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kneeling on sharpened floors

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kneeling on sharpened floors

lesson plans, if any actually existed, were aborted
so, too, the discussion of Vesuvius' volcanic ash in 79 A.D.
encrusting Romans like chrysalis mid-thought
as the cold shrill sirens of a tepid war
breached the universal routine
forcing the abandonment of mind-dulling patterns
increasing heart rates in a soldierly dash
to the cloak room for a shroud:
the fabric of protection
smelling of home and the love of our mother

kneeling on sharpened floors
we shared touching intimacy with terrazzo
buffed to an exquisitely fine edge

resembling the pipes of a pressure fed organ
mechanically aligned in scaling rows
we were tuned to the import of prayer
keyed for the unlocking chant
accompanied by a celestial backbeat
clicking and clacking the beads of sorrowful mystery:
the weapons of choice in a children's crusade
against crimson, godless hordes

kneeling on sharpened floors
wandering on inswept eyes
this we prayed:

our Father who art in heaven
hollow be thy name
shall we be found here
by a new millennium's progeny,

kneeling on sharpened floors

sharing in that same archeological wonderment
lately abandoned in gray wainscoted classrooms?

most Pompeian's died
in communion with their families
we died lonely among strangers
orphans to our God
as we knelt on sharpened floors
at the hour of our death
amen

and i heard the Lord God speak

Christ, where's the light!
and i heard the Lord God speak
to no one in particular:

way to go, my boy,
you found a path
the nuns are as wrong
as the Pope's last decree
there's more than one way
to do this right

I admire the way
you hid in your bed
discovering a world within
squaring the darkness
with eyes pinched shut
reducing your vision
to see further ahead
finding it luminous
at the edge of the void
then mapping the liberating light

Mulligan

consider yourself lucky
some children don't get there
they fail, they flail,
they fall beyond the pale
but you, my boy, you found a way
heaven's no more than that