

LETTER TO FRANK O'HARA

It had been raining for ten years—
just after our vows too, when the life
of the party shouted “Drop dead.”
What aplomb! All those faithless Springs
suddenly worthless. Years of abandonment
counting for nothing. Oh horrors of
enchantment, beauty of truculence.
You can always depend upon the hostility of lovers
But we, a glamorous, shuddering chorus,
eyes averted, move *en pointe* past
the confessional's lurid glow,
that peep-show of self-pity. Really, Mary!

As if our holy yawns don't prove
we're simply riddled with purity
and will float softly, silently
as the dreams of the inconsolable rhinoceri,
pitiable as the tears of lost seagulls,
sure as Adam's apple pie, straight to heaven.
The angels' impatience says we've
all prayed for too little and they
can't wait to scold us. God's redecorating.
He wants all his darlings back.

Oh Frank. Have you missed us terribly,
whom you never met? I picture your daily
grand jeté over the sun, knowing the moon
never tires of loving you. I long to change
costumes and visit. Let's see. Blandishments,
pitchforks, foreskins. Well! But then Edward
told me you had the longest he'd ever seen.
My mother loved me so I got to keep mine,
ensuring that there I would always be a goy.
Just knowing that I've kissed lips that once
kissed yours—but enough. Discretion is
the better part of careerism. Now there
is only one poet I love to read while dreaming.

—Steve Turtell