

LE BRAME

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ANTON SEDLAR IN MEMORIAM

Ed una lupa, che di tutte brame
sembiava carca nella sua magrezza,
e molte gente fè già viver grame ...
Inferno, I, 48-51.

1. Orphanage

I was young and did not see

but now flashes on my mind a wildfire
future conjunction: me curved in a
womb of my choice in daylight; every time
spring comes round we are visible, me
and her heart, my heart in her thighs

and never saw, being so young, when they

but now I am squeezed like an orange for sweetness
in the patience of the closing space
between her thighs

and never saw, being so young, when they took my
father and mother and bent them till they fitted me

but now my heart lives in the graciousness
between her thighs

I was young, I did not

but now pleasure is in gentle and in dying and in the itch
of spring on the membrane of repetition, like a flash of insight
every thirty minutes or a
film of love each night

had no vision nor wanted any when Father and Mother
snuffed, they probably deserved it

but now I am prepared to deplore every atrocity, even among
members of a family, so long as there is softness
between her thighs; it must be different from myself;
since they kneaded my Father and Mother into me, it has been
less fragrant, less radiant, yet it goes on
was eyeless when they cremated them

but now I see the eye beyond the tunnel,
kiss the voice before it speaks to me,
feel myself dressed in a love like flannel
like the wonder-baby on the victim's knee

me eyeless that has lessened, when the words came, each rejection

but in the bigger night I know my parents sleep
and the dead go burying each other.

2. *The Star*

"A thin runner, but swelling
with all our tender zones;
eye-tricker, fading out of long gardens,
but sleek already with all
fluids and juices that ease us,
when we cry: more! but sharpen
thirst and blur vision."

This way, when the sun went down, I saw her against it,
trotting, part-Alsatian, part-dream.
Fur drifted off like seaweed, but the skin stayed.
Gaunt runner, streamlining out of wisps of pelt,
bones shining through, savage and chancy.

All burning and loving and sadness
distilled into moving parchment on a bone frame!
And in her cavity, this couple, that couple
prelive holding with brushing of clawless
buds along each other,
blunt-muzzled, eyeless, light-passing.

From this hollow, where we might be one another,
mindless radiance makes us each and uncertain.

Just then the sun, through parchment flanks,
warmed the innocence of future ruin.

Heavy runner, but skin light as a kite-cover, her
pads lost in the deepened mud of the horizon.

Only her ribs are stronger to the last rays, curving
onto the nipple like fingers to a breast lent unwillingly.

But the place of hope was the palm of that hand,
for it drove blood down the fingers to arouse
the nipple, so it glowed then extinguished.

That lost us the skinny, loaded runner.
But hope stayed in the after-image, bit
like the first time I saw you and felt it.

Suddenly in the dark runner's blood
pumped through her heart, our
recognition blossomed in the whole
darkness. While all our pain
to come streamed through her arteries,
hungry, wolf-born, uncertain -
we saw ourselves apart, passionless,
calm in the new night,
fixed in the first star,
equal and shining.

3. *Shadows*

When I put the soul-mill on,
 it grinds broken love-play. And another
 classic record has
 the Rising Song, you know:
 "quindi
 quindi uscimmo
 quindi uscimmo a riveder le stelle."
 Fine for the dead Italians. Not many
 risen lately.

Skin like cotton wool: when half my brain wakes up
 the other thinks it drowns and cries like a
 lost hyena in a formal garden
 for you, or one of you, or one of your
 red-flower thoughts to shine
 and make a centre in the light,
 a hole for it to take.
 So I lie dying, you
 arched over me and the light drains
 upwards in a spiral
 to your hole.

Next time you watch this show,
 whether sitting among the dripping
 swords of a forest, or in a sand-waste,
 or flying: become a womb, into which
 they, slipping from the screen,
 can peer, then scamper:
 the shadow-children.

No one can treat them like the contents of a tin then,
or set them fluttering to death around a lantern.
But let them be safe
as rabbits on a dead farm, or even safer.
And every one of them has an exciting face:
come closer to them, their
simplicity is like your smell to you,
touch them like you touch your
breast, accidentally, smoothing them both
together for me in the
heart-pause of seeing.

They sing:
"You would be
our Lady, if we
were not already
living in sacredness."
To be free of them we
must do without passion.
It is better to have them
biting at our hearts.

Through dusty, warped
mirrors, in the cold garden
in summer, furtive, mimicking
every body I have known,
every body you have: there is
only one love, many times,
one object and its
shadow children:
precious times
when we feel them
stirring within us.

4. Requiem

Long time asking your long silence:

In time did you ever see the houses come down
to the park at night and eat the willows?

An Anglican was hired to say the burial, very
well attended; I was away shooting rabbits
at the time.

Pastures of angels

They forage among the houses. Dad came by
sowing his dragons' teeth. All the gang
gave him a cheer, held their fire.

Pastures of angels
where they graze
fields of the green
inverted sky

No point in telling the family - they were all
drumming on a hollow tree. I never shot a rabbit
either. One newspaper got hold of it.

Lost in the air
the shepherd plays
his trumpet to them
sweet and high

This carpet of dragon-buds: Dad sowed them.
Amazing the houses' appetite for greenery.
Just look at the cud-chewers moving like a brick plague
over the park!

Sweet and high
and counts the woolly jumping days

Was the Anglican soporific enough for you?
But it was not a good thing. In no sense.

Long time asking your long silence.

Pastures of angels
Blue night rising

5. *What the Anglican Said*

*"And a she-wolf who, for all her thinness,
yet seemed plump with every urge that makes us
cry, faint and die in no uncertain fashion ..."*

I tell you: tension nested in the pockets of a star, pulling between one self and three - a stretch that the Italian caught in the image of a she-wolf, pregnant with all the voices of the body, but thin, active preliminary. Like a stagger into the betrayal of love, feeling a small breast lent unwillingly to fingers curved in she-wolf's ribs: *le brame*.

They are feral: unhappy cats in the sack of feelings, also their squalls and the puddles under it; the bulges and peakings of hessian and a detonation of yowls.

We read they are the belated tantrums of our childhood selves, an unforgiving bunch if ever there was. But sitting down with them to talk it over rationally, drawing patterns in the sand at our feet, designing new pricks in better proportions, espousing the imagination — my God! — but *le brame* might sneak up and kick you in the brain just then!

Imagine a garden where they would be let in one day a week, no more except in an emergency. There they might convey to you some tenderness for past and future. They would not be allowed to afflict you with convulsions and strangulations: model ghosts.

But I tell you: it does not matter whether you are at home when they strike, or in the air when they plunge. Worst of all is when they come like a thief in the night, so that you give birth to them in the taxi.

Above all they are unlikely. Oh but do not, don't they, the hairs rise, muscles charge, gun beg to fire at the spirit of the wind-change, the corner on two wheels into all futurity, the thud they can make on you when they have stretched you tight as the belly-skin of a famished, pregnant she-wolf!

There you lie, like yesterday's Sebastian, smiling still for the arrow running late, or a Teresa who mislaid her angel. But I tell you: if angels were afflicted by *le brame*, angels too would grow old.

And you others remember when you go out into your streets and other people's homes: the she-wolf is still chock full of little ones. She has enough for everyone's doorstep and everyone's stocking.

Have rest. Have peace. Have mercy. Amen.