

Excelsior - A poem in 9 parts (Post 5 of 5)

by Iain James Robb

VIII. *Towards Affinities, Beyond*

My love, since I saw you last, since before we reached the
chamber,

I cannot count the quasars which have passed, but there still
gleams Time,

Like a memory of a lost event unwitnessed, and this illusion
Carried still to opened senses like a frozen climate, now
Bequeaths the frost of all your absence in its hands of dew,

Blue orchid sought, unsought, when in stasis' dreams I render
Thought to the amniotic box wherein the wheeling ways
Of our identities relapse to an entropy sans number-
I sleep purloined of you. Did you catch this face when you made a
statue,

With the thousand others striding past the ghosts of galaxies?

Our allotted mates are many, though their numbers fivefold few:
So many as lose ourselves to us: I remember the garnet dance of
eyes

Crowning the quads and spires of lost Antares Alpha,
And how I tasted lips that were wet where you had took me in
you,

My mouth against yours; your thighs enclosed me like the lights
round our bywayed bay.

Black glows the sky outside at night like a god too full for hunger,
Electric black by day, but which is which? We time each season's
spray

By the foliage garnered in the half-mile yard: for every foison
There is a flower or some fauna that does not recall
Its source, in other moons where we engendered them-

Or carried them from Terra past so many detours,
Unimportant now: but one reminds me sometimes,
A hybrid sunflower that has only ultraviolet turned to,
To reflect its blue refractions from its veins of marble
Softer than all marbles are, a drained liquescence
Carrying your eyelids in its pale purview.

From actual food I've fasted: tasteless as your breath
Is our sustenance allotted; pain and even play
Faint conjuring tricks in holostatic mirrors,
The sums of us. Is this the weight of seraphim-
The luminaries whose progress sainted ages
Unlived through in our borrowed cells, descendant
Of their antique antic tide's helical cortex,
Which even now in dreams dreams us Ascendancy?

And we learned to square the circle by their weight of angels,
God's parlour tricks we skipped, fey harlequin, Despair
Of our survival's path; a ship turns many circles:
My lost one windfalls me in windless air.
The spacecraft's nave the chapel of the rise,
Descending cadence, of the transept of our phoenix day
Past the prince of all the dead masques none obituarise,
In the gleaming courts our path, where metal meadows play.

Excelsior, you sons of such whose sands were granite,
Glass-arch constructors shutting in all suns,
Though those destroy us; forward, godling gliders
Through the freefall All where specks our single syntax,
On the chords of voids made manifold in man!

Excelsior, scions of those whose hands of granite
Carved the Jupiters that lorded tides and moons-
Symphonic shadows cast to starstream, striders,
Through ammoniac clouds that straddle all our Arks you ride us
To the spiral arms we seed with loves: O scions of man,

Seed them with any feeling; I can taste your breath,
It burns me like a freshet from my memory;
It is only lack of purpose we mistake for death-
My own, enervate flights that claim white destiny,
My own, to relish sense, with all that falls beneath.

We used to visit the museum at Antares, remember,
City capital of seven, worlds on microfiche
Projected out against red void, from our once azure mother:
Subjective distance not divided from Bernini's creatures,
To the Orion-mirroring soul-shrines of the pyramids;

And the latter seemed quite small from an aerial distance;
From the skyview seem like ant's tracks, through an open space
Between where we are with our shut lives, like an open window
Looking on the ghosts of we ourselves, from Ganges
Of our past, to captured wastes of the Suez Canal.

My love, when last you laid your hair against me,
In the planet's afterglow, I felt the heat against
Of Triton's future fountains; I felt the rupture of quasars.
Against it all we are still manifold man.
Cosmic hoofbeats scream, but scorch of Grecian Venus
Still reigns, supreme in utter blanking black-
ness. Still the shadow of you radiates a touch
Much clearer to me than the dots of dawns.

When Jupiter became a second sun
We had to go there; we had to find the planets.

Regardless of where our different ships are placed
They are the same: I man Galatea, you Polyphemus-
Since it was you who chased me first — the irony of names;
But the name of Neptune I think is inept still,
Its surface wiped like builder's trash by way of galaxies:

We have to learn, my friend, to flow against such stone.



This holostatic wilderness our primal garden-
No modernity now possible, but grand we are,
In dessicate floatation, and transform our orbits,
Correspondingly, to whims as fixed as satellites:
We either saw where we were safe some while, or never
witnessed,
We the sleights of many systems, and the blanks of chance,
Our 'thrown overboard', self-guide, where no Pleiades are.

And so we left some bright millennia back the dying planet;
Man should survive at any cost, though life be burned to grey,
As mine would be except a century more kept in silence,
With your voice, in deprivation, with the tank's wombed stillness
In this spacecraft that may meet you, in its perihelion
To where your own will hover also to our new blue sphere.

And if man must plant survival at the cost of violence
Of emotive flux that claimed us in its cadence once,
Or many cadences in one, then question God's own purpose,
Making one of us in deity's incipience —
To say our speck among the vaults of voids is single purpose
Of a universe our forms remould rebirth of love.

My own lies separated by the strength of nearness,
By which the faraway is fixed, but nothing turns in air

From deck to chamber that's more ancient or more fresh in
clearness

Than the multiverse that parts us: or that passed us there

One moment since, a thousand years ago's green sigh,
Amid the flora of the ship's park when the false rains shower
On sapphire patches of false spring where lives my sunflower,
Where hides your life; this is not absence, this is just goodbye.

