

Ygdrasil

A JOURNAL OF THE POETIC ARTS

October 2012

VOL XX, Issue 10, Number 234

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ISSN 1480-6401

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LITANIES

I eat, I sleep, I whisper prayers.
I wrestle the wild birds of night,
the saintly beasts of fire and earth,
you, who dream in the wilderness
come, come with your robes of silk,
come with your dead and dying,
let me weep for your outrage,
I am acquainted with ruins.
it doesn't matter that the trapeze artist
is flying to his grave,
we are all tragic and timeless
and tending towards death.
I run my fingers through the strands of hair that are left,
lightly touch my lips with my fingertips, I murmur litanies,
I am alive still, spread out over these rocks waiting for the Holy Ghost to anoint me.

I am the tree, I am the seed, I am the leaves,
I am the branches that are bowed down and laden with fruit,
I plead with the birds, with the Sky God who animates my speech,
won't you light on my branches?

I am the seasons of the year, the harrowing of the ages,
I am broken into a million pieces, and each piece sings, I am.

I am the archangel of fire ascending the bone ladder,
I am the sin-eater
attending the sacred ruin,
the trail of shadows.

the names of the saints sear my lips, hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee, blessed
art thou... your cue, Mother of Roses, Delphinium of Sorrowing Mothers whose death I am.
Mother of Perpetual Help, pray for me, Mother of my Heart, the floors are covered in moss,
did you notice my Mother, my darling Summer Rose?
the signs are everywhere, a thick coat of ash on tables, chairs, lintel,
broken utterances without charm,

it doesn't matter that the yearnings of the heart
belie the constant obstinate invader
banging incessantly on my door.
I am turning to dust too quickly.

each morning I go back to my slumbering heart and cry out for the awakening.



in the cities of the heart

(inside)
behind closed eyelids,
are worlds
and cities
of crimson heat,
cities of the heart.

tonight,
this night,
while this city
mourns its dead,
an invisible rainforest
hovers, like a hanging garden,
over the sea.

in the presence of
an Impossible Star*
to night,
this night,
in this city,
beneath those skies,
alive, my Immortal Beloved,
(History of Histories)
stirs the air,
the night,
my dreams,
my crimson heat,
my hungry heart.

in this body,
in this wound,
in this tear,

in this holy of holies,
I am alive
in the history
of our unforgetting.

in this hard beauty of dying and becoming,
the children have grown dangerous and wise.

Dec. 2011



BALANCING A BODY ON BLADE OF TREMBLING GRASS

~ to the poet

*I stumble into the garden of love, in dreams of late,
attune my eyes to this wilderness of divine sorrows (inhale, exhale, o divine breath!)*

I wait with grace.

I rose from the water, alone, and stood in this field of trembling grass
I walked through the seasons of the flesh, a living myth,
what was I looking for, a dream written in stone?
I considered the filaments of tissue
that float like seaweed along the folds of the heart,
or a benediction, a substantial grace,
and what does it matter if the past is a cacophony of ancient voices riding a song,
an exiled rebel child,
or a dying rose?

I am imagined beneath this tree with the roots at my back. I am the prayer of an ancient warrior, a sky rocking a landscape -- the trees swaying in the imaginary wind, my hands reach for your face like someone blind searching for the map of life, looking backwards and forwards at the same time, I pull the fragmented universe together with my fingertips to write love on your face.

worlds intersect, language is born, and flows from the tips of my fingers. I write, blinded by light, my fingers still searching your face for a divine language, my hands following a dream, I am the seer of divine origins, a dreamsayer.

by night I practice my confession, words barely squeeze through my lips, the cankerous ode to the father of all grief casts a shadow on my face, words release a torrent of torturous sounds. I stand here alone, my voice escaping through all my pores, the light preying on my eyes, feasting on my soul.

while standing in the bruised field of my afflictions, I saw the white horse galloping towards me, the mirage settled into a dream and I awoke from this dream awash in longing, o benevolent reprieve, I am alive! what scheme brings you here? what words sanctify our flesh, our lives, our dream houses? in this confessional of unreconciled suns where do we set the table for the feast?

gathering up paper and charcoal, layer upon layer, touching the paper with my fingertips, I follow a dream horse across the page, dragging the charcoal, smudging it with my fingers, the

marks describing the night, once reckless love, once ink and paper, I am creating a map to invisible worlds. and, if by night, riding the skies on the back of a white horse, comes the poet carrying the firmament on his shoulders, I will remember the quick way you breathed words into my skull, your breath smelling of ashes and seaweed, o magnificent error, stubborn grace,

your words graze my lips,
the church bells ring out the Angelus,
count backwards to get to the beginning
before it rings out the final ode of inclusion and endings,

