

Lessons from the Dwarf

Shackled
to a dwarf,
bethrothed when
I was young, too
young to know life
must be held with loose
and open hands.

Pockets
stuffed with
gold they said,
to worlds apart
you'll go. Little did
I think to check for truth,
and, life and art.

Not to
worry people
said it'll come
out right, you'll see.
Dwarfish gold's a most
fair trade, for fair young
innocence.

Twisted
joints won't
matter much when
crowned with matchless
gold. Treasure is the thing
at stake, so stake your claim
with him.

So, gladly
did I bend
myself to his
odd height and frame.
My green young limbs
like ivy grew about this
strange short man.

I fit
myself
askew and
bent my will to his.
How odd it seemed
at first but then we grew
entwined.

Together
 did we grow
 as I like a vine
 became. Twist round
 and round the trunk of
 him my supple waist
 did bend.

I forced
 myself to
 grow his way,
 counter to my own.
 Skewed my joints and
 watched them spread in
 pained asymmetry.

Gaspings,
 clutching,
 holding gripping,
 I held on tight and
 tighter. But thoughts of
 gold spurred me on and
 I clung on that much
 tighter.

But as
 I grew enwrapped
 with him, old I grew
 as well, and lo the time
 came at last to spy for
 promised
 gold.

To check
 his pockets
 was simple now,
 long had my limbs
 gone 'round. Where
 one left one off and the
 other began, was no longer
 plain to tell.

My fingers
 splayed, my
 hair grown wild,
 my neck bent like
 a bird. My head perched
 back on a tilt, my elbow at
 his knee.

I checked
 empty pockets:
 to my horror and
 dismay, no dwarfish
 gold was hidden there,
 no single coin for me!

A
 dwarfish
 joke. Tricked
 from start to end!
 In fury I kicked him
 down the stairs but forgot
 our single fate:
 kicking one,
 was kicking both,
 so down the
 stairs we came.

Bouncing,
 rolling, tripping
 falling, we tumbled
 over and over. Crying,
 gnashing, grimaced laughing
 into a bloodied heap.

Each
 time I rise
 he knocks me
 down, till bruised
 my lesson learned: keep
 step with him my dwarfish lord,
 one fate, one life forever.

A
 single breath,
 a single heart
 beats in our bodies now.
 As one we rise,
 entwined we fall:
 shackled to the
 end.

Fear's Painted Savages

Fear's
 painted savages
 crouch beneath
 the paper sky.

look

They clutch
 spears
 in their hands
 ready to attack.

Spears?

Look closer:

fear's sharpened
 sticks are
 only blunt end
 broomsticks.

And see
 their tribal colors—
 baby pink
 and baby blue feathers,
 not the blood-soaked
 rags you
 feared.

Stand on
 tip toe
 you can easily touch the sky.
 Feel the painted ridges
 beneath
 your finger tips.

Fear's painted
 savages stand and yawn,
 rub muscles sore
 from crouching
 and limp back home.

Still afraid?
 Turn off the sun
 with
 a click.

Madness&Creativity

M & C asleep in the bed together
 M wakes first
 How do I look he asks

Matt'd hair cracked lips parched throat slack
 jaw
 Not good says C I ll make the coffee
 C makes the coffee and pours it down M s throat
 No no not really just joking she pours it nicely in
 a cup and sets it down before him

Think I can go to work like this asks M
 C cocks her head
 no no I wouldn t she says no no call in sick
 today
 M calls in sick a sick day or no make it a
 personal day he says into the phone

M looks in the mirror
 What will you do today he asks
 How bad do I look I don t look so bad

C hunches over the drawing board
 always something always something to do
 I think I ll work on these full size paintings
 of the universe then I ll knit a few
 more strands on my DNA she says

That ll take you a lifetime says M
 That s the idea thinks C

M & C sit down for dinner
 Pass the salt says M
 pass the pepper says C
 and so the evening passes

M & C lay down in the bed together
 Sweet dreams says M rolls over and begins to
 snore
 C looks up at the ceiling at the shadows on the
 wall and falls asleep

C & M awake in the bed together
 How do I look asks C
 Flat hair dry lips crusted eyes slack jaw
 Lookin good says M I ll make the coffee

M makes the coffee and pours it down C s throat
 How s the painting coming asks M the paintings
 of the universe
 How s the knitting
 Fine says C all done all done says C
 and lays the paintings neatly on the bed
 She lays the DNA daisy chain beside it
 C returns past due library books
 She finds lost keys and puts them away
 forgotten passwords are remembered
 C lays down on the bed she lays down on the
 bed and lets it carry her far away a
 rushing river

The morning finds C gone
 The universe and the DNA with her

M wakes and looks in the mirror
 How do I look he asks
 Matted hair cracked lips parched throat slack
 jaw

Lookin' good he says and so.