

Trois Leçons de Ténèbres

"music in a time of darkness"

The voices spiral up into the night.
Mezzo and soprano joined in sadness:
the Hebrew letters of the Jeremiad
framing the opening of a troubled heart.
Music written for a dying king.

He has never been so empty.
Nothing could have prepared him for this.
Like the dying Louis, he sees his surroundings
as a gilded prison confining his soul.
The face in the director's washroom mirror
is greyer and older by a decade, etched
with lines born of worry, not laughter.
The shoulders sag with the weight of lives
dependant on his every decision.
His eyes are wary, watchful and reserved
like an old master's portrait, full of doubt.

This is not what I signed up to

Back in his wood and leather scented office,
he looks down on the corporate plaza below,
where a solitary figure is gazing up,
at his silhouette framed in the last lit window.
For a fleeting moment their eyes seem to meet,
each one envying the others imagined freedom.
Then the man below, raises his fist
in an ancient gesture of impotent defiance —
and in this moment, thirty floors above him,
another king comes to understand loneliness.

Note: The three lessons of Tenebrae (Holy Week) were written for King Louis XIV by his court composer, Francois Couperin, and performed by nuns as he lay dying. The music is considered by many to be amongst the most exquisite of the Baroque.

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