

Extraterrestrial Life

“Your pioneers

Now know their exile is a temple curse, despite
This closed and strictly economic life. The miracle
Has been their unaverted gaze, the wonder
They perpetuate in us, whose hopes anticipate
The coming of another dawn.”

“Too bad

They’re never here together and can share
That view.”

“Yes. They know that when my vision
Was restored, I risked my life in looking up,
And saw recurrent planet earths, rising
After intervals, but climbing to the same mistaken
Zenith, setting in the same deluded west, and sinking
In a flush.”

“My pioneers won’t bear their curse
Importantly. What they saw (explosive reds and mauves
Against a band of midnight blue), and what they found out
Later (universal truth), undoes for centuries the wonder
Of a dream. Their alien in a silver cloud cannot affirm
The rash proposals of some half-a-dozen sane men
Here, but in a technocratic absence of intelligence,
Stutters out a plea for help, evidently lost.”

Copyright © Peter Cowlam