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GABRIEL FIELDING

CORRIDA IN AZPEITIA

I

Now we are back from the far South
Our coin spent in the sovereign sun
Over the blue counter where the girls wear waves
And the corn breaks on the dry pines,
We remember most the bull's mouth
And his hanging tongue in the sand,
In the noise, in the cloud of clapping—
And the sexual poise of the matador's thighs.

If the cape turn like a wind or a wave,
If the bull drive or stagger,
His grave gaze on the whispered threat,
He'll be brave, he will die
He will purge some debt.

And homing high from the far South
Through clouds, through the fell Pyrenees
Where memory plumbs the gadarene slope
And the eyes turn in on the sullen sun,
We remember most the bull's mouth
And the piercing truth in the sword,
In the hide, in the clustering flies
At his side and the loop of the drunken horns.

If the death set like a trap or a clock
If the bull lean or shudder
His blackening ton in its shroud of sweat
He'll be brave, he will die
He will purge some debt.

When we came back from the far South
Where the houses crouch on the little hills
And the shutters shout of the darkness within
As the wind collects in the sea's cheek,
We remember most the bull's mouth
As we wept by the wall in the round ring
Where the reed-pipes call on the *sombra* side.

If the man die like a dog or a slave
If the bull tilt, wet his horn
In a groin or a silken breast,
He'll be brave, he will die
He will purge some debt.

And running back from the far South
Through the map and the mountains
The paper-backed towns and the dancing stooks
Dazed in the light of the losing sun,
We remember most the bull's mouth
And his hellbell cry when he drowns out
In the rising noise as the Spaniards shout
'Ole!' for the kill and the blood runs still.

If the crowd fail like a wind or a wave
If the bull lurch or stumble,
His blinding eye on a man or a maid,
He'll be brave, he will die—
Some debt will be paid.

II.

Ignatius stands in the dark;
 Let him be lifted up by the four handles on his bier:
 Let the gold and the thin face
 And the pallors of fasts long kept
 Shine out on the shutters of houses and sleepers
 Here where the night coffers the four dead bulls
 And the live matadors and the people who prayed in the streets.

Ignatius stands in the dark;
 Let him be lifted up by the four bishops about his bier;
 Let the eyes and the brow-sign
 And the marks of spirit on flesh
 Shine in through the windows and walls of the town
 Here where the night smothers the four live bulls
 And the bright matadors whose swords are stacked for the morrow.

Ignatius stands in the dark;
 Let him be lifted up by the two hands and the sandalled feet;
 Let the robe and the shaven scalp
 And the symbol of Blessedness
 Shine on the vinous eyes and the earthen hair
 Here where the night conceals the four new bulls
 And the young matadors whose hands are clenched in their sleep.

Let him be lifted up;
 Sustained in the savour of myrrh
 In the empty aisle of the thronged church
 Let him be lifted up!
 Let him stride over the stone floor
 Through the prayers to the Western door
 And out through the Spanish night
 With no word:
 With his light!