

Soothsayers

I looked to the soothsayers and broke the cardinal rule.
In my desperation, I asked a question
I didn't know the answer to: What should I do?
Three gathered around me and answered in turn.

"Let your tongue be your sword.
What use is a pen when no one reads?
Let no nuance pass through
those lying lips, so help me God."

"Abandon love by the wayside,
check your morals at the door,
and sacrifice pride for patriotism.
Martyrdom never came so cheap."

"The sky is easier to reach when it's falling,
my dear, and Atlas can't hold it up forever.
It is romantic to worship the status quo,
Roman even. But remember Rome fell too, darling."

Begging is unbecoming, but I've yet to become anything.
My pleas and pleases pass my lips with ease,
and each soothsayer sighs with that same sadness as Cassandra.
Still, I remain stubborn. They won't be believed, not by me.

I looked to the soothsayers and asked again,
louder this time, with the certainty of the senseless.
As seductive as their destructive visions could be,
I have to imagine something better. I have to.

They leave one by one, realizing they won't win a convert.
My question hangs in the air behind them, hopelessly unanswered,
and still I've yet to find my gallows sense of humor.
I lost the point to all this when it was stabbed through my gut.

When no soothsayer remains, I ask my question one more time.
There's no one left to answer except me, myself, and I,
and we've never seen ourselves, let alone the world, clearly.
I'd take my chances on two paths diverging, but what do I do with twenty?

I looked to the soothsayers, and learned only what is impossible.
Let the abyss swallow me whole before I choose intentional cruelty,
as I will always take the unknown over a profitable lack of empathy.
Let the future remain a mystery if only it is not the one they offered me.