



In Relation To

after Nathan Oliveira's painting "Standing Figure #4 (with Nails)" 1990

The figure was already there
that's how we knew
about the moon at the bottom
without which we could not see,
like a boulder holding things in place.
It was clear the sun was busy
with its gyrating flames
and streams of thought –

But we never doubted the figure –
at cross-purposes and cross-wise
or aslant and furrowing
into its dirty cottony mesh
that which goes soft around a man

angling, as he does, between
heart and head and traveling
through the loins;

Moonboulder cold
and quieter still
as in the nature of things
what is placid distance,
unfeeling or removed,
it stays us.

You could see it as a staining frame
the confusion providing
the substance of the man,
or person, if you wish, or need.
Little interested in its gender,
the shape remains the same
with some curving
caressing
or brushing
could be seen as an abstraction

While the one thing
at the mercy of the tides
stands still –
what is outside often
seems that way

Fashioning a hive
some frantic border
for us to rest in
we lie still in our troubles
as if we had a place
in relation
to

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