

Your Numerology

for Regina Steiner

It began fifty thousand years ago
but Pythagoras did not have the number.
Gibbon did not count it in the rise
nor subtract it from the fall
& Will Durant & Chaya Kaufman
did not count it
in four million words and ten thousand pages
of covenants & campaigns of the ages.

Omitted in ledgers kept
by owners of a small inn near Magdeburg
who also omitted the year Sixteen Thirty-one,
unexcavated by archaeologists
summing the scythe
of Antonine Plague
as it flowed from the Danube
& crossed from Rome to Jiaozhi.

Not found in the forty-one plays
twenty-three novels and fifteen hundred letters
of Gabriela Zapolska,
nor Epicurian riddle, nor Leibniz theodicy
nor quark in cosmodicy
nor Handel *Messiah* of anthropodicy
nor policy, edict, idiocy
counted from the necropolis.

But Georg Cantor nearly counted
its infinite and well-ordered set,
its diagonal argument,
its *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen* counterpoint
Mahler heard coming from a future
Kraków, Auschwitz, Sachsenhausen, Dachau,
Bergen-Belson Grosses Frauenlager
now harmonized into Lower Saxony Herrenhausen Gardens
& Best Western Hotel Heidehof.

Marked, scarified, still you slipped
past the eliminationists
to become both spectacle & lover.
Yes, I am jackal, late,
but now count you sister.
I honor your number
wound unaccountably astral
through the flame & dust of the pack.

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