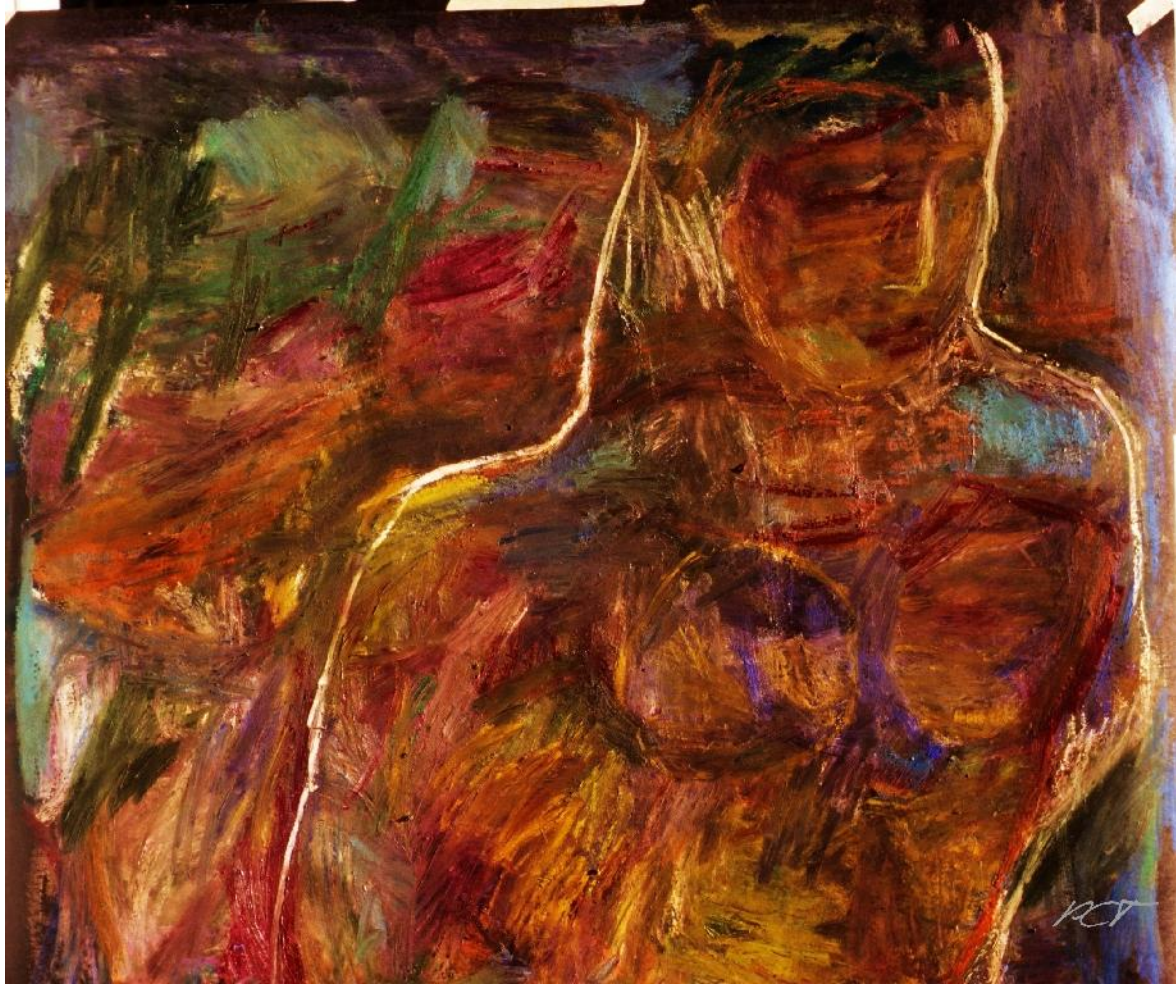
this love song is a world of lengthening shadows,
a world fashioned from words,
o immortal poet, write me into the book of love,

and hold me tenderly until I awaken.



THERE ARE NIGHTS LIKE THIS

menacing night, inside/outside,
we're all pilgrims here
in this ice palace of forgotten dreams,
we are like eaglets tossed from their nests,
wounds as archangels coming upon one another in the dark,
we are exiles descending the rope ladder,
beggars at the mercy of our fates,
in the evenings I am a torn amoeba
under your spell, I am drowning
like the innocent witch howling
in the night like the north wind.
someone has climbed into my skull,
how can I tell who it is who speaks?
I am aching from the cold, who will
close the doors in this winter palace for derelicts?
enough is enough, we are all clutching at dreams,
hanging on tight to those bits of crucified flesh,
listen, there are nights like this when poets write diamonds
and flowers bloom in black holes.
you have to weep for the endings,
weep for farewells and leave-takings,
weep for the exiles who are still looking
for the map of the world.
you have to play for time,
in this cruciform for lovers,
the slide from night to day
is full of tender mercies.



