Azdak After Curtain Call

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CHRISTOPHER NEWMAN
Oh, you were a stalwart horse’s ass,
Christopher, Christopher, poor blind
Discoverer, voyaging, voyaging east,
Leaning from crow’s nest, hoping to find
Soul and body to flesh your ideal,
Girl of your calculated dreams;
You paid your money and took your chances
Where love’s fair white moon beams.
Oh, you hopeless barbaric American,
Commercial person, unequipped to face
The urbane civilized exquisite cruelty
That kills with a rapier’s perfect grace.
— E. W. Oldenburg

AZDAK AFTER CURTAIN CALL:
CAUCASIAN CHALK CIRCLE
The curtain closing shuts out the warm lights
And laving applause of our brief world.
A line of dying characters, we
Resume our own skins under our grease-paint.
Beside me in the sudden breathing dark
Grusha asks: “Is it you, Azdak?”
And I find her small hand in mine
Crumpled and warm like a sheltering bird.
Hand in hand we shuffling guide each other,
Blind players groping for the wings
Across a blackened no-man’s-land
That’s caught between illusion and the real.
Sweet and gentle Grusha, simple helpless girl
Of hopeless flight – I’ve given you
Your happy ending, heart’s desire,
Your man, your love, your child, your life.
I will keep your hand until harsh real light
Wakes us and we lose our powers.
If it would keep you always safe,
I’d wear forever the unreal grease-paint of a judge.
— E. W. Oldenburg