

But first things first, I said
A missionary must never, never
deviate from the plan
If he ever hopes to proselyte
this extraordinary man;
We must go back to the first hotel
pay and check out
before we burn the second one down;
It makes more sense, more sense,
I logically said;

When, down the street, we saw a crowd
in white powdered wigs
and red braided coats
assembling for a momentous event
in somebody's civilization.

Fascinated, we delayed our necessary mission.

Christ's Bracero / Ai

I hired you to pick corn, but you can quit anytime.
Inside the green husks are kernels of fire.
I don't say they aren't good.
I put sugar in my wine,
but it can't match the kernels crackling on your tongue.
It's up to you. Just take my advice;
stay out of the field at twilight.
You set to work, I slip down in my wicker chair,
counting 666, then I doze.

When I wake, smoke is spurting from the tips
of the unpicked corn.
The sun, the moon, two round teeth rock together
and the light of one chews up the other.
I hold my breath, until I see you limping forward.
You bow your head.
Yellow kernels fill your eyes and slide down your cheeks.
Your right foot rests on the ground
while your left, a split hoof, paws it, gently.
I feel the heat growing in my armpits, my crotch.

I lead you into the house, where we lie on the floor.
I rub your hands over my body.
Lucifer, the Apocalypse is over.
I am the First, the Last
and you are nothing. . . . Hold me.

Silent Canto / Horace Coleman
for Ezra Pound

fallen
the last petal
from our sour
cherry tree
floats on
turned earth

the roots
go deeper
now
the tide
in Venice
lifts

In an Office of English / Ron Welburn

in bookcase of yon . . .
steeled in reflecting black
leroi jones sits

absent of langston and
alone of our long singers
his 'dead lecturer' catfished

against the enclosure
dovetailed to coleridge's
mariner, awakening that

sensation of floating, that
tingling of seas. is it he hanging
from someone's neck?