

Noli me tangere ...

Josephine Evans

I

Poor frantic whore
fixed like Ixion
to her precious pot
and grief
and running
frequent with yearning
to pour it all
to pour it out
on anyone's feet
sordid
dusty
raw
but crying to her blistered heart

compelling her

Until the Other
the Lady of the hot day's shade
stood by her frenzied path
and called her
drawing her
beneath the longest trees
of deepest noon
and calm
and there with cool reflection
fed her thirst
and stilled her surplus heart

then in the shadows
and embraced by soul
in her keen flesh
she knew the place
of distant grace
where she could pour
herself.

II

Smells
of summer's evening
heavy
on her hands
as she was groping all the way
along her heart
to the cool and searching garden
still
with risen ease
and feel for morning
yet apprehending
the soft denying eyes
daring her
in such a keen consuming place
beneath the plaintive skies
where she must not discover
with her strong affirmative fingers
his form
but only all the secrets of the eyes

why
why to her
this last refusing smile
while such a little distance further on
along the doubtful road
his weak and heartless friend
invited there
with long incredulous thin fingers
to handle him
to see.

The article 'On Baseless Suspicion', published in the January issue, is a revised version of a paper delivered by John Milbank in his capacity as Maurice Reckitt Teaching Fellow in the Department of Religious Studies, University of Lancaster, to a Christendom Trust consultation which met at Hyning in Lancashire last July.
