## G.C. WALDREP

## Strata Florida

if prayer, then, should mean a green thing the spiral stairs leading up the bare shoulder's lush horizontal only not for the ear, which draws in hunger's call my faith is planted here not as a prince, his brown, blown body

but as ferns among the stones of the string-course move me, precious giftling or move my song, the green hills burn with your green thought

& the vowel that quickens against the heart's restless dahlia, its blood-salts sunk deep into the leg's twin shafts

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the well in the choir inverse of the crossing tower (long vanished) for the washing of the saints' feet

what is *cherish* 

but a well, an inverse gravity

(to embrace Love twice, in each arm in the biceps, in the labor of each strong arm)

I can't name the trees that brow this hill (which the abbey would have hidden) (e.g., from my view) (now opened up, into love's sweet desolation) love's green labor o my body be a friend unto me, both crook & shepherd to my hungry thought (I saw the lame lamb twice, by the well) (I saw the black lamb twice, from the window of the moving train)

I would wash here, but cannot I who still wear the clothes of a dead man they are clear & cut like glass

(but what if language

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is, in the end, a *failure* of the imagination keeping the underbrush poisoned, from its honeyed roots)

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you see, we know the story we know the gold ring closes on the living bone the circuit choice makes around the circumference of the body, the ear reclines on the divan of the skull

drawing the disciple it most loved to its breast (made the same, of earth & ash)

the oak's wings open like a banquet, & what is whole trembles, a bit, on its pedestal