

## ***Orpheus In Asheville***

Every Prelude is a beginning; preludes begin in the heart.  
Carla is the diva of the opera at the Biltmore gala;  
her moves are melodies; she is soprano of the samba,  
Telemann, and Gluck's *Orfeo*, a Brazilian with the Vanderbilts.

Her curves are smooth as polished wood. He plays her  
on his hand-crafted lute...lingering on each swell & hollow.  
His fingers work wonders on each fret; he feels the timbre  
in each string of her. Each of his tunes is a prelude to love-

making; a prelude is a love song old--beginning anew.  
And he knows, as he plays the theme song from *Black Orpheus*,  
that he is creating a multilingual score; she leaves him a scent  
of gardenias, on the arm of a tuxedo; in the lobby Orpheus plays solo.

He is the grandson of an old world stone mason, an artisan  
who built the Biltmore Estate to last. His musician's hands  
trained to knead deep as in a spa's hot stones massage.  
The guitarist loves her operatic interludes caressing his guitar.

Gliding away in a limo, she leaves him composing in the lobby.  
In a midnight slide off Black Mountain Road  
she is a skater in a love story ending in broken glass,  
black ice; mezzo in shards; rime ice clasps her body,

clouding Craggy Cascades in icy droplets--a glistening freeze  
on the windward face's mountain limbs at dawn. He lost her;  
she left him on New Year's Eve for a mountain in fog; he searched  
underground for her, charmed cave mouths into a chorus; the trees--

around the Highland Hospital where Zelda burned--learn arias.  
Orpheus' fingers melt Looking Glass Falls every spring into lyricals.  
A mythical musician, ever-improvising Preludes, plays instrumentals;  
stones--cold Blue Ridge stones--break into Bel Canto.

*Orpheus In Asheville*

***Shumann Composed For Cello***

On the car radio, NPR plays a concerto.  
Shumann, they say, was soothed by cello music.  
So he composed slow paced compositions, to soothe  
his troubled moods. No longer does a duo  
make beautiful music together on violin & cello.  
A woman screams at a man--waves her bow.  
Their romantic instruments, left unplayed, soon break.  
The duo flares, burns up, flames out before their libretto  
ends in ashes, breaking the ancient Dao of Ying  
& Yang; no smooth curves fit Dao harmony  
into place. Artists can not last if love is less  
than their music. He leaves for the Beijing Symphony.  
She stays to teach. They shared a bed before bows  
crossed their strings like electric shocks. No concerto.

***Frida Kahlo On South Beach At The Bass Museum***

*I had no idea I was going to miss her so much. --Diego Rivera*

Frida wore white on SoBe for art deco,  
a floor length native dress to hide her legs--  
(Madonna wore a man's tuxedo)--  
peasant beads, bare arms, scooped neckline.

A floor length native dress hides her legs  
as she lies recovering from a miscarriage, in body cast.  
Frida loved folklore, peasant beads, scooped necklines.  
Next to her, Rivera--muralist--is an elephant.

Lying, recovering from a miscarriage, in body cast...  
Picasso gave her golden amulet earrings in Paris.  
Next to Frida--a dove--Rivera is an elephant muralist.  
Frida's features in photographs line the gallery walls.

She wears Picasso's golden-hand earrings from Paris.  
Her dark eyebrows, thick as fur, are wings in flight.  
Frida's images in photographs line the gallery walls;  
an unsmiling face reveals hints of hair above her lips.

Her eyebrows--like dark fur--are wings in flight.  
The dove was crushed by Rivera's seduction of her sister.  
Unsmiling face, Jewish blood, hair above her upper lip,  
superstitious artist, loved by other artists taking her picture.

Rivera ripped her heart, seduced her sister.  
At Casa Azul, she paints from a mirror, exposed in black & white.  
Photographers fall in love taking her picture.  
She paints nudes in jungles, poses with parrot & monkey.

