

4-2012

aprA2012

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Once I could write
the whole world in one day
then it took seven

by now I can barely
color in the daffodils
slackly lovely by
the leachfield, and blue,
blue, o love, so
much sky to fill.

1 April 2012

THE CRUCIFIED

Who took upon himself
the persona of a redeemer
spoke outrage in the temple
and what seemed just foolish to the Greeks,
the Swiss, the spring
flowers of the Engadin, one scarlet
cyclamen I found growing
from a cleft in the rock ledge
after I had climbed the Roc d'Enfer.

1 April 2012

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Worrisome thought:
will the hydrangeas
come in blue this year
and will the cholera
stop killing in Haiti
and the tanks in Syria,
and my knee get better?

1 April 2012

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Things fly about.

They stand naked on the corner

these flowers mean trouble

I have forgotten everything I knew.

1 April 2012

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So slow the car
imagines the road

the road divides
before it reaches

anything called me
and I answer still.

23 July 2015

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Problematize the obvious you get a science
ask why X loves Y you get a picture of their eyes.
We want to be seen. All the rest is music.

23 July 2015

MANDORLA

the marvelous
almond-shaped orifice,
the shape that speaks us into this strange place,
ogive windows of the lost cathedral

we are the stoned priests, we hum.
Because this is the shape of the body
coming in and going out,

the sacred window that is a door
that is a half-closed eye

and in the silent for a moment mind
a tear forms, shaped like it,
shed for all beings

the suffering of things.

Through the door the stranger comes
shadowy blue with sympathy for you
you can't understand, the stranger
sits down on your doorstep

and does not leave,
smiles as you enter and leave,

for love is a beggar even at the meagerest door.

Grace of that contour, ooze
of meaning sticks to everything,

nothing void in this empty world

you sing inside us till we can't resist
opening our mouths to you, raped
from inside out we sing
such a simple song, the future
will understand
even better than the present can.

Difficult poems are the easiest to write.

The hard work is getting you
to sit down beside me
even at the ordinary table, where better,
faded flowers and fresh coffee,
to talk and talk and what comes after
when the hibiscus on the berm outside
finally gets around to it and blossoms us.

23 July 2015

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Keep nothing. Send it all
back to the foundry
they'll melt it down and cast
the massive Five
Minutes Ago on a Lost Part of Earth
to be hoisted up in the public square
between the Dutch church and the CVS.
People will say it resembles a cannon
or maybe a man eating an apple
or a woman showing her child how
to cross the street safely the lights
keep changing, who said we
ever have to stop? Go write
another town and live in it,
kiss the window and see your breath
at last, see what you really mean,
a smudge-on-clarity is who you are,
drunk identity in a sober world.
Sometimes they fire the cannon,
more commonly the child runs away.
Winter apples are withered but very sweet.

23 July 2015

[for Orestes]

KL:

It is woman's work to rise against the state.

When I killed the king I was killing
the power of the state
over the individual, I was killing
the rule of husband over wife,
priest over worshipper, gods over mortals.
This is woman's work.

It is woman's work to destroy the state.

Then when the king was dead
and another feckless fellow
little more than a boy
came to animate my chilly bed
out of inadvertence I became the state
but I meant no power, wielded
as little as I could,
let things go along as they chose,
things can be trusted to go their own way,
I let whatever wanted to
grow in my garden
and never cared what people think,
I let the sun shine and the rain fall

and let the roses shove out their thorns in peace,
that is nature's way,
that is woman's work.

I let you live as you chose
in rags and smelly clothes
and sulking all day long
and sleeping every night alone
to play your silly part,
a simple daddy's girl
struck down by the loss of his
power, the only power that you knew,
you had no power of your own
yet...

And then your leper brother came
panting for revenge or god knows what
and from such feeble maleness
you sucked enough strength
to rise up against me—
I was the state and you cut me down.
That was woman's work.

I let you do it. And you did well,
you are my flesh and you know
deep inside you what I knew:
love men but do not let them rule,
a queen is the antidote for a king—

destroy the state and grow the person,
all power to the individual,
I let you kill the state in me
and by doing so you set me free—
and that is woman's work,

break all the rules
and begin each day just you,
just you and what you see and feel—
all longing and no belonging.
You and I are just women now,
being with each other,
and that too is woman's work.

