

Ash Wednesday Poem



I love the contrast between the first two and the last two verses of this poem.

The author like myself is clearly not a fan of the baroque church style, an allegory for the way we "parody the divine. " No doubt there are other styles that do the same.



Ash Wednesday Poem

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**These frowning aisles as penitentially
As though it walked in sackcloth. Let it be
Laid at the feet of all that ever grew
Twisted and false, like this rococo shrine
Where cupids smirk from candy clouds and where
The Lord, with polished nails and perfumed hair,
Performs a parody of the divine.**

**The candles hiss; the organ-pedals storm;
Writhing and dark, the columns leave the earth
To find a lonelier and darker height.
The church grows dingy while the human swarm
Struggles against the impenitent body's mirth.
Ashes to ashes. . . . Go. . . . Shut out the light.**

And so the light runs laughing from the town,
Pulling the sun with him along the roads
That shed their muddy rivers as he goads
Each blade of grass the ice had flattened down.
At every empty bush he stops to fling
Handfuls of birds with green and yellow throats;
While even the hens, uncertain of their notes,
Stir rusty vowels in attempts to sing.

And throws an olive blush on naked hills
That hoped, somehow, to keep themselves in white.

A carnival of colour, gladly spills
His blood: the resurrection—and the light.

Louis Untermeyer