

from
The Salmonella of Knowledge

9. DRUID'S EGG

*And Babylon shall become heaps, a dwelling place
for dragons, an astonishment, an hissing.*

—JEREMIAH 51:37

Life below apes life above—
Sperm and egg: comets, earth;
Milky serpents riding night
Is why our world gave birth.

“Thisse fact nowe Duncan Frasier
Of Cheviotte singes in rhyme”
Translating his own Latin verse,
Frasier translates mine;

His “fact” of people changed to wyrms
Makes magic imagery:
“As thou my sister has lik’ned
So lik’ned shalt thou be!”

Lik’ning this to English now,
I’m reiving from Leumane—
His wyrm baits a Geordie line,
Tis aa tha fookin syem:

Strong songs grow like dragons’ teeth,
Lord Lambton or Childe Winde
With Jedburgh axe and berry-broad sword
Tilt St George’s mind

Since Pliny's Druid's Serpents' Egg
 Was bought somewhere like this:
 Spun from spit, it hung in air
 Supported by their hiss

Informing England's grassy language
 And elocution's lawn,
 When serpents taste a double air
 Is when new airs get born.

11. ALL KOENIG'S MEN

for Irina Gavrilchenko

I butcher for the Wehrmacht catering corps,
 Slav slave labour in the Patriotic War
 And sometimes I steal cows' blood in a bottle
 Because it fries up like a purple omelette.

We sold Fabergé Eggs for our Five Year Plans,
 I handled the red one ribbed with diamonds—
 Inside a yellow rosebud in the German taste
 To comfort Alexandra, our homesick Tsarina;

My Mother in the rosebud boiling yellow eggs red
 With berries for our sins and the blood Christ shed,
 Then we break them with nails to signify
 Our pure new souls from His sacrifice,

While my Grandmother sings about hares laying eggs,
 Like the song I heard about Sniper Zaitsev
 Whose name means "hare"—his squad's called "leverets"
 And their egg-timer sights fill with yellow heads.

I butcher for the Wehrmacht catering corps,
 Slav slave labour in the Patriotic War
 And sometimes I steal cows' blood in a bottle
 Because it fries up like a purple omelette.