

(1957) THE BLACK AND WHITE MINSTREL SHOW (1978)

HIM:

And then I slept  
And, waking in the wasted air,  
Saw and heard thus –  
He whom I saw seemed like a cavalier,  
And I heard this:  
“Watching my people die  
Does not satisfy  
even if they broke their word,  
Even if they *deserve*  
to be governed by King Turd.  
Roosevelt, Churchill and Eden  
bastards to a man,  
Liar, Jew and glutton  
have squeezed the people dry  
like sheep!  
At Sarzana I lay still,  
waiting for the call  
from sleep  
I am Guido, whom you loved  
as a spirit from above  
And for the burning-glass of my mind's reason.  
I knew the cleansing fire  
Of Venus's third sphere  
already as I rode  
Cavalcanti, the cavalier  
(*Not* a mere follower)  
through the squabbling streets  
Of our *città dolente*  
(*Firenze*)  
which breeds  
Not men, but a vain and touchy  
race of slaves!

Passing through Arimino  
I met a gallant soul  
Singing as though her heart would break  
with joy!  
A young *contadinella*  
– Big-boned girl, but *bella* –  
with a German on each arm;  
And she sang,  
she sang of love  
without thought of  
heaven above.  
She had led some Canadians  
into a field of mines  
Where the *Tempio* of Ixotta

JIM:

And  
Waking where  
A man saw to hear,  
We see what seems will hear,  
a lack of *genius*:  
The whereto of Matthew,  
The hard won Johnson,  
broken, unheard,  
master of nothing but what was deserved.  
To be, a threefold argument.  
[Raising Cain:  
Adam  
had him: two sons  
one for murder  
one for mutton.]  
Lapping, lake-faithful,  
trussed and stalled  
in sleep.

Sing, sing, Zip, sing –

ZIP:

And  
I knew the historical truth:  
“Ann Lewis was here.”  
Sounded as syllables  
“*So*”  
“There is,” I told her, “this  
*particular* pity called insolence  
called cruelty, *called*  
frenzy.  
Which feeds  
cruelty, casting the watery  
*not* ‘of’ slaves.”

The sun, for one, persists  
its unmet arguments,  
its uniform bestrung with tidy  
mortality.  
Community be god-  
damned, in German on each arm:  
[Ich dich][nicht] [As I say I am]  
Unsung, more here  
by being more *there*  
more there by being.  
[oddly numbered]  
Sweetly we did this thing of  
fucking up, where hangs  
the familiar.

Mechanized  
used to stand.  
They were coming in fours and fives  
– I felt a wave of passion  
steal over me again  
as if I were still alive  
That's the way girls are  
in the Romagna.  
sing –  
The Canadians had come  
to 'mop up' German scum,  
To pull down the remains  
of Rimini;  
They stopped to ask the way  
to the Via Emilia  
of a girl,  
a poor young girl  
Raped by the first of that *canaille*.  
– Be! Bene! soldiers,  
follow me.  
Let's all go together  
to *Via Emilia!* –  
She showed them – where to go.  
Her brother had dug the holes  
For that mine-field,  
there beside the sea-side.  
Towards the sea-side, she  
(big-boned, but a beauty)  
Led the boys.  
Brave kid! A real cutie!  
She played that prank  
for love:  
acing 'em all for poise!  
Death-threats arrived too late,  
Defying Fate  
she died –  
That big-boned girl –  
with pride,  
hitting the target straight!  
To hell with the enemy!  
Twenty of them lay dead  
The girl dead, too  
in the midst of that *canaille*.  
Everyone *except* the prisoners.  
A real hard-case  
that kid  
Singing, singing  
with joy  
Along the road that leads  
beside the sea.  
*Gloria della patria!*

Nothing doing  
by our self self-esteem-  
ing. Murderous 5  
—branded on my thumb.  
This is our country for old men  
*and*  
I could be eternalized.  
Sing, sing, Mr. Tambo,

TAMBO:

Did you say *via*?  
Did you say *girl*?

We three.

Via is a—*so*  
Alto or soprano?

Suffering, really,  
would be  
relief.

Caught in containment  
without conscience:  
without content:  
The rest is noise.

Sing, sing, Mr. Bones, sing –  
BONES: *is the mike on?*

I died,  
thinking about the brawn of statistics.  
That insistent jealousy.  
Vainly thinking  
about poor girls about whom  
about poor men about whom  
speaking *about* is not  
thought thinking but thought ill-wrought.  
Crabbed  
being, being  
less ex-  
cellent, more ambitious,  
Pricked glory—  
belled with idle syllables

*Gloria!* the glory  
Of dying for one's land  
in the Romagna!  
The dead are not all dead,  
Myself I have returned  
from the third sphere  
to see Romagna,  
To see the North reborn  
among the mountains,  
In this 'morte saison'  
to see the home-land,  
And yet – that girl ...  
what girls,  
what boys  
wear black!"

no thoughts thought but thought.  
Le résultat est stupéfiant et séduit.  
All hope is derivative

*"That's what she said!"*

Sung –  
IN PLACE OF AN INTRODUCTION

*I don't have anything to say, I'm just  
sorry about what I did*

I got more pussy than you can  
squeeze from a cat