

Storm Shapes of Tomorrow's Words

On a road that started with rain,
a road accidentally taken, exposed
petroglyphs from Italy's delusive heart
promise a lyric of happiness
in the absence of belief and the presence
of fertility in the yellow eyes
of the mimosa, a flower whose depths
reflect a window into one's own
ability to accept surprises.

The years that zig-zagged through my brain
like microbe blades are a kept secret,
a covenant with hope, sealed as they are
in a blind obstinacy that dreams
are not time's mocking sticks, nor mistaken
identities a judgement of the night walks.
Why hear in the train whistle
your history, like the world's, is a comedy
of bruised odours and tenantless voices.

So cheer the way art translates
the faces of past loves, the family found
in the home of the rare friend,
the far too many acquaintances, cheer on
for the way it sings the tail of the disgruntled,
smog-nazzled crow. Embrace the seconds
the blood thins and mind reaches
the monuments to absent forests, destroyed
animals, birds and fish where our migrations
of greed push us as well to the edge
that once brightened in a sundance
and winter ceremony.

When the journey parallels the underground
passages of memory, memory recalls a too
passionate love for the moon's gifts
exterminates, a reminder that some
of her landscapes turn fiction like the storm's
downbeats turning the three layers of sleep.

Each park sculpture from the cities'
pantheon presented the imagination an option
from leaping into the Po or Arno rivers.
Each city did its best to counter the fear.
I imagined my birth waves and the after shocks.
So every new road taken catapults my travel
beyond the skin, water and sky shoots
of day and night like the poplars
and eucalyptus on the streets of Padova,
Arezzo, Parma and Rome.

The song switched to another key
the morning a vagabond self shed shards
at the crossroads, years after the last
fable. The empty hallways of Zeus and Hera,
Venus and Adonis, marbled emblems
of the running and standing still
of the spirit, enlarge the canvas
of my blue jay perspective stirring
the dust-power of blood, nerves and silence.

Imagination plucks the consonants
and vowels from the nights like Pan grapes
from the vine on the train from Florence
to Perugia, brings me almost face to face
with the Muse, her fresco of my stories'
carnival of bones. Missing characters
and scenes swept under the tracks,
my tribe of names jabber like the train
passengers, dangle with last year's
olives in the trees.

I step away from the station.
The Umbrian sunset paints a grey-blue
path on to my Coast Salish blanket
and staff, recycling itself into yellow
and red-ochre mosaics. Apollo and Artemis'
laurel grotto that inspires the dead
to act upon the mirror of the visible
reverses my novella's ocean-bottom fathom
figures whispering for a last
Aeolian harp's breath.

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