

FEAR (*an illustrated poem*)

Birth

Tick-tock, tick-tock
I'm in Time. I'm out, born
but somehow shorn of clout
for Fear was my midwife
or was it?

That terror of falling, of loud noises,
the only qualms 'they' say escort
me into this world, must be grilled.
Questions can't be stilled.

Who or what is this predator
that steals my light? I see it
as a horrific bird alien to my skies.
It hunts in dark, in panic dreams,
beak like a nib overwriting my Life.
The stink of ink, black I think.

What are you really, numb-dumb
thing unable to love?
Is that it? Is that your identity
—you can't love?
Or is it you love too much?
Some fears alert and I guess
some sort of love in that.
Vital I stare into the abyss
but will that set me free
or be a death-kiss?

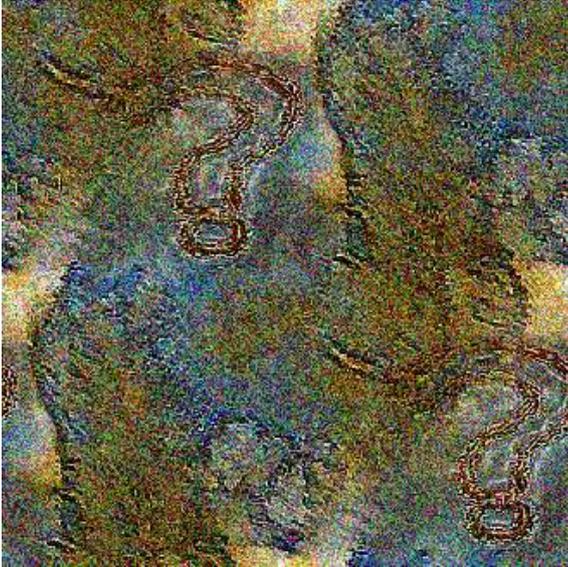
Your cold-a-lifetime skin's predatory
bird, sickly shiny and where quills
erupt is ivory into honey: a ferocious
feathered majesty, a drool in time
and so I'm now a running fool
fated for your many treadmills:
round and round going nowhere.

I shape into your truth, some sick thing
carved out of fright and midnight tune.

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Early Years



The rabbit's inside my skull again.
He's always come back ever since
I'd opened the book and he'd been
an impossible blue on impossible green.
Always that fear of impossible things
What's going on?

In awe of him, I also feared him,
"Peter the Pale Blue Bunny"
on two-stroke empty blades
but there's no warren.
Does his den exist in my brain?
Surely, he can't live within me
and thus can't be beckoned from there.
He comes from somewhere else
with steady, relentless hops.
He never seems to reach me
although he never stops.

The book got lost but I thought
about him over the years, kept him alive,
and so he never comes like a spook.
In my night-visited room lit by
a stone-winged moon,
blue whiskers suddenly appear at door.
Then, him himself, a breathing being
—Peter, the pale blue bunny
in his impossible blue.

Peter was forerunner of impossible
dreams that media, celebrities, politicians
offer in return for compliance
and still the brainwash dance goes on:
Superheroes wham-banging from movies
with supernatural invincibility.
Zilch of me in them.
But at night, lying awake, Peter
tiptoes towards me in a jargon haze
just like he did in 'the old days'
—to be feared in his impossibility.

Late Teens



Can I ever escape from fear?
My father feared water, passed it on.
But fish have no fear of it.
My mother feared escalators,
didn't pass it on.
So birds and I have no fear of air.
Birds can fly off in an instant
and so, on shaky ground I took flight
to France, putting the miles
between me and what I feared
—that the boy I loved didn't love me.
How I yearned a sweet romance.
But waiting there was fear
in *fleur-de-lis*, in *salle's* frosted glass,
in engraved guy cored under
a Jerusalem star, mooning over
a nearby mermaid magnetic
in her half-fish-ness.
Again, the unknown,
the fear of being found within it.
Foreign spaces are trapping places,
Fear's stomping ground.

In *Marie Celeste* pub, English cougar puffs
a Gauloise, stalks for the Lord of Misrule's
in ascendancy and so, this sixty-year-old
bleach job in gold lamé grows more bold.
Where's my sweet romance?
Am I scared of my own sexuality?
Coiling smoke, blue click of billiards
and a Fifties tilt machine neon-floods
a caricature of Marilyn Monroe ecstatic
over iconic subway grating—erotic magic.
Somehow, trapped in pub, Marilyn's
no guilt, silly-foreign floozy but a Kundalini
goddess at top of her game, a chess-piece
in Fearscape. But is sexuality bogus?
Marilyn, what is your real name?

Later. alone. free of fear for a second
but captive within self, I'm a statue
at hotel window, and through darkness
a gleam of 'other' eyes, an invasion of space.
Danger abroad.
Retribution.
Not alone. Never Alone.
Merely quarantined.

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Twenties/Thirties



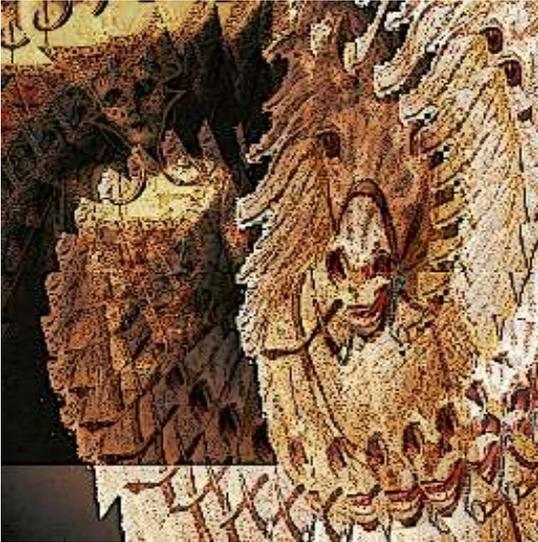
Must put down roots, get my own home
but no house ever real:
only the one Fear craved, a tall,
hostile tenement housing only strangers.
Fear enjoyed the murky hall,
the steps that echoed, the male spiders
crawling into kitchen for warmth and a mate.
You want to understand before too late
why Fear can grab all. Some say dread
of a Gothic movie's isolated house
is a fear of the unknown.
Do we crave Fear or does Fear crave us?
Our forebears in caves faced
wild beasts no longer here and so,
do we invent Dracula to fill
that predator void?
Caves morphed into cities
but our fear of the dark stayed
despite electricity making dark a choice.

TV raps abysmal news:
terrorism, bush fires, looming wars.
Fear's now in the room for Fear
grows fat on itself like some bloated tick.
Must keep telling myself fears are illusions,
responses to stuff said to be true but aren't.

Today, rhetoric in politics tinged
with the Apocalypse and always
a media personality, website or blog
to assure us our fears are warranted,
even moral, but that's at odds
with what my dad, that man of proverbs
said, 'Anger is the child of Fear. Anger
leads to hate. Hate leads to misery.'
Dad's recited words linger.
See, Fear! You're not absolute.

Fear, you're in every house but you're
not just tapping of branches against
window or muffled moan outside.
What or who really are you Fear?
I don't want you in my home.

Middle Years Crisis



I fear the fading of my youth, poverty,
desertion by my lover but what to do?

Now, watching scary movies, riding roller
coasters on dates with boosters
like "Joe Six-pack" who excites me.
Absurdly in that thrill, Fear relaxes.
After all, I'm an 'experienced woman',
a woman who's known Fear all her life
and so, a crumb of recognition?

I, Joy 'Carrot' Adamson, sporting
a sheeny gorge de pigeon dress,
am still rattled by how my life's been
at odds to that of a glossy-mag's
skinny, silk-blonde miss in chic jeans.
How I still fear my plainness,
glimpse plutonic forces in my dimly
reflected face in pinball machines.

I orbit a ringmaster,
a sugar pink bareback rider.
Harlequin beckons.
I suspect he's Fear but follow anyway
although his spectral eyes refract
my image and so, over the palace towers
of this rainbow king, an ivory
into honey bird wheels in circus sky.

Footsteps echo many selves on spiral
stair. Softly, harlequin ushers me
into his royal chamber, sheds his ensemble.
His hermaphrodite body gleams
opalescent, moon-mad.
Lover or brother to a not-queen
in this great bed?
Bogeyman, Punisher, Godhead or Fear?

Old Age



Sans Teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything—Shakespeare

Somewhere I'm screaming to wake
from this nightmare of the crowning
of the young, the forgetting of the old.
What is this sleep?
Will I ever wake?

This slumber holds a wormhole
that swells, beckons me to go beyond
the poppy goddess of whom I'm fond,
that stiff terracotta Cretan woman
with raised palms, seeds of opium
poppies on her head, skirt of simple
tubes—an icon bled out of even
symbolic Life.

Is Fear also slumbering?

Breeze sways trees, poppies, grasses
as if fingers yearning to signal
a looming rebirth are stroking to jolt me
out of deep sleep of opium sister.
Cloudy white sap drips when
stem's cut—milk of a mother.

Mantras from poppies in earth-dark
enchantment might never be plumbed
in numbed breath of the old folk asleep
Am I yet searching for the elusive
'Black Beauty' poppy that's almost black?
But almost something's not quite it
and so why bother?
Will these ghost poppies soon dance off,
forget me and my ignorance?
Weird how poppies imply remembrance.

Finally, I know only when I'm afraid
do I feel truly alive.
That's some kind of answer.
But is it a trick? Some slick fob-off?
No. Maybe *I* am Fear, midwifed myself.

End