

Upwards, Into the White Eye Rising (Parts 1-3)

by Iain James Robb

The Argument:

A couple of young female lovers, one slightly older than the other one, decide to part ways. The elder has contracted a terminal illness, and they decide the best way to part ways would be by joining together through a suicide pact. However, the younger of the two opts out, and the elder sings her gratitude, for the fact her lover will still exist after the durance of her song.

The full strain of her burden is thus documented in the following poem.

I.

Your scent, as carried by a world of glass,
Ends its word or essence and reseats in leaving,
That has filled you out but does not keep its contours,
Surrenders sense of its own memory-
Like a bird in amber; if dead wings lack freedom
They have flight sans motion past their wonted garden,
As a crystal glade grows: but your own beat west
Towards my sudden sundown.

Still your scent moves only
As a form that's sheltered under Perspex seems to,
As a thought has *movement*: only *yours* remains
To fall down now - I have no torch to call you,
But more silver-sharp than fruit the moonglow welters,
Is your face, detained some place all words miss music,

As a huntress makes her grave beneath the ferrous
Sky, at the high midnight of her midmost moon.

And I had a dream that you were dead;
Yet we remember the routes we took as children,
As sisters then, with all the lights around us,
Between the station turnstiles, and the carnivals:
And we were our own, conjoined an equal twin
Outside the freakshow limits of the puppet kingdom
Men might call life. My own is leaking from me;
Come my way now; the hour is not yet winning
That will drive the dawn that topples onto me.

*Six hours till sunrise: let your breasts find my breasts:
If our lips tip to drizzle, then it slips through our fingers,
In the dew-mouthed pass; and if a sound, let it linger,
That escapes all hush that is dissolving us.
A quiet in quiet is the cage in my chest;
The prognosis that claimed my future face and body
Was not so quiet; we dissolve in death,
Though my own would find me, at no years' delay.*

Yet a vacant stairwell seemed the heart of my head
Before we passed forth as lovers, from the roads took as children
And became we now; drown out the moment of me,
Smooth liquid and sudden and passive as glass.
Till this illness will sever all, one severance holds
From this thought, thought as one: the taintings of Time
Reclaim our fruits as fresh as all that we were once-
Untouched as what I am at last and you are united,
In the end that disunites and lies our horizon:
A region beyond dawn and sleep, laid still at our eyes.

*Six hours till sunrise; let your breath find my breath:
The pale hair of the meadow stirs the wind through its fingers,*

*As my own bind down, and cross upon you as halters,
As a world of umbra in the umber world's hush.*
And if pain makes a razor, what is pain at its best
But a reflection of doubt; against a razor, what falters?
We will both stand still; I feel the sands of your breath
Arrange in one hourglass the first and third seasons.
Has a ghost strayed there? It will be chilled by the daylight:
Its wraith stilled, where our mouths dwell still with the day.

II.

There's a black horse that rides to me out of the light
That hides in the cloudlets, running over the mountain
That severs us from us; it strides out of sight-
Its eyes blind white, its mouth breathes lavender.
Take my hand and we pass, and retire from talking:
We pledged in our passage to fill thirst of the fountain-
That will find us our slumber where dumbness of dreaming
Is all our dreams numbered: but what will it bring,

This relapsing from twilight: what horizons, what shore?
We never had forethought in the candyfloss seasons,
The schooltime path travels where our passions still hover,
Like birds burned in sun, though they turn without reasons,
Now shrouds lie upturned on the clouds that loom over-
And all this looms, over. Talk from tongues that are numbed
Recalls a sculpture from nothing. I am wear worn from walking:
Let us drink from the river where our dreaming lies dumb.

It has never been known