

What I Gave Up for Lent

Sima Rabinowitz

measuring cups, shot glass
cloistered rhymes
my Catholic past (Edith Stein, Simone Weil)

both kinds of contrition
theories (of)
pattern recognition

pattern recognition
moveable fasts
Manhattan (the cocktail and the island)

the hungry poetics
a penitent aesthetic
my Catholic future (homilies, apologetics)

theology
geography
prosody

science

Desideratum - 2

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What Roget wanted, he said, was to be useful,
practical, to provide an implement *hitherto*
unsupplied in any language. His Work was a tool.
Tool as in contrivance: plan, scheme, design.
And tool as in instrument: apparatus, appliance

utensil, weapon. Weapon against
confusion, sloth, ineptitude. A prototype,
also, of course, a contrivance as in resource
and also as in a *card up one's sleeve*.
Forgive the vulgarity, Roget, begged

his future comrades in synonymity,
but things ordinary, not classical,
classical as in tasteful, as in prototypal,
are common, as in base, but also as in shared.
Precision, above all, was his motivation,

the desire for perspicuity (567n), clarity,
directness, our complicity of meaning,
complicity as in: inclusion, association,
in the same boat. Again, excuse the
common (as in mediocre) metaphor.

I know (understand, recognize) what possessed him,
possessed as in devoured by, possessed as in
on one's hand—he would have a hand in classifying,
yes, in naming, naming, naming,
that great (as in powerful, as in proud) science.