

DR. SOFT ON MARRIAGE

Your life depends on it.

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It troubles the doctor less
that women he knows and loves
and is married to
have been married before
than that
priority
they put
on marriage
where, for the doctor,
marriage is the most immediate
fact in his life
that it's an institution
he feels in his bones
that
any
incapacity
for marriage
to *anything*
is cause for concern
for the doctor
is Dr. Soft
Dr. Soft on marriage.

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The man the doctor is thinking of is **Paul Blackburn**
and the city is New York
and the gentleness
of someone
the gentleness
how, what there was, was shared
that it was manly
that there were no lies
that the first writer he knew
capable of love in this way
was *this* man.

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Drano in the kitchen sink
that lye never works
to unclear anything
but is of use
solely
as a precaution

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that if it's a confession
the doctor is reading
and a piece of literature
that purports or pretends or appears
to come out of that confessional
the doctor's choice
is for the former
and to hell with the other.

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Similarly, regarding epigraphs
quotes "from my sister's dentist"
and elsewhere
how nothing published in the last 75 years
has been equal to its own epigraph.

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More marvelous than anything I can imagine:
being read. Anyone
reading
any one word
of this.