

Ygdrasil

A JOURNAL OF THE POETIC ARTS

November 2020

VOL XXVIII, Issue 11, Number 331

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ISSN 1480-6401

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but that was unreal
i should have gathered
some kind of deal

we were together
but we were apart
it could only end
with a broken heart

no one to blame here
we felt what was real
i remember you leaving
i remember the feel

a fool in the shadows
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of my delight

if only i had you
here in my arms
would that do good
or would that do harm

it doesn't much matter
now that you're gone
the door's always open
if there is a storm.

kjg 1:42 A.M. 2020-11-29

John Tustin

AFTER I AM DEAD

After I am dead
You will hear about it somehow.
You will cry and imagine you flung yourself
Upon my already descended coffin,
Crying for God to take you, too.

After I am dead you will think about me
At moments during your day sometimes:
You will imagine that we lived the second half of our lives together
Until I died.
You will close your eyes and see what I must have looked like
With a head of hair more white than brown. Such deep creases around my eyes
Still dark and blue and looking right into you.
You will lie in bed and imagine I am there, my head to your breast.
Your hand holds mine and my voice vibrates your body
When I tell you that you are still so
Very beautiful
When I look at you
In the morning
Lying beside me in bed.

After I am dead you will cry sometimes:
A small silent sob.
Not every day or even every week, but often enough
That it disturbs your heart.
Someone you love may ask you why you are upset,
Seeing your tears before you can hide them
And you won't tell them, of course.

After I am dead I will remain the dirty little secret of your life
And your heart.
You will see yourself as my widow,
Reading the hundreds and hundreds of poems I wrote about you
Before I gave up on us – some long after you gave up
On us.
You will never set eyes upon the thousands of poems I wrote about you

After we both surrendered to your weakness.
You will know, somehow, that they were written.

After I am dead
You will look in the mirror
And see me beside you. You will feel me there,
My hand on your shoulder, my fingers in your hair that has become white
And still so very black.
You will feel my breath warm in your ear,
My lips then touching your neck almost imperceptibly.
You will shake uncontrollably,
Knowing your life has been largely a fraud.

After I am dead you will think about me.
You will think about me often.
You will see me in coffee shops,
On the train,
Across from your kitchen table as you look out of your window
And pretend,
In the stairway that leads to your lonely bed.
I will be infused in the objects on your dresser.
The utensils in your kitchen drawer – each one is a word in a poem
I wrote about us.

After I am dead,
Until the day you are dead,
You will think about me when you least want to and realize
That you made a terrible
Terrible mistake.
I was not a game piece
But your life
Was just a game.

THE CEILING

at 2 A.M.
every night
with
eyes closed
on my back
and painting the image
of her naked body
upon the ceiling
of my mind

I WAS A SLAVE

I was a slave
Until that day,
Definitive, clearly defined,
That I broke my chains and ran,
(Looking back often,
Hearing the barking sniffing dogs,
Tripped up by the courts of man
And the frailties of my flesh)
Leaving everything behind except my heart
And my will to live.

Then I met you.
I offered you my heart,
Which was all I took with me
When I broke my chains and ran.
That and my will to live, which
I did not offer you
Although there were times...

I gathered my papers and fought.
My emancipation was a battle
And barely won.
I was ready to begin life
As a free man.

Now you have left me
And I sit here
With my paper and my colored pencils,
Without armament, adornment,
Protection.
Without all but my will to live.
Left alone here with the memories of whispers
Hanging off of the curtains; left alone with the darkness
And the promises now just dried blood stains
On the floor that cannot be
Rubbed out
No matter how long I stare,
Sitting in my well of ink and iodine,
Marinating in my loss.

am a slave.

SHE LIKES A CERTAIN TYPE OF MAN

She likes a certain type of man.
A man who works with his hands.
A man who rides a Harley.
A man with a big broad back and hair covering most of his body.

She dresses very conservatively
And she used to like the shock when someone met her biker husband
Wearing his leathers and his pork chop sideburns.
She has no tattoos and only her ears are pierced.

She loves everything to be neat and tidy. She NEEDS order.
Her eyes tsk tsk a lot.
She lives in perpetual disappointment of others.
She had a crush on the man behind the deli counter.
She liked his big black mustache.

She divorced her biker husband
And now she's dating a man named Angelo
Who's a big Greek fella with long dark hair.
The smell of perspiration follows him
Wherever he goes.

She works with children but, outside of work, she is afraid of them.
She has no children. She has two small dogs. She doesn't trust cats.
She used to read books but now she's too tired all the time.
She lives alone and wants to be happy like that.

I used to love her a long, long time ago
When we were kids and she didn't know as much about herself.

WE USED TO TALK ON THE PHONE

We used to talk on the phone.
Our friends wanted us to meet. I wanted us to meet.
We never met.

