

D.S. STYMEIST  
**RECLAMATION**

At the end of a dirt road that runs in  
and out of olive and cedar groves,  
past fields of wheat-stock stubble,  
you come upon the abbey Sant'Antimo.  
Within its tartar-stained, grey walls  
are odd fragments of even older stone:  
half-way up the square block-tower  
is a Roman toilet carved of blue-veined  
marble and stuffed with rough cobbles.  
Around the corner, a toga-garbed figure  
carries a basket of summer grapes  
among the dressed blocks of travertine;  
salvaged from a nearby Roman villa,  
this stone man has come up in the world  
and has the best view of the Val d'Orcia.

That these fragments of old masonry  
now cloister relics of Saint Anthimus,  
who smashed Faunus' simulacrum  
and was thrown into the river Tiber  
with a millstone clapped round his neck  
for the crime, is an irony unapparent  
to the Canons Regular who chant  
the Gregorian in gleaming white.

When midnight comes and the dogs  
pull my body apart, I can only hope  
that the busted-up and unhallowed  
remains of ill-used life will serve  
in ways far beyond my intention.