

Prometheus

by Iain James Robb

Allow me one moment of stasis from pain,
If I must really become that one,
Who brought by giant hand man's gain,
And suffered through theft of the sun.
No dagger pricks the injured side,
Or vulture picks the source of bile:
Still must wan hordes of men revile
The fallen course where dooms reside.
My feelings for the peopled sphere,
Once revered by bournful torch,
From its impression leave the fear,
Of standing, split-ribbed, at the scorch
Of beak against the opened wound,
Heat sourced out that the cares divorce
All warmth from the jealous gods,
Whose procurator of their fane,
Showed their aspects upon the odds,
That ashes were his final end's remain.

So if I must become that one
Whose penance was the martyr's path,
Fraught glory on a mournful throne,
In theft of essence of the sun,
Allow me one moment of numb respite,
Remit of mourning for the bone,
Or daggers prick where sense was rathe,
And final blessings mine shall turn to spite.

For those who take for granted what is granted,
Those content to drift through life as given,
Floating through their diamond haze enchanted,

In the grip of having their grip on things, to open
Eyes on what they choose to keep closer and close,
I feel a vulture come and make its nest of thorns inside:
And they who walk by in the rain untouched, for those
I'm held against the wall, to claim this idiot fate to be my bride.

Yes, I brought fire; it was me (Prometheus?). I stand before you
marked in beggar's rags. For it is I (Prometheus); I turned the trick
which heated you from my far stand ensnaked on the crags. Pack
my gift with tallow-wax to burn in pendants filled with lovers' locks.
My side hurts, go...oh, gorehawks!

To teach you not to see me was the gods' alarming parlour
trick. To give your substance temper from my broken rood was more
than your deserts. Where is the one who will free me, the child who
slew the serpents? No-one has come and leave me here bleeding: I
am the face of a fallen flock. Thrones of azure space bedeck the
crystals of my eyes.

Yes, I stole lanterns to flesh your desire: I was not
Prometheus. Oh, gorehawks! Come with me to a ruined arch and
give me what my substance lacks. Those passions the same from
shadow to shadow you will not divulge to me. I'm made in mock for
further bane to feed your further paradise. I cannot hold the key.

Kings of your riches, kinged in your quiddity,
Winged in this, ye hoarders of robes:
Distinguished in this, you might inherit my misery,
Calm in the calyx your empire disrobes,
Unfolding more nectars you breathe with each press
Of a language that hardens in my red duress:
Kings of your quiddity, holding your cloak
I sincerely hope, I really hope you choke.
My artifice masks my enrapture to gains,
And enslaves my own limits to live as I learn
(Still I yet wish to taste of your shattered remains),

Yet I hope you live quite caged: I hope you burn.

For those who go through life with closed eyes open,
Seeking in dreams what they claim and find their own,
Pert gewgaws that the wind won't break, remaining
In the grip of having their grip on things, my throne
Below the arid cloak of grey becomes my quiet pen,
And shatters all the flights of hope I made limp at the wing.

If I am truly becoming that one
Who wrought his love with iron breath,
To torture flesh with self-help riven,
Then release me to a deeper death.
I did not sense my meek misprision,
Courting blame by charity's soft guile
(Here where nothing lifts but blooded bile),
In theft of deathless essence of the sun:
Permit me one instant reprieved from my pain,
Remit of sentence pressed close to the bone,
Else blessings severally else were lost in one,
My ardour silenced by the arid wind's disdain,
To leave a shadow stranded in the ligature of night,
When final blessings die and turn themselves to spite.

Then if indeed in deed my debit begged and fell increased,
Let pity rest my credit's wage, then let me be released.

