

Failed Study After Francis Bacon

(Sikertelenül Francis Bacon nyomában)

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Translated by Andrew Fentham

These signature motifs, gesturing to who
you want to be, are plays of the wrist,
forearm movements. Strung like a violin,
fibers run through meat to your fingertips
from the brain, alive to the brush's each
bristle point, smeared brilliance of pigment
received by the canvas as impetus. Mixing in
reds, yellows, blues, the white you like best,
you drip oil droplets till light and reflection
run together and disappear and coalesce.
Each here and now color on your palette
is newly established by you, in offering.
A childhood trauma finds expression
as an angry snatch at the surface, searing
finally into form. The amorphous, rhythmic
din in your head pulses itself into color.
In the end, it's kitsch and clichéd.
You imagined there being more in you.
But that's it, block red circles and ellipses
in smudged gradations of rouge, burgundy,
merlot, paprika, your insides out on display,
nothing new or unfamiliar from the untrained
hand, beyond an inherent dearth of technique.
Try to save it. Daub on more. Reds, greens,
yellows, blues, keep going with the white
and see it all get browner, get earthen,
boggy, swampy, shitty, muddy,
its dull sheen becoming first a chaos
and then an evacuated brown enormity.
Here is everything, as filtered through you.
Painful to recognise that anything you create
must turn out this way: colors and words,
any achievement or lived experience,
bequeathed only as one easy body down
into the unthinking, lustreless ground.