I would try to pin her down to talk
And she would just dismiss me, put me off
Or outright disappear.
Then out of the blue
She would call me when she needed an ego boost
Because the man she really wanted was not
Being compliant, I imagine.
At least I think so.
I'll never really know.

Our talks just faded away
When I realized that putting off meeting me for six months
Was more than a hint she was not interested
And as much as I desire to dismiss her
As a smart but flimsy flirt
Lacking the emotional maturity to know herself
Or me
I cannot.

I think I know who she is
And I wish for her to hear
The sadness I did
In her voice,
The tragedy in her eyes,
The traps of her decisions.
To my detriment I find such tragic sadness beautiful.

May someone one day love her
More than she loves herself.

She deserves it.

I still think about her sometimes.
All of us have thoughts we cannot help but think.

-
-

- Alexei Vesselov

PRIKROVENNOST'
(THE SECRECY)

Dedicated to Vyacheslav Kryzhanovsky

The Symbols:

: – *long vowel.*

' – *pause, also breathing.*

_ – *is like a moment of decision before a long pause.*

() – *brackets also signify indecision as well as variability.*

■ – *this should be concealed.*

. – *point as a whole.*

The thing

Is hidden under the leaves.

Perhaps

Not the only one.

– Is this an important thing?

– I don't know.

It shouldn't be revealed.

It's not there for that.

When they wrote

About the yellow leaf

Lying on the wind –

I haven't been here.

I am not present here.

Nothing betrays

My presence.

I('m) (have been) empty.

And everything

Is v[i:]sible through me.

But I still

Can't see anything myself.

When everything seemed like
It was just there

I'' was even less there.
The trace is gone, remember your name.

The refuge of existence
Was overcrowded

And I hid myself in the folds of the terrain.

_ *We need to take a break here.*

So somehow it all became.

Little by little
I'm breathing in the (autumn) air and listening.

I'm not listening to something specific, but in general.
Still trying to hear (something).

Maybe ' *nothing* has no need to be recognized,
Not even through the most delicate method?

And even if nothing happens
To what just has emerged,
Will the same thing happen
To what is just about to appear?

But it must be concealed too.

Like water underneath the water.

'''

When I listen to the
Splashing fountain streams
,

Water flows
Out of the mouths of three frogs.

Then it disappears.

.

– There is a lack of texture here.

– There is not enough matter here,
The variety of objects and phenomena does not strike my imagination.
,

– Why do you say so?

Passing cars
Disperse the shadows of the leaves.
The unevenness of the sidewalk opens.

The unevenness of thinking is revealed, __
Which now cannot be hidden.
However,
This has not been [REDACTED] [REDACTED].

First
The sharp stones of the fence,
,

Then –
The hard leaves of the hedge

Hide in the shadow of my hand.

What I'm hiding
Will not remain a secret for a long time.
,

Once I give the show away –
And it's gone.
.

I tell everything as it is.
,

– But how?
– Yes / no / hard to say.

_ *We need to take a break here.*

– Try to express yourself mysteriously, but concretely at the same time.
– Ok, I'll try.
– It's good of you.

(the music)
Of (my) concealed breath
Is discontinuous and irregular:

Jon Wilkins

UN CARIAD YDYN NI

Love

An intense feeling of deep affection.

Caru

The same but in Welsh.

But is it the same?

Love crosses

Borders

It shapes my heart

Or does my heart

Shape my love?

Cariad

a person with whom someone

is having

a romantic relationship.

Romance

Between two lovers

Is it ever complete?

A love affair

Affair of the heart

annwyl

regarded with deep affection;

cherished by someone.

Regard

Cherish

Love

Beloved

A much loved person

We love

We lose

But to lose love

Is like losing your

Soul.

My heart does

shape my love.

We love

rydyn yn caru

we are one

rydym yn un

We are one love

un cariad ydyn ni.

In truth

Mae fy nghalon yn siapio

fy nghariad.

My heart does shape

my love.

GARDENING TIMES

I was weeding in my garden and between
the digging and forking and ripping
out of roots and grass and weeds and alien
shoots I thought how good it would be if we could
pick the parts of our memories we wanted
to keep and throw away the rest. I know
that we need bad things to make us
realise that what we have is good, but when the
memories scar and refuse to let us move
on then why should we keep a hold of them?
How do we dispose of our dark times?
Too many lie back in the memories of the
past, content to blame and fixate and never
move forward because they see no point
when in fact the very reason we have these
memories is to show us what has been and
what can be, so we live with hope afresh.
Why stagnate when it is your future that sets you free?
Remove the weeds from your memories soul,
plant seeds and saplings and foster each with care.
New dreams can and will come true, so dispose of the
creeping roots that threaten to choke the
fresh and embrace the life you deserve if
you maintain your gardens fancy vagary.

OCEAN KISSES

Have you any idea

She asked,

a questioning smile

Upon her lips

How loved you are?

