

THE CENTRAL HOME

STEPHEN PAGE

The Central Home has lights!
It was once the Malingerer's home,
Dark and lawned with lemon-tree stumps.

Once it was only called House 21,
But now the hardest worker lives
There, the tamer of horses,
The counter of cows, the planter of trees.

All that is good radiates
From there. Even in the blindness
Of noon. Look! The light has cracked the chimney
And burned the floors!

Misionero, do your recorridos,
The count lessening has no excuse.
Do not allow your lot to pass
To overripe clover, do not fall
Into a crack, do not allow
The Central Home to become again
House 21. Let it center the ranch,
Let it be an example.

I have given you electricity,
And fixed your doors.
Misionero, keep it your home.

TERESAI: MY MASK OF DAY

STEPHEN PAGE

My mask of day rises with me out of bed
like a wrapped sheet: clinging, covering, she hides
the scars of night; she is soft, sensuous, caresses
my muscular build, my face, my hair;

She unwraps and pirouettes before me, holds out her arms,
clasps my hand, ballrooms, tangos:
She jumps up and down upon the dry earth,
raising dust to form a rain cloud.

She does not resee my nightmares,
or remember them for me upon waking.
She does not see the half-bottle of scotch
I sipped into my veins the night before.

She grinds coffee and pours spring water through
the grounds, serves me in a porcelain cup.
She scrambles eggs and sets the plate
before me. She does not ask

Where I was the afternoon before,
or who I was with. She sits in the chair
next to mine, places her hand upon
my forearm, and says nothing.