



Richard E. Sansom

There's Always Nietzsche

I know there's no such thing as pay-dirt.
There are only baskets of slag
and silhouettes of horizons and endings.
When I drink from another's face,
their words beat at my feet like beached fish.

It doesn't matter.
There's always an ambulance.

When I send out feelers and seekers,
they all come back like trash returned in a storm.
The sun has a good laugh . . . the moon is not
dejected.
It's like walking out of an old movie long after
it's over.
But I stay beyond the end, and the aisles are full
of decisions
staring at me like persistent monks.

It doesn't matter.
There's always Buddha.

There's no such thing as pay-dirt,
so why do I tattoo my prayers on the bottle,
walk the chambered nautilus of my room
banked by old pirates, wind striped and stark,
lascivious and cheap,
and take into my songs the drugs of this wilderness?

I've begged for it many times, pimped I should say,
wanting nettle to splay me raw with light,

my women doing all the cutting

through glass-hard ribbons,
to the flowers of passion.

It doesn't matter.
There's always wine.

There's no such thing as pay-dirt,
between day's calyx and midnight's spore,
under plantations of life,
alone with the same nightmare
of meeting myself at the door.

It doesn't matter.
There's always lavender.

In the street my heart falls like a sack of hearts,
before I can give it
to an old wretch begging hearts and love.
But no one sees it fall.
They're too busy dancing on the bricks and girders,
and burned into the sidewalks with graffiti
and epics
steaming on their lips,
wanting nothing but volcanoes and soup.

It doesn't matter.
There's always Chagall.

Memory drags in its articulate damage,
the lovers, fathers, daughters
and mothers of speed-of-light wrecks,
strewn among my manila folders,
bleeding, as if I collected specimens.

It doesn't matter.
There's always Nietzsche.

Richard E. Sansom lives in Sebastopol, California.

*(Editor's note: The photograph above the poem is of a small stone building, in the Swiss Alps, known as "Nietzsche's hut." He may not have actually stayed there~Nietzsche was more inclined to stay at small residential hotels~but it is in a similar landscape, "high above the world and time," that he wrote a number of his most famous books; in particular, *Also sprach Zarathustra*.)*