

Classic Encounter

by [Carleton Raisbeck](#) (October 2018)



Milk, Michael Borremans, 2003

I call them The Academy Peripatetic
because on the dealings of men
they dwell day and night,
and are without
a place to call home.

On the steps of a church

they converge, devoted
to discourse and drink.
(but by morning possess
much less resolve
than Socrates in *The Symposium*.)

Recently, I saw them sprawled
topless, soaking the sun,
with the richness of Senators
in Roman bath houses.

Stood before them, a defendant; a rhetor,
stained with icons of gods on his skin,
defending a thesis and waving
a chalice of tin.

Deploying an anaphora, he spake:

“I ain’t never seen her.

And I ain’t never touched her.

And I ain’t never gonna see her again.”

But alas, his *narratio*

though emphatically put,
failed to convince;
a questionable *ethos*
or a flaw in his logic, perhaps.

And of course, as it does, this discourse became flesh:
a *refutatio* to the stomach and face
—a conclusion, at least, it may well be said,
with less finality than hemlock.

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