

Stephanie V Sears

Curiosities and horrors

(from a drawing by Odilon Redon)

At all ages I was in the night
that changed familiar shapes to strange apostrophes
baffling me during dark interludes.

Three trees of diverse diameters
keep each other inevitable company.
Is this frontier mine only
at the tip of the world
where gloom and brightness elute each other
in black hatchings, highlights, wings,
the aborted features of dusk?

Globular eyes exude the sweetness
of unwilling horror,
they watch me as I watch the unplumbed shades
of an alien spectrum.

Nothing is stable, nothing rooted.
Balloons bounce around me
gooey like balled spiders.
Uncertainly, I tread, I run, I hug
the unnatural face of a forest gnome,
the creased and hollow promise
of childhood's gummy haven.

Branches of bone glut on the night.
Their phosphorescent calcium
shimmers from top to bottom with lightening
and reveals the wallowing features of terror,
sated and obese.

The very place

It is a breathless ring
a north pond, plane
under the sky's skein of consent
edged by tall crisp reeds
shadowing to hide
the obstinate past.
Ice percolations quaintly
magnify the russet icons
of old prostrate grass.
Ducks flutter upward
chanting nasal phonemes.

Something departs,
the scene converts to allegory.
Sun improvises across the gold torq
of curled and braided hair,
tints cheeks with peonies,
and seals a reunion.

Love promised, missed,
perjured by ill luck,
comes to be by that law
that nothing is lost.
Sheathed in the feathered powder
of a fouetté, an arabesque penchée,
lovers embrace in a pas de deux,
and engrave their lines
once suppressed.

The promised horse:

to those I know in Egypt and Syria

That evening rested magenta
on the desert grown out of its dust
for the promised horse
into a garden's rosebud light,
dune and shadow comingled,
where together we heard
the cool voices of silence.
His round planet eye
commanded space to be still
as he won over the latent sun,
something of foam, something of fire,
furlongs ahead of the ground
a floating stride of mist
in his limpid wake
leaving the elixir of speed.

I pledged myself to the bridge of his back,
the high ideogram of his neck
where haste mapped the course
of his immortal blood.
For he is without rage
therefore inhuman
with power to extend the day
and sweeten the night.
Herald atop his own crimson crest
inscrutable arch spanned
between obedience and supremacy.

Safe from my own deviations
I was part of that alchemy of faith.