The Lizards

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Abstract

The bells, the bells-can you hear them? One by one they throw out the hours that died Without hope for resurrection Without lamentation Without pain...
The Lizards

by Christos Saccopoulos

The bells, the bells—can you hear them?
One by one they throw out the hours that died
Without hope for resurrection
Without lamentation
Without pain

Death keeps riding on a perfect circular path
Never missing his aim
Behind the arrowhead of the hour hand.

The bells awoke me suddenly at twelve.
I wondered—were they drumming the song of birth
Or was that the hustle of the funeral march?
The bells always wake me up
At this hour of dubious meaning.
Then I cannot sleep again.

II

The ionic capitals make extremely uncomfortable pillows.
I rolled over
In the cold lap of a crippled Aphrodite
From whom all the colors of life were gone.

The clocks never stop trotting.
Armed with the chisel
New gods on the stone they carve
And without pausing to admire their work
They go on chipping away
Noses, ears, limbs, life.

From the cloudless sky
Hercules sent me a riddle
Wrapped up in an ironic smile.
III

From the mouth of a bottomless vase
Came creeping a lizard.
He went about
Smoothing the wrinkles of his belly
On the glazed surfaces of white marble
Fearless of their deadly silence,
Almost sacrilegious in his funny quick movements,
—ALIVE.
In his mobile eyes
I read the answer to Hercules’ riddle.

In this country of disassembled columns
Only the lizards dwell.
They have heard the bells striking
Again and again and again
—thousands and thousands of times.
From the nipples of the fallen Athena
They have sucked the wisdom of Death.

Now they lie on the vat of Diogenes
Drunk under the shower of sunrays.