

# Stone Angels

Ulver

Angels go - we  
Merely stray, image of  
A wandering deity, searching for  
Wells or for work. They scale  
Rungs of air, ascending  
And descending - we are a little  
Lower. The grass covers us.

But statues, here, they stand, simple as  
Horizon. Statements,  
Yes - but what they stand for  
Is long fallen.

Angels of memory: they point  
To the death of time, not  
Themselves timeless, and without  
Recall. Their  
Strength is to stand  
Still, afterglow  
Of an old religion.

One can imagine them  
Sentient - that is to say, we may  
Attribute to stone-hardness, one after the  
Other, our own five senses, until it spring  
To life and  
Breathe and sneeze and step  
Down among us.

But in fact, they are  
The opposite of perception: we  
Bury our gaze in them. For all my  
Sympathy, I  
Suppose they see  
Nothing at all, eyeless to indicate  
Our calamity, breathless and graceful  
Above the ruins they inspire.

I could close my eyes now and  
Evade, maybe, the blind  
Fear that their wings hold.

The visible body expresses our  
Body as a whole, it's  
Internal asymmetries, and also the broken  
Symmetry we wander through.

With practice I might  
Regard people and things - the field  
Around me - as blots: objects  
For fantasy, shadowy but  
Legible. All these  
Words have other meanings. A little  
Written may be far too  
Much to read.

A while and a while and a while, after a

While make something like forever.

From ontological bric-a-brac, and  
Without knowing quite what they  
Mean, I select my  
Four ambassadors: my  
Double, my shadow, my shining  
Covering, my name.

The graven names are not their  
Names, but ours.

Expectation, endlessly  
Engraved, is a question  
To beg. Blemishes on exposed  
Surfaces - perpetual  
Corrosion - enliven features  
Fastened to the stone.

Expecting nothing without  
Struggle, I come to expect nothing  
But struggle.

The primal Adam, our  
Archetype - light at his back, heavy  
Substance below him - glanced  
Down into uncertain depths, fell in  
Love with and fell  
Into his own shadow.

Legend or history: footprints  
Of passing events. Lord  
How our information  
Increaseth.

I see only  
A surface - complex enough, it's  
Interruptions of  
Deep blue - suggesting that the earth  
Is hollow, stretched around  
What must be all the rest.

My "world" is parsimonious - a few  
Elements which  
Combine, like tricks of light, to  
Sketch the barest outline. But my  
Void is lavish, breaking  
It's frame, tempting me always to  
Turn again, again, for each  
Glimpse suggests more and more in some  
Other, farther emptiness.

To reach empty space, think  
Away each object - without destroying  
It's position. Ghostly then, with  
Contents gone, the  
Vacuum will not, as you  
Might expect, collapse, but  
Hang there,  
Vacant, waiting an inrush of  
Reappointments seven times  
Worse than anything you know, seven other dimensions  
Curled into our three.

But time empties, on  
Occasion, more quickly than  
That. Breathe in our out. No  
Motion moves.

Trees go down, random and  
Planted, the  
Way we think.

The sacrificial animal is  
Consumed by fire, ascends in greasy  
Smoke, an offering  
To the sky. Earthly  
Refuse assaults  
Heaven, as we are contaminated by  
Notions of eternity. It is as if  
A love letter - or everything I  
Have written - were to be  
Torn up and the pieces  
Scattered, in  
Order to reach the beloved.

No entrance after  
Sundown. Under how vast a  
Night, what we call day.

What stands still is merely  
Extended - what  
Moves is in space.

Immobile figures, here in a  
Race with death gloom about their  
Heads like a dark nimbus.

Still, they do - while standing -  
Go: they've a motion  
Like the flow of water, like  
Ice, only slower. Our  
Time is a river, theirs  
The glassy sea.

They drift, as  
We do, in this garden so swank, so grandly  
Indiscriminate. Frail  
Wings, fingers too fragile. Their faces  
Freckle, weathering.

Pure spirit, saith the Angelic  
Doctor. But not these  
Angels: pure visibility, hovering,  
Lifting horror into the day,  
To cancel and preserve it.

The worst death, worse  
Than death, would be to die, leaving  
Nothing unfinished.

Somewhere in my life, there  
Must have been - buried now under  
Long accumulation - some extreme  
Joy which, never spoken, cannot  
Be brought to mind. How else, in this

Unconscious city, could I have  
Such a sense of dwelling?

I would  
Raise... What's the opposite  
Of Ebenezer?

Night, with it's crypt, it's  
Cradlesong. Rage  
For day's end: impatience,  
Like a boat in the evening. Toward  
The horizon, as  
Down a sounding line. Barcarolle,  
Funeral march.

Nocturne at high noon.