

the poetry collection

holiday
broadside



Bob Thompson (1937-1966)
Expulsion and Nativity, 1964
oil on canvas
63" x 83 ½", signed
Private Collection; Courtesy of Michael Rosenfeld Gallery, LLC, New York, NY

"Blue Anuncia's Bird Lute" © Nathaniel Mackey.

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This version of the Poetry Collection's 2010 Holiday Broadside is published in an edition of 1,200. There is also a limited letterpress edition of 100, of which the first 50 have been signed by the poet.

NATHANIEL MACKEY

Thompson transforms the stable in Piero's painting into the black, shadowy silhouette of a huge bird, its looming darkness suggesting Thompson's own conflicting use of bird imagery. The orange figure, distinct from the others in color, stands directly behind the kneeling figure of Mary (rather than off to her side, as in Piero's version) and reaches an arm up toward the bird.

— Shamim Momin, "Commentaries,"
Bob Thompson

Blue Anuncia's Bird Lute

after Bob Thompson

Bedless trek she saw
them embarked on. Choked
earth they were strewn
across... Sleepless,
walked
in their sleep she said it
seemed, yet-to-be world
on the tips of their tongues,
each in the other's
eyes no
end... Lost endowment,
indigent kin. Lapsed earth
gone after, something they
saw
she knew they saw... The
lute's neck's gooseneck
look...
And so said nothing. Cigarette
stuck to a nonchalant lower lip...
No book of dissolving the
book
said less... Lithe body had at
by one that wasn't there, hers in
the

his-and-her ghost house, near
water, nose caught by sea smell,
salt, said to've been known before,
moved on, soon to be there
again...

Patch of hair he put his hand
to. Voice eaten at by what names
fell away from, thrall nothing
there gave its due... Roofless,
floor-
less umbra. Patch of hair parting
the dark welcoming heaven.
Bound legs of a bird she held
on

to... Amniotic light in no one's
eyes if not his. Hand assessing
her leg mounting skyward...
Wonderment winged but
with
legs held, hard to miss what it
meant...

Hers to be his to be hers ad
infinitem, smoke smudging
the
bell of her throat. To what had
been or might've been her
thoughts migrated, cloth wall
he
pressed his hand against, he of
the indelicate embrace. Split
stem
of a bass played awkwardly, canvas
wall he
reached in
thru