

REVERSING THE FOOLISH MAN and Other Poems

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Reversing the Foolish Man

Let us reverse the foolishness of the man who orders the death of the toe-slipped boy,
the death of the soon-to-fall body, the just awakened, collaterally damaged girl standing
at the wrong place at the wrong time.

Let us reverse the trajectory of the palace-fired bullet, the bullet returning to carbon powder,
the powder receding to ash.

Let us reverse the ash to dust
and the dust back to elemental stone
that will fill up the dry creek back to brimming river.

Let the river slide back to a bucket of clear water, the same water that will rinse the mountain
of its heavy cloak of dust, rinse the green canopied trees down to their bark.

Let us reverse the bark to the naked pulp
and the pulp to the crease-free paper, the paper unrolled and unfolded
to bear each pen scratch, each ink-filled letter.

Let each word slide back to the heft
of the alphabet, each dash each dot reversing
to the blackened pool
of molten ink.

Let each molten ink
reverse to the droplet of
blood,
the blood to
the coagulated
bruise.

Last Dance

Soon love will exhaust itself
like a spigot turned from north
to south, the water restrained
brought to the sharp heft
of the heart.

For what is exhaustible will not
spill over, will not run over
just as the dance would click

its leathered heels and say
with finality—
“That last note is for the homeward road.”

Love dressed in feathers is love ready to
make your acquaintance. It says,
‘Dance
with me as long as the sun is up,
as long as the air is wild
with whipped-out music,

as long as the lovers are heady,
filled to the brim with nectar,
creasing the air
with hope
and expectations.’

So if death comes with wide
open arms, love comes
with twice as much, making its widest
entrance, doubling the stakes,
gambling
away
the last pile of coins,
its last bag of fortune.

'Come,' said love to anger,
'Bring me to that heavy laden table.'

And anger, losing its momentum,
complies, follows what love
demands, brings all the food
and wine, all what that wide
plate of desire can hold.

For the dancer stays close
to the dance—but the good one?

Oh, the good one! He whirls
and turns and takes the wind
out of his lungs.

He dances the dance
to its sharpest, until it gives up,
gives way and fractures to bits,
the breath running out,
shadows spilling out,

the air troubling
and troubled,
from the farthest north

to the farthest south.

Solstice

for Paul

Ssshh let me warn you our work is not finished here
though the sun erases the solstices of our skin

grand your breastbone grander your clavicle

tower & dune loom above the Schier magnetic
the ebb tide the ocean's spill

our stories are elliptical our stories are empirical
we rely on the quackery of foreign tongues

once we eloped our bodies covered with moth wings
our cheeks bright with spilled mercury & moon dust

fragrant our toes in giveaway light fractured our knuckles
"affection is coincidence & bruised attentiveness" you said

but we venture into the deep oh yes the deep

widely we revolve wary of each other widely
we circumnavigate tails of comets curling to ashes