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REBORN TO THE LIVING

Jim Strecker
Trumpeter

¡POEM¡ In the great Rift Valley, this sun-parched belly of earth, I walk into his knowledge. I hear the sound before language, his breath; I hear my own heart breathe wonder. His eyes have decomposed, become dust, and I touch a sharp stone, an axe he made, and I am atoms of dust and flesh, my lifetime and a million years old. Still I do not know what he knew, what the heat of his brain wanted to know when he perished in the age of stone before time. Then to grasslands, Masai Mara, and thinking steals my body from flesh: I am become my own danger. I contemplate the giraffe, zebra, elephant, eland, gazelle, all born of earth to die the half-eternal lifetime of stars; but I, born flesh of the very same earth, am a stranger. In the wild beast's heart the world begins, in the wild beast's heart the world is new, and I, man of nuclear age, idea myself out of blood and out of wonder into abstract of the earth. Yet this to the sun I speak: Into you, great flame, I bring my small fire; into you great flame, I bring branches of a thousand dreams. And they are nothing to you, great sun. And I who kill the earth am nothing, know nothing, dream nothing. I am not forever and you are the sun.

¡POEM¡ Then evening: the sky is heavy with colour, darkness and blue as one. The sun blooms twilight, the horizon, the stars are blossoms unending, and beast and man have sense in senses shared. We are kin, we are one, the tangible echo of heaven, yet my perfection is less. The black rhino stands, forever and now, on the cool, dimming music of these grasses, and I, descendant of stone age, am made of stone. I have read too many books; my brain is misshapen heart. I have stopped the seasons, made light to stop the seasons, hacked my dreams apart to touch their molecules. And somewhere in my sleep I call to earth, call to earth, my flesh, and awaken alone. My words are merely dust blown too far away; I do not know myself in raindrops as they fall. Then heal me, teach me, wildebeest; I touch every atom of your name and say nothing. Let my blood drink the master design migration, and let my steps follow you. And you, water buffalo, teach me to stand still and know that I am. And you, hyena, baboon, let me know the whole world in your senses resounding, no matter what shadow shall speak for the end of this mortal, mortal world. And cheetah, impala, vulture as one, let me know, before knowing, the wisdom of my bones. Blast rushing stars of wonder through my skin, and let me be what I am, your spirit in mine, summer in winter, fire in snow. And above this grassy mirror to the sky, let my heart be the sweat-scented wind, my mind the transcendence of the bird, my life a split second of breathing through these lungs. And earth, now dry where my moist ancestors rotted, earth of each killer and victim, my kin, I feel the waters of your love in mine. My ancestor, nameless, set me here, foreign to his primal splendor; he hacked a stone to shape my destiny. And now I, the hunter, shall be hunted again

¡POEM¡ And my cells, like the stars, shall be before they become. For the child, my heart, is the light in the darkness, where these peaceful creatures of morning drink rainbowed rays of the sun, more real than any voice that names them one by one.

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