consider Harold:  
For he will greet no other cat in kindness,  
    for he will fly past cat Frye, cat Alter, and cat Hartman in a hurry.  
For he will give them each one sentence;  
For he would wish it to be executed.  
For he is fortunate cat Geoffrey is not David Lodge for he would lose  
    all his groupies. For groupies more than tenure are power.  
For normative is a curse word to him; which of a truth it is.  
For his desire would be upon the fanatical and upon the fundamentalist;  
    for he secretly wishes the world to be saved through K;  
    for lacking that, the great German tradition will do.  
For he itches to write an introduction, then writes a preface, then a  
    commentary; for then he “enfolds” author, and does “imagining”  
    of same.  
For he inscribes, monkeylike, everything.  
For he is a bottom, for he cannot do the police in any voice. For Ken  
    Burke did a better job when it mattered.  
For he cannot possibly love women and give them *J*.  
For he loves to fill gaps where *J* nor Rosenberg left gaps.  
For he would hate it if the world were saved through *J*;  
For there is more in Hesse than in Mann and Buber of what he wishes.  
    For he cannot save Hesse, nor even acknowledge him.  
For *J*, any *J*, would be angry to hear the Lord’s prophets insulted.  
For he is unhappy, having served Blake all cut up, he has no more use  
    for him; for he last cut up criticism and served him as kabbalah.  
    For having shished criticism in order to liberate it he will now  
    do etymology.  
For there is no anxiety in Hebrew etymology, or so he thinks.\*  
For he hopes Ginsberg will bless him and kiss him.  
For in sheol Bly will kiss him.  
For he is the kiss of death to Rosenberg.

For Levinas and Jabes blush at him.  
 For he is of the tribe of Joseph Campbell.  
 For in calling the Tree in Eden "the reality principle" he is deluded he is  
     Wittgenstein. For he speaks like Woody Allen who is his prophet.  
 For he worships the word uncanny and wishes no one will know why.  
 For for him *J* is *the* Western Sublime. For *J* is shattered not to be  
     Eastern Sub too.  
 For cats ought now to be called Harold, as in "here, Harold; *J*'s got  
     your neck Harold."  
 For he will commend his flock to Dr. Pagels and Dr. Caligari before  
     commending it to Mt. Calvary.  
 For *H* weeps.

#### Note

\* Rosenberg speaks a spare, at times unsparing language. Some puns are there and some mystery. Rosenberg works close to the peculiarities of Hebrew idiom, but also to the etymology of the Hebrew. It is a very popular mix of flavors since the experiments of the Pound ear, since Zukovsky, Blackburn, and Logue. Yet, we need to ask if the Rosenberg/Bloom project can even approach the joy and deep satisfaction that the recovery, say, of the pre-Socratic fragments brought to the intelligentsia when Hermann Diels's and Walther Kranz's edition came out in 1903, the fragments freed from deep strata of Hellenistic nostalgia and apology, translated afresh, and, at long last, treated as wholes. Or the thrill of the first extended Zen texts coming across during D. T. Suzuki's lectures on this continent. *J* would have had a chance indeed, but the envelope it travels in, the bloomsday apparatus, compounds the uncertain poetics if not the method of dis-locating and re-planting a monolith. Whole sections seem to care not one bit that they are no improvement over other translations. There is a burden also, throughout, that the translator is self-effacing, a good scribe who sticks to the bones of the language, has too much respect for it to want to intervene and make literature out of it, who in fact is trying to say that the literature is *in* the language. It tastes, eerily, like a re-hashed—re-fried?—Kazantzakis (*The Saviors of God*, New York, Simon & Schuster, 1960), translated and prefaced by Kimon Friar, who

could not resist toying with a philological rendition of the *pneumatikai askeseis* of the subtitle (Spiritual Exercises in the printed version) as “pneumatic drills.” Let’s not mention the aura of minimalism, and thus of the “authentic” and spontaneous. A test of the latter would be if readers in our culture would feel free to substitute “God” every time Rosenberg’s text says Yahweh.