I smiled in return

Please tell

I replied.

As the ocean loves the shore

Kissing the sand

Then withdrawing

Kissing

Falling back.

She said

Her smile

A perfect smile.

My love is like the ocean.

A sweet thing

To say.

If so, it cannot stay

I sadly said.

It was her turn

To smile again

Her radiant smile

Her eyes lighting up

Like the sun above.

Yet it will always return

Never to leave.

Regular as the moon.
Each night
It laps around the stone
As my lips kiss your body
So the ocean kisses the sand.
But when we are apart
I ventured.
She interrupted
There will always be
My return
For I cannot leave you
Ever.
The ocean caresses
The beach
Its fingers exploring
Each creek and rindle.
Just as my fingers
Explore you.
I am the ocean
So full of love
So full of care
I may leave
But I will always
Return.
My love
Can never end.
An endless tide
That flows your way
Forever.

HU-TIEH

If you have a covert desire, go capture a butterfly and whisper your innermost secret to it. Since butterflies cannot ever speak or sing, your thoughts are for ever safe in their caring peaceful keeping. Set free the butterfly, and it will carry your dreams to the Great Spirit, who all alone knows the thoughts of each and every butterfly. By setting the fragrant butterfly free, you restore nature's sweet balance, and your wish will surely be granted.

So my thoughts return to years gone by when as a boy I sat on a wall, close to the park in the morning sun With a friend who didn't remain a friend for long. He used to catch Butterflies in his hands and brush the fairy dust from their gossamer wings which meant they could no longer fly, so died a pointless death after all their efforts to escape the rigid cloak that formed their early life.

Made so more tragic if they were carrying the gentle words of some sweet angel who only wanted her love to hear her musings, but dare not speak them direct. I always loved to see the myriad colours fluttering and drifting upon the wind soaring high or flitting low, colours indescribable as they wended their dream like way up to the Great Spirit who awaited their most private news.

Today they float and glide upon girls' damaged arms and boys' chastened legs without the fairy dust that let them shimmer in the pale blue sky, but instead their colour reflects the mood of those blemished by the self-harmers' knife or blade.

A reminder to them that Someone cares and hopes
That one day they will be free to choose to be just who they
wish to be and face no judgement calls.

You are not alone as the Butterfly saunters down your arm
Or rambles along your leg and fades as do your nightmares bleak.
The translucent wings so light but strong reflect your courage
as you take on the darkness of the night that fill your every day.
The whimsy that is the butterfly mark resonates a strength that you
do seek to beat the demons away from your door and replace with
the beauty of the psyche it reflects.

PETALS

We cut the flowers and then they die
despite us meaning well.

We present the bouquet and smile our smiles
though aging flowering buds destroyed
as soon as hands have plucked.

Just like my love, it now drains low
suffused into the sky.

I meant you well though denied your heart
and now the leaves do fall.

Like tears in rain, they flood the sky
and love washes slowly to the side
to where knows not, to pastures lost
as my love you do deny.

I cut the flowers and bind them up
as tight as they can be
just like my heart, my love for you
but all to no avail.

Petals float into the air and drift among the wind
like love on the breeze of life itself.

My heartbeat's dispersed into azure
my love for you denied.

Flowers are doomed as they are picked
and die the death ordained by joy,
then fade dispersed into the earth.

Like love so cruelly shunned

I love you so, but lose your love as flowers give up their soul.

Post Scriptum

John E. Marks

The beautiful Cathars of Languedoc

The ideas of the beautiful Cathars of Languedoc spread across western Europe
Cathar comes from the Greek: καθαρῶν, katharoi, "the pure [ones]"
They built on the dualistic theology of Manichaeism
Which they blended with the eastern Christianity of Byzantium
They were ascetic: believing the material world was the evil realm of Satan

Whilst the world of the spirit was the beautiful realm of good God(s).
Within each individual this battle between Good and Evil was constantly mirrored.
This syncretic blend of religions denied the vengeful Jehovah of the Old Testament
And was anathema to the powerful in Rome who launched an Inquisition, the Albigensian Crusade
This attempt at the genocide of an idea led to tens of thousands being massacred

For instance, Simon de Montfort decreed that a hundred Cathars should have their eyes, lips and noses removed

A Cathar with one eye led them back to their village as a warning.

Cathars were strictly non-violent and this left them vulnerable to the hyper-violence of their age
From 1200 AD until 1250 AD thousands were burnt alive for refusing to recant or to take communion
It took hundreds of years to wipe out the human traces of this beautiful religion.

Now a few of their castles remain in the mountains of Languedoc
But their ideas have never died they've come alive again in a new age:
veganism, vegetarianism, mysticism, mindfulness, equality of the sexes, living in the moment,
holistic medicine

Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose

For the beautiful Cathars of Languedoc.

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