

TRIPTYCH

i.m. Anthony Ian Ross O.P.

RETREAT

Wildness of old men:
bones of a dog's skull patted
under its pelt.

Growls and spray
from the burn of words
we swam in.

Dressing by numbers
when the lucid space
between clouds needed

life into stiff fingers.
If after rain
the countryside sapphires

cows like plump angels
cropping green ether
gaze down down
down to the kingdoms of clay.

THE CALL

- 1 Now it is evening weariness tugs our sleeve.
Bad weather bristles on the cheek: uneasy
mirk. History's blood is caked too hard
for one night's rain to wash away.
Eyes like pebbles on the beach are wet
then dry again, as dockens shrug
raindrops from their veins.
- 2 Open your mind like a shirt
and shake its thoughts dry. Listen
to the birds sing: Never look back, look
back, never look. When mist lifts off
we see the earth again, tread upon
close cropped grass.
- 3 Clear days when the brow of the hill
shone in the sea loch's mirror.
Then memory was sheared in half like slate.
We bend to drink: tongues freeze
to the wayside burn.
- 4 Yet still it goes on chattering to the sky
with its tangled hair and clump of cress
and a necklace of rocks and those
busy hands.
- 5 White water heard the call and did not change
its course, but for one hour it surely ran
with blood.
- 6 That shout set a guard over our mouth, a watch
on the door of our lips.
- 7 Years when we waited for his next command.

TESTAMENT

o h mend my
h u a d r t
he a d
the s e
h our s
to r men t
me
I
a m
a ha r t
th a t
r an
into a pi t
a t a me d
her o
a nt h o n y
th i s
t r a p
r end s
my spirit
into d ir t
o h
t ur n
a r ou n d
th a t
my
to r n
hand
F i nd
your hands
Father, t h en
s end my spirit
h o me
Father into your hands I commend my spirit

James McGonigal