Bride Of Sorrows

Every man who has reached even his intellectual teens begins to suspect that life is no farce; that it is not genteel comedy even; that it flowers and fructifies on the contrary out of the profoundest tragic depths of the essential dearth in which its subject's roots are plunged. The natural inheritance of everyone who is capable of spiritual life is an unsubdued forest where the wolf howls and the obscene bird of night chatters. Henry James Sr., writing to his sons Henry and William

every night in dreams, you come in, lie down beside me. the phantoms of my flesh intoxicate me. we are dark and full of grace, fragile beasts stationed on this outpost waiting for daybreak. we were lost in the dancing, the changeling—you imagine yourself, the wood carver/celestial sculptor containing your lines with a faithful urgency.

there are lines like that the world over, that would take your breath away. the light is blinding, isn't it? angels of mercy striking the bells at dawn. your kiss was a prayer of remembrance, a candle lighting the way, this time it doesn't matter how the secrets are embedded in myths, or where the roads leading out of here are going, now I see you in the waves rushing to meet me, the luminous sky that opens above me. I exist now, in the mists rising from the northern seas, interior time slows right down and mocks emptiness.

why did you come here? listen, fly away with me now and I'll tell you things, secrets I have never told anyone. the blossoms will soon be out, they are late coming, but soon. I run up and down the streets like this, in dreams, calling your name—come back to me. I fall back and wait for you to awaken. what is the point of all this? in the morning I go down into the city, grieved and broken, my eyes are open. where are they keeping the light?

no one is satisfied with the meagre rations of social vestiges.
we invent new religions to satisfy some hunger for divine heroics.

time speeds up on the outside, and the voices have begun again, to berate me.
what are they looking for? there is nothing more. I am standing on the edge of invisible worlds entreating a moonless sky. what is this country that I've left behind? who has not gone out from this place? where do the angels of mercy reside?

I burn candles for protection from all that has come against me. I have not forgotten the language of this city. I could name my fortunes by chance, luck, fate, destiny, accident, divine interventions, a godsend. the world is a blanket of anonymity. I make my home in the wind, I surrender myself to the stream of endless tides that break across the Salish Sea in the currents of air. I have become my own house. my heart is on fire.

who can divine the colour of the sea? the forest at night? the wind? the memory of love?
I weep for my holy northern woods. I fear the wild animals are in danger. dreams, mutinous and unfamiliar, take up home, speak with your voice, I begin to have visions that fill my room with mist and wind and trees, (it happened once, again, at night)
I could have leaned away, but preferred the company of ghosts to my own slow death, (slugs or snails in memory's vaporous world)

while these visions write themselves into the book of unimaginable sorrows, the silence perches like a bird in the eaves. I have one dark hole for an eye, up-side a sea of flowers. who guards the portals of dreams? everyone has left. the mist moves towards me as the night birds howl. do not begrudge me one iota of peace. I die a thousand times before tomorrow. do not reproach me dear beloved Old One, what is not here will echo through eternity, in one final bid to be remembered. the long savage silence of your mind is a persistent grace. you gather us in like flowers.

I have been unable to sleep. the wild animals keep me company. the first whispers of morning propel me, to follow the stars down from the night sky, to scatter them upon the earth. I fall into the morning.

the sky is crying.



Post Scriptum

SACRIFICIUM

I am the innocent roots of the imagined tree in the Garden of Eden.
where will I begin? the ruse? the ghost? the long silence of the night?
my soul, once river, once sky,
once love drawn through stone,
if it was I who parted the sea,
if dying,
if a holy fear,
if a dream moves in the air like a visible language,
I flounder on dry land, I am a fish bouncing from rock to rock.
broken in a thousand pieces, each piece remembers your name.

we were a dream walking,
the hordes pouring into the ruined cathedrals,
death hungered, beguiled the living.
like psychics plundering the secrets of angels,
there was no remorse, we forgot our histories.
show us tender mercies, Beloved, we are bred in blood and bone.
forget, forget, forget the city of your birth,
we have not summoned this day with the church bell.
and the prophets still walk backwards
through the stations of the cross,
to return to Paradise.

bless the solar halo,
bless the light riding the sky from the backside of the mountains,
bless the trees testing winds, lit from behind like a visitation from on high,
bless the silence of the night,
the unexpected wind, abrupt and holy,
bless the light of the dead,
and the uncurious, dead before their time.

who carried you into the wound garden?
who called the saints to prayer?
we have created a bounty of dreams
from sound knocking on the past,

back and forth
inside, outside, we are breeding dragons,
once nativity, once immortal soul,
my body is the holy of holies.
burn me with your ecstatic breath,
climb in behind the door in my skull,
I surrender to the eye of the tongue,
(dull words bind us to sorrows)
I heard words coming from behind the world,
and someone was singing among the ruins,

I am the burnt offering.
I am the Leper of the end times.

*

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Submission must be in the body of an email unless otherwise agreed on.