

# **MARK MCMORRIS**

**ON LABYRINTHS (2)**

**CAMP**

**TRANSPORTED (1)**

**TRANSPORTED (2)**

**INVISIBILITY**

**INCOMPLETENESS**

## ON LABYRINTHS (2)

The labyrinth is a precise  
cryptogram of detours  
disappointed guesses  
defeated insights  
misreadings  
luckless voyages  
of discovery  
mirror symmetry

Archetype  
of many things  
unconscious desire  
reason  
scholasticism  
chance  
metaphor of many places  
racial homelands  
impossible to escape

bantustans

favelas

migrant cities

(unsolved conundrums)

ghettos in Kingston

cemeteries

Though the archway

admit the hero

to navigate sheer walls

to follow knowledge

farther than prudent

and to meet echoes

of himself on thresholds

armed with answers

possibly valid

the labyrinth is not your ally

The labyrinth is a figure  
that captures  
a figure of the archives  
faith and illusion  
inexhaustible corridors  
for study  
many temptations  
many fables  
with many doorways  
many paths to the light  
many deceits  
many rites of passage  
many ordeals  
the Minotaur lives there  
savage, cannibal, brute, barbarian  
the hero's task  
to dissolve the hybrid

Lamentation

women of the camps

women of the ark

in reverse sailing

women of the provision grounds

Doors like sentinels

that open and close

too soon or too late

Although the moon

laminates the walls

of enamel blue mosaics

tiled mural with bathers

on the walls covered

in the ash at Pompeii

the labyrinth is not your ally

Although the diagram  
reveal the profligacy  
of mathematical idea  
display the elegance  
of ratio and number  
like the metrical form  
of complex stanzas  
or palace of synesthesia  
the labyrinth is not your ally

The labyrinth is many things  
it outlasts the meaning  
anyone can think of  
to give to the building

## **CAMP**

The camp is an enclosure  
Ringed with posts and barbed wire.  
Three generations have seen  
Untold circuits of the sun.  
There is only barbed wire ahead.

## **TRANSPORTED (1)**

The wooden walls of the hold  
Shelter things of darkness  
Torsos arranged in stacks  
Like books on shelves  
Unreadable pages pressed  
Together containing what  
Inscrutable writing.

The faces more than empty  
History or tragedy or—  
The genre of the passage  
Erased from all catalogues.  
Shoulder to shoulder  
Costly replicas in the dark  
Forms are stirring.



## TRANSPORTED (2)

The slave ship is a labyrinth.

The door lies in the past.

The structure has no limit.

The end of the voyage brings

Another enclosure.

The sun falls on living things

In green pasture and level field.

Not all things are living.

The sun falls on them that perish

Behind the barracks.

Tongues grow like weeds

In hard dirt by the pens.

Rain washes them away.

(The future is more of the same.)

Over the planted fields

The silence is unbearable.

## INVISIBILITY

Most walls are invisible  
the wall on the inside  
that practices disguise  
the walls of amnesia  
behind which your past  
the past of your nation  
shelters and works.

On a wall the picture  
of children reading  
a book on the grass.  
Cottages in a valley.  
The natives of the picture  
built on the slopes  
below flame-red  
poinciana branches.

A donkey pulls a cart  
with cut grass and yams.

The deceit of painting  
spreads bright sunlight.

Behind the invisible  
wall the scene turns grim:  
day after day of toil  
*here wi dig, here wi hoe*  
you know what I mean.

## INCOMPLETENESS

The labyrinth is not a womb.

A chamber like a prison

The walls cover many acres.

No one has seen the last wall.

How would you draw its map?

The labyrinth is cunning.

Built by reason, it imitates

The disputes of reason

In the jousts of Abelard.

It copies itself endlessly.

Every passage is a detour.

The labyrinth will always

Be undiscovered: Terra

Incognita, like the future.

Godel's theorem explains:

The system does not hold

The complete diagram of itself.