Two for E. P.  
†11.1.72

RICHARD SIEBURTH

Alto Adige

swoops back  
  to earth  
in the span of a bird  
    alighting  
  no heavier  
   than a whispered word

the voice not carried  
  on tablets of brass  
    but as a trace  
through thin air  
  or prism’d by glass:

no Law is but Love  
  (though we break it faster  
    than the dark  
      in the eye of a dove)

to the East  
  the lightning stumbles  
and plunges down  
    broken rungs:
thunder seeded
   among clouded tongues
each one unalike
each one
   forkier than flame
they climb
   the coil of Babel
and fall
   into the dream of a common name
dancing to the dove
   finding fluency in every tongue

all our scattered
   sticks & stones
now leap into praise

all our words
   now gather song
circling through terzo cielo
   face to face

a single bloodpoint of light
   wingbeat
   in the white
   of night
Santa Maria dei Miracoli

acqua alta, wave-taps
   on marble, pooled light,
seepage, eddies, chaff
   chopped in the wake,
windows into water,
   stagnant glass

sirens breaching
   the mirror,
come up for love,
   come up for breath,
dolphins risen
   from the dead,
breasts cupped
   in their palms,
light gathered
   at the nipples
through splayed fingers
   scissored in stone,
flanks smoothed by the swim,
   marble veined
   like the back
of a breaking wave,
   eyes laguna grey,
mouths at a loss for song

a ship gliding through the stillness,
   lit at bow and stern
yet the bulk of it
   pitchdark,
shadows in its hold,
   cargo of ghosts,
   singing into oblivion,

night with a fringe of foam