

TRIDUUM

Travis Scholl

I. THE EARTH GROANS

In the garden—
amid the grappling
with anguish and silence
—a sound of sounds arising
as if from earth itself
scorning the tumult of the city.
Discern the sounds: mountain
goat bleating her birth; thump
of wild ass and ox; futile beating
of outstretched ostrich wings;
fierce laugh—“Aa-ha!”—
of war-horse; young
eagles sucking blood...
Grief and praise intermingle
here, unworded, in this absence
present in the wind, this garden
of sound. But only he
heard the wild, pleading
synchronicity.

The sleep of the three
was too deep to be
broken by groaning.

II. THE EARTH RECEIVES

Then—he liked to liken himself
to the wheat seed as he
walked the ripened fields,
plucking the tops of stalks
and popping the kernels
into his mouth. They gave
his breath a starchy sweetness
as he pulled the circle
close to whisper secrets,
mysteries, and signs.
Now—the two are carrying
his corpse, ruddy flesh
spotted maroon, brown
primordial clay mottled
with drying blood still wet.
The grinding mash
of leathered feet against gravel
mimics memories of the crunch
of kernels between his teeth.

Receive him, O earth, to rest in peace
as you would a grain of wheat
dropped into the ground to die.

III. THE EARTH RESTS

The dawn broke silently
and noon is calm.
The day is quiet, exhausted
from labor of death.
The day is sabbath, resting
from work, the making
of things, doing and undoing.
This earth and her people
lie dormant with hearts
emptied by grief.
The dusk will lie like an infant
asleep on a bed of mountains.
Nothing is left to be done.
After all, what is left to do
but sleep when the one who is
life—who was our life—
is dead and buried,
shut up with a seal of stone?
—sleep being to dissolve
into the awaiting rhythms,
the patience of time in place,
the memory of tomorrow.