

John Grey – Two Poems

In A Tangier Marketplace

Dust and people crushed
so close,
I wear their smells,
and cry the tears
of their bawling children -
crated chickens
squabble and peck,
ducks hang by the neck,
and trinkets
are thrust under my nose
accompanied by the hands
of beggars -
I dodge a taxi,
the smell of day-old fish,
and a stray three legged-dog,
while admiring the wares
of the rug dealers
and hardwood chests
shimmering in the
afternoon sun -
eels and dolls,
Berbers and tourists,
sweat and leather,
djellaba and fez,
mizwid and nafir,
the bustle is incessant,
each noise picks up
before the last one ends –
and now the true test
of my immersion –
I nibble on something
I can't even spell.

The Strain On My Resources

I'm thinking man bites dog
or maybe Aesop wrote Shakespeare's plays
or the New York Times is made of mercury -
I need a break
but, one day, I too will be dead,

so my head needs to plug on
in the face of
department stores selling phials of tarnished blood
and monsters leaping across the rooftops
for if I just relax,
clear my head,
what hope has the giant checkbook
against a pyramid of skulls
and who will slit the throat of time
if I've mellowed out
the terrifying spider -
there is no rest
for the wicked good
at skirting close to insanity -
or, as the butterfly once said,
you're next, boiling kettle.

John Grey is an Australian poet, US resident. Recently published in *New Plains Review*, *Perceptions* and the anthology, *No Achilles* with work upcoming in *Big Muddy Review*, *Gargoyle*, *Coal City Review* and *Nebo*.