In Casa Azul...gored by trolley handrail, exposed in black & white;  
Frida unbuttons her white native dress to the waist,  
she paints nudes in jungles, poses with parrot & monkey.  
To reveal solitary, pale fleshy pearls--plain pink nipples.

She unbuttons her white peasant dress down to the waist,  
clasping her hands under her bare breasts with pink aureolas,  
revealing solitary pearls of pale flesh, plain pink nipples.  
Bewitched by her Tejuana look, I feel her spell; another lover.

*Orpheus in Asheville - continued*

Clasping her hands under bare breasts with pink aureolas:  
*Frida, Nude Torso*, 1938 photograph--alive--by Julien Levy.  
Bewitched by her Tejuana look, I feel her spell, another lover.  
The third eye in her surreal self-portrait, an exotic tattoo, hypnotic.

Alive in her art, *Frida, Nude Torso*, 1938 photo by Julien Levey.  
Kandinsky leaves his tears on her cheek as he kisses her.  
The third eye in a surreal self-portrait, an exotic tattoo, hypnotic,  
hooks me like Picasso's earrings, her mythic scarves, ex-votos.

Kandinsky leaves his tears on her cheek as he kisses her.  
I leave Robert Deniro to drink in art deco at the Chesterfield,  
Frida, mythical in her scars, Picasso's earrings, ex-votos,  
pass Casa Casurina (where Gianni Versace was murdered).

I pass Robert Deniro drinking in art deco at the Chesterfield;  
Al Pacino played a *Marielito*--*Scarface*--at 13th & Ocean Drive;  
I see Casa Casurina, blood stains gone, Versace murdered.  
I taste Frida's skin even after the iced bitter lemon drink.

Al Pacino played a *Marielito* in *Scarface* at 13th & Ocean Drive.  
Selma Hayak wore a white peasant dress at the Bass Museum.  
Frida's taste lingered on my lips long after the bitter lemon drink.  
Versace models slink & strut as I leave a lover, artists in art deco.

***Driving to Columbia***

Last night I heard *Thank you*  
*for taking care of me.*

I was reading *A Handfull of Dust*; last  
night I heard the icemaker cough.  
My dead father stares at me  
from an empty store window.

I smell coffee, raspberry, rain,  
and Old Spice this morning.  
The pink rose in the garden fell  
into petals before I left the house.

People gather on Route 302  
for a horse show. A horse trainer  
drove his horse trailer 21 hours  
from New Mexico to run for roses.

Used cars wear their worth  
on their foreheads. Confederate  
soldiers, on their way to a war  
in a pickup, stop

for a red light. Smooth Jazz plays  
Bony James covering  
Stevie Wonder --  
a song I no longer remember.

I heard you say to me *thank you*  
*for taking care of me.*

***Ars Poetica***

*Our words are words for the clay, uttered in undertones...--Charles Wright*

If you keep your ear to the ground,  
you will hear oceans form shore lines.  
Each line is a breath, a complete thought,  
a lapse, a story, a Station of the Cross,  
a meditation. Some words are heavy,

like a horse's hoof. Others are nimble  
as a dancer with ankle bells. Some drum.  
Always sing words out loud. Don't let them fall  
flat. Pick up the vowels to roll like marbles.  
Spit fragments out. Consonants cut a rock face.

Carve or break the stone of the line;  
what is left is what you mold; what you speak.  
Then you chisel it in. Then you put it down.  
Keep your ear to the ground. Words are coming.  
The ocean sends shore lines to ground.

Maybe the dead walked in your room  
last night, looked in the mirror,  
touched your body with the gloves off,  
left an envelope on your desk.  
Open it. Listen. Try to get the words right.

It takes a certain mind to read between the lines.  
Silence is the space, the air, the pause worth hearing.  
Feel absence in your bones; a heart beat is a tone.  
Atone. Let yourself go in the undertow.  
To hear clay utter undertones, go alone.