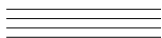


C O N C A V E D E C A D E S



S T E V E B A R B A R O

But of the many, many (the un-sundry, soap-glossy) plates at hand the bottommost
plate of the stack fits the thought of the victuals it shan't
ever flaunt, and perfectly, your impatience meanwhile suits
the looming necessity of the plates, perfectly,
perfectly, while the rotund sheen of the plate atop of the stack
portends the weirdly casual way that our sustenance breeds its own
rituals, which might very well be the same process
keeping the bottom plate so conspicuously, well,
spotless . . . But it must be, you suspect, dammit, it must be the indefinite
non-need of that last, bottommost piece that best defines the whole
structure, though there is also of course a whole room surrounding,
a whole room and an entire edifice and a nation of laws
plus an erratically contoured universe subsuming an inexhaustible
here-there-here of flutterings within which system the plate-stack
is one of the homelier, more functional occurrences. . . Yet when
the possessor of the plates, which is to say you but not I, plans
the party whereby each last plate will be needed, it shall appear
as if fate itself were assuming the voices of friends
who were once amongst the closest of confidantes as they sigh
and pull back to lament how they've already eaten.