

The Cave of Hypnos: Early Poems



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Mnemosyne

Men dream into flesh
between long nights,
weaving their breath
into memory,
and believing
that memory
mirrors the world,
as if men's names
were not just water
singing softly
to be heard.

Tide

You move
like a winter tide
rolling on a belly
of sand.

Swirling over me,
fondling
the broken shells
of my sighs.

Lick my skin
with salt
and silt
before I
die.

Karma

That dark carpenter
is building the rooms
where we will spend
our future lives.

Here is the next room.

It is papered
with our words.

Its bed is framed
with our desires.

Its mirror
is smoked
with our hate
and our love.

We will meet suddenly
in its doorway,
entangled again
as if
never parted.

The Salt Stone

I have licked
the salt stone.

Run mad
as a mushroom cap
bobbing in the rapids
of a dark stream.

Leapt up
the oak ladder
to circle the
crescent moon.

The wind
lies languid
in the ivory caves
of your
morning
mouth.

The dawn wraps
your shadow
turning slowly
towards me.

Panikon Deima

Night flows
through the streets.

The stream rushes faster,
the trees are swallowed.

The moon drifts
into blackness
like a butter balloon.

Silvered by moonlight,
a god walks.

His horns are knives
that rend the soul.

Men see him and flee.

Forever seeing
their own eyes,
they are lost
in a maze
of mirrors.

Fleece falls thick
over his shanks.

His hands move
in an alphabet of light.

Night moves before him
like an obedient tidal wave.

Hush.

If we listen closely,
if we listen closely,
we will hear
his cruel laugh
roll from our own lips.

White Rooms

Morning
slips
into
white rooms.

It gently
glides a
sun smeared hand
over
hazy figures
undulating,
speaking
silent
words.

How and Why

In a former life,
I was a fish,
eyes wide,
gulping
meaning.

Now I wait,
empty,
a pinpoint
of breath,
a sliver
of infinity.

Come to Me

Come to me
before the dawn
dims the stars.

The same wave
that washes
the clouds
moves in your
fluttering breath.

Let me see the
play of shadows
on your breasts.

Let me part the rose
that roots
in your heart.

Let me bathe
in the warm sound
of tears.

Come to me.

We will let the moss
of unknown paths
grow between our fingers,
let the closed door
of the future
fall to
the sky.

The Dancers

It is because
I fear to wake them
behind the bolted door
of dreams.

The starving eyes,
the fragile ribs,
hollow gourds
on Shiva's belt.

They dance as
he dances
upon the
withered plain.

It is because
I fear to
name them.

The night whispers
their names,
calling their
twisted faces
to me.

Will you hide with me,
fornicating
with the future
between the pages
full-color ads?

Here they have no names.

They are
shadows of rags,
shifting dots
on the television screen,
dancing,
dancing.

Last Laugh of the Rainbow Dancer

The black candle of night
is reversed and lit
as Annie stumbles
through the kitchen door
blue terry cloth robe
untied, rubbing her
dream crusted eye.

The stove flickers on
in the frost tinged shadows
as Ichabod, the half-blind
alley cat, slips between
her ankles, begging for a
little warm milk.

Annie drops
freeze-dried coffee
into the cup,
which melts
into last night's
lover's face,
and she drifts back
under his back before
he danced out
the morning door
without waving
goodbye.

The toaster grates
like a hinge, and
Annie swings over
the linoleum floor,
humming, smearing
butter on toast.

She catches a glimpse
of two glasses, wine stained,
and feels empty as a
dry wind.

Dew has risen into
frozen flowers
on the windowpane,
and Annie stands
startled.

Ichabod has smashed
the sugar crock,
the grains
are pouring
in white waves
out on the
floor.

Inexorable,
innocent waves
right there
on the
floor.

Elysium

The transparent doves
die slowly
in your fingers.

Wings,
thin as blades of grass,
scrape against your palm.

So this is heaven,
you pray,
hoping you are wrong.

Thin men
wedged in the eyes
of needles,
faces blank
as wet cement,
congratulate you
as they pry
the gold filings
from your teeth.

Several dwarfs
chisel your name
into the sides
of new cars
and smile.

Everyone
you have ever known
is there
armed with
butcher knives.

Suddenly,
the lights
go out.

Confession

Only because
we are
candles
burning
at both
ends
do I say
this word
love
and fall
silent.

Dukkha

Your eyes are scarred,
pain twisted and knotted
like a macrame cross.

Your hands are maimed,
the nails clinging
to the flesh
like some broken Huguenot
on the rack.

Your mouth is hard,
the narrow trenches
the years have dug
bind it
like a gilt frame
strangling a dark
medieval portrait.

So many eyes
are light and clear
like dew reflecting
the morning sky.

So many hands are
soft and warm
like a cat against
a naked thigh.

So many mouths
are shaped to smiles
like clouds
releasing the sun.

Why do the silent demons
grapple and sweat
like insane Apache dancers
on the tangled stage
of your mind?

The Gulls

You forgot
to remove
his hands
still stroking
your breasts
in slow circles
like gulls,
white bellies tight,
as you
so naked
tried to light
a smile.

The Answer

Creating fireflies
between the
leaves of time,
I stop to consider
your eyes.

I swear that deep within us,
tangled in the
chains of memory,
lies a dark answer
to the bric-a-brac
of thought.

It stirs
like a panther
uncurling in
the jungles of night.

If lightning would streak
the skies of our lives,
if dawn would
mix her colors
in the small dish
of our hopes,
we would be
incandescent.

The dull moths
of our days
would fold
their mottled wings
and die.

Oh temperance,
murderer of the
wild dreams
of children,
sleep.

The News From Saigon

The turning world,
a river of blood.

We whisper
words of love.

The radio rasps
"today in Vietnam . . ."

My hands move through
waterfalls of hair.

Our moans are not,
no not,
like theirs.

Gypsy

His eye is slow and sensuous;
it lingers on your breast.

His fingers weave the wiry thread;
the beard flows to his chest.

Gypsy, lost in plate glass skies,
will I pass the test?

Gypsy, fondling inner lies,
will I here find rest?

His arm slips slowly round you;
the tree grips the earth.

His gaze cuts through your sighs.

He knows you will forever thirst.

Gypsy?

Yes.

Gypsy?

Yes.

Gypsy?

Yes.

Job

Job before
God's wailing wall,
eyes consumed by fire,
prays the blood's
tormented call,
echoes my desire.

The Bed

Hollows map
your body
gone.

My body drinks
your fading
warmth.

Your ghost
is mute.

I smoke.

A touch,
did I feel
a touch
of a wrapping
thigh?

Silence deepens.

I sleep.

Night scraps
the window.

The bed
is silent.

The Bureaucrats

They are pencils,
starting sharp,
ground down
each day
between grey
file cabinets,
never knowing
the hand
that writes
with their
numb bodies
slowly
as the
hour hand
goes
by.

Bedlam

Mad eyes,
glazed and deep,
slice slowly,
dissecting each
motion.

Lost in
phosphorescent seas
whose waters
we have
long since
forgotten.

Ice

Water freezes,
ice thaws.

A man is born,
a man dies.

The Voyeur

A photograph as fragile
as a necklace of ivory
carved in a World War II freighter.

We carry the sea inside us
and the memos of dreams
we write ourselves
augur the future
as surely as
the dark dreams of angles
build the nine circles
of hell.

Five lies you told me.

Five.

I will tell you one.

The coupling of phantoms
can only give birth
to a stone.

The Yellow Brick Road

I never lived in Kansas,
but in 1966 I met
the Wicked Witch of the West.

"The world is a dream
refracted in billions
of eyes," she said.

Taking a diamond
out of her belly button,
she held it to the sun,
"See."

Treading water
in the Sargasso Sea,
I notice that
the North Star has
gone out.

Dorothy, where are you?

I have been calling for years.

Soon my bright eyes
will be mirrors
for fish to write
cryptograms on.

Goodbye, Emerald City.

Like all dreams,
you can only
shallow us whole.



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