*(Elektra moves forward very slowly, slowly reaches out to embrace her mother,
clutches her, kisses her breast.)*

23 July 2015

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And the blue sky comes
it is an answer

to no question
Be like that

all the time
arrive

and be big and be there
that is the simple situation

what the ancients called
the bosom of god.

23 July 2015

[for Orestes]

OR:

I met a poet once in Thrace
a gloomy man with tender hands
who told me that human men
were created not by the gods
or chance or destiny
but anciently by human women
soon after the beginning of the world.
Women were the first-born
and the only humans then,
they gave to one another
in some strange way that love
and tenderness and sciences
were all part of. Then their poets
thought up the image of a servant
body, rough and strong enough
and shaped just enough like women
to fit together pleasantly. The servant
carried, threw, battled, lifted, dug—
but as often happens with creators
they fell in love with what they'd made
and in a terrible moment let them take charge.
Do you think there's some truth in this?

PYL:

How would I know?

I don't feel much like a servant,
do you?

OR:

I don't know what I feel.

PYL:

Me, I'm glad we live now
when we're in charge.

OR:

Are we really?

PYL:

That's up to us, isn't it?
My business is to be in charge.
Yours too, that's what brought you here—
why are you doubting now?
Your mother sinned against male power
and you came to take revenge.

OR:

I've seen her murdered in my arms
and yet she's alive.
I've seen the blood-soaked robe she wore
but now her breast is pale, unblemished,

I've seen her eyes follow me
as I move about the room,
she knows I can hear her
but she hasn't spoken yet.
I've seen her smile at me—
how terrible a dead woman's smile...

PYL:

Clearly she's not dead.
There must have been some trick—
women are like that.
Elektra pretended to kill,
your mother pretended to die.
They're just working on you—
it's all just make-believe,
all that phony blood.
Women are like that.
And it's your own fault—
you should have done what the law requires,
you should have killed her yourself.

OR:

At least I held her as she was slain.

PYL:

Not slain.

She walks in the city.

She's here now.

OR:

But only I can see her!

PYL:

Don't be silly, we all can see her,
her servants bring her breakfast,
they make her bed and air her mattress
while she goes down for her morning swim,
I see her sitting on the terrace now,
my conquest sitting soft beside her.

OR:

My sister. I don't like your word 'conquest.'

PYL:

Call it whatever you like.
Women like me, people
in general like me—you
fell in love with me back then
didn't you? Why shouldn't she?

OR:

Do you think of me as a conquest?

PYL:

We've had fun together—

that's what I think.

The clouds above just pass across the sky,

they don't change it.

We're just who we are,

have fun while we can

and stay loyal. I have always

been loyal to you, haven't I,

kept company with your leprosy,

brought you back to Mycene—

we're good to each other,

so now I fuck your sister—

that makes sense to me.

OR:

That's so limited, so mercantile.

PYL:

What more do you want?

Big things drive out little.

There's only one sun in the sky—

does that make it limited?

OR:

Go have her, I don't care.

Just be careful—a woman

who has killed once can kill again.

PYL:

She'd never lift her hand against a man.

And even if she did, I'd be like your mother

and rise up from the dead

all ready for breakfast.

Don't worry so much—

all that guilt and vengeance stuff is over now.

OR:

(has drawn closer to Pylades, lays his hand on P's arm)

I do love you, dear friend.

I'm sorry if I spoke wrong,

my words are wrong,

I want you in my mouth.

PYL:

(playfully, tenderly)

We rule each other with an iron prick.

...

23 July 2015

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Many a moshteen in Drumcondra
I ween, I saw them on a Sabbath morning
when devil the church they'd ever
spoil with their breeches, loud louts all about
talking the football and hurley,
I feared for our lives as I steered the rental
up the wrong side of the road to the north
where someone told me an airplane was
would whisk us none too soon
to walk at peace among the dreamy Swiss.

23 July 2015

(*máistín*, 'thug')