

Cover Essay

Danse Macabre

I had a dream, which was not all a dream,
while staring face to face with Haring's mask
whose deep despair and horrid silence scream
to blind with crossbones baleful eyes that ask
how seven figures of Pangaea's brood
unsealed the seventh sign to damn them all
to plunge from the apocalyptic rood
and whether they possessed the wherewithal
to seek the hope abandoned long ago
with Dies Iræ, for their world, the Earth,
had over eons cooled from fiery flow
to verdant nature's vast, resplendent birth.

I note the blaze; the reverie is fled—

I wonder then as to what lies ahead.

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ABOUT THE POEM AND THE POET

This poem—peppered with gleanings from the lyrical visions of Dante, Milton, Byron, and Keats—is in the form of a Shakespearean sonnet.

Mark Olival-Bartley writes, translates, and studies poetry. He is presently reappraising the sonnets of E. A. Robinson for his dissertation at Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München in Germany.

ON THE COVER

Untitled (Burning Skull), 1987 by Keith Haring. Enamel on aluminum, 44 × 31 × 9 in. Keith Haring artwork © Keith Haring Foundation Used by permission. This cover art was sponsored by the generous support of EcoHealth Alliance.



ABOUT THE COVER ARTIST

Keith Haring was born in 1958 in Reading, Pennsylvania. His interest in art developed at an early age and in 1976 he enrolled in the Ivy School of Professional Art in Pittsburgh, a commercial art school. After realizing he had little interest in commercial art he dropped out, moved to New York City, and enrolled in the School of Visual Arts (SVA). Haring quickly became involved in the burgeoning alternative art community outside of traditional galleries and museums. During his time at SVA, he experimented with a variety of artistic mediums and in 1980 began to create drawings in white chalk on matte black paper panels that were found throughout the New York City subway system. From 1980 to 1985, he produced hundreds of these public drawings. During the 1980s, Haring achieved international recognition, participating in both group and solo exhibitions. In 1986, he opened a retail store in New York City called Pop Shop, which sold images of his art on clothing, toys, and other gifts. The shop was an extension of Haring's commitment to share his art with as wide an audience as possible. In 1988, Haring was diagnosed with AIDS, and in 1989 he established the Keith Haring Foundation to provide funding and imagery to AIDS organizations and to generate activism and awareness about AIDS. Keith Haring died of AIDS complications in 1990 at age 31. His work can be seen in exhibitions and museum collections worldwide.