

v. *The Palace.*

Raised arms, bleak cry,
hair tarred with blood,
you come like a demonic bird
to where we crocodiles wait,
interweaving with slow elegance.

Arches of crocodile tails
pointing to the sky
like galleon sails
in full magnificence -
here you lie in state.

Your broken skin
dribbles as I taste and see,
with furtive grin,
your lavish generosity.
To give one's flesh and blood,
one's physicality, as drink and food
suggests a mind relentlessly at home
with all the wild and daring ways
of art. I understand; I gaze
in recognition of shared genius.
Now you must be my guest and come
and taste the subtle pleasures of my bliss.

When you sail into my sweet lagoon
on the placid water in the noon
day light and the bow calmly veers
toward the bristling masts and quays
of the Giudecca, the diamond appears.

In high serenity it floats with ease,
pink and white, above the intersection
of each archway's crocodile motif.
I watch with proud affection.
I linger like a floating leaf.

When the Carrier's dance of hate
was overthrown, there was no monument
for me to quietly appreciate –
my jaw line proud and tremulous.
As I had long since understood,
my taste for certain forms of nourishment
was vilified by the ungrateful populace.

Imagine my enchantment and surprise
when smiling lips and knowing eyes
close to the sovereign's noble seat
spoke of homage for my daring feat.

When you called the greatest and the least
to sit and share your kindly feast,
how could you foretell
what glory it would bring?
No king or emperor can claim
so much beauty crafted in their name.

I too (though to a limited degree)
have known that fervent swell,
unalloyed and deeply comforting,
of sweet emotion on my face
as I stand before a place
of beauty built for me.