

Generations in a wine dark sea

Instead of fresh herbs, what I rub on my skin now
is nettles, I cry out and delight in the dramatic effect
The adolescent is standing before me, is not me,
his eyelashes pretty now he leaves them alone,
He's moved on to finger cracking. He ought to understand,
the age is right, is it not? to say to him, let's talk now
about travelling cumulous clouds, moon riding day sky,
hair falling in dust, cats brushing legs like foliage,
tropical night breeze, whirling, spinning maple seeds,
crunchy autumn leaves and one small lone blue feather, reappearing
in unpredictable places, pressed between the pages of books like forgotten
euros, Let's talk about damp yellow grass recently nourished, slumber, lotus-
eaters and opiates, acres of coconut trees, Let's talk about eyes sharp as a puma's
and moving limbs more precise in the darkness, a lifted curse, a shattering vase,
a slice of papaya, a still dark brown face, flapping through a sanctimonious night
and memories of many lives, let's talk about dirty quartz and the smell of
seashells while washing hair, flecked eyes that sparkled with a spice like
pimento, lips wet with fruit, the scythe that hacked the clouds into streaks of
plasma, the plotless story, the sequential paintings, your ticking hand that ruled
time and weather, the world splitting into a series of images, all times and
possibilities, in one unique frame, the ruffling of hair and heart possession that
echoes across the aeons.

Lost fairy

They poisoned the Argentinian trumpet vine
because it got too comfortable, sprouted everywhere
like a weed, and replaced it with some other flowering vine
more white and well-mannered. I suspected them of racism

but it was their house. When I moved here, the flowers seemed to be in my face like the advertising, although the convolvulus always tended to remind me of Borges. No more discreet kangaroo paws, subtle Geraldton wax, bedraggled wattle. Here the bedraggled wattle is me, amongst those other belles, the saucy snapdragons, self-sufficient succulents, ubiquitous petunias, spicy nasturtiums, whose population seems to dwindle in every suburb where we live, along with the European dandelions, washed of residual herbicides and thrown in our soups. We are foragers, tribes people with little ones strapped to my front and my back, a stolen cumquat or rosemary leaf perpetually between my teeth. How did dente di leone translate to dandelion? The plant has teeth, it's rough, roughage. I slurp the nectars, check the parallel lines on the leaves before chewing native sarsaparilla, tear my sandalled feet to ribbons in the sparse strips of bush between train stations, teach the kids to hoist themselves over a tall rock. We run away here when we can't stand being at home. I pretend for a moment that I haven't been domesticated, pretend for one afternoon, I still have big, purple, feathery wings.

Other lives

A staircase leading to a new continent
The smell of a man's body, never known
but so vividly imagined
Practising the words "I love you"
It's been some time since they were said in English
It's been some time since they were meant.
A child told to count windmills on her way to boarding school
A child about to be abandoned
Windmills and hair, windmills blowing hair
Watermelon carved and eaten
with plastic spoons because knives are forbidden

A paedophile uncle and a new pink A-cup bra
Raindrops on car windows
Imprisoned in a car
A game that gives identities and voices to each raindrop
Clusters of raindrops that join and separate
Massive drops that steamroll diagonally
separating families, drawing baby raindrops from their mummies
How they cried!
I can still hear their distraught voices

Femaleness

There comes a time when you can look a man in the face
While he's doing something else, and instead of being
dazzled, by his phenomenal good looks...
nothing. You can live without him.
His track pants are too daggy
his toenails too long
his ears too greasy
his nose too bulbous
his penis too crooked
his glasses too big
It's those glasses and the way
he looks fixedly at the computer screen
It's the way men relate better to computers than women
It's their onanism (which is just a fancy word for masturbation)
which yes we all do, of course, but for me it's about sailing higher, higher
above apricot coloured clouds. For them it's about believing women exist only
for them. Oh! Let me withdraw further, further into my inner worlds...
Let me see all colours behind my eyelids, especially bright green
Let me be a retreating dot in an enormous swimming

universe. Let me be cradled, floating in space.

Sustain me now. Sustain me now.

Mastitis

Cinderella is on the stairs in a flurry. My story

hasn't been written yet. Nothing resolves.

Scientists are on the verge of a breakthrough
that may save us by destroying another world.

Metal drums full of fire. A dispersion of men in overalls
leaping for joy when they find the key, scissor kicks in the sky.

A knowing god looks down upon our treetops and sighs.

The time is now, it's running out, *ça ira, ça ira,*

I tingle. Nerves twinge. Something terrible may still happen.

My breasts are being milked for yet another hour
and I shiver endlessly in a feverish infected delirium.

Boys cavort and ignore me. They're used to this.

Downstairs you grizzle and mutter in your usual way.

Something smashes in a doorway. More curses.

Flat on the bed, making a leap fifteen years back in time

I am left with an upturned palm full of sperm and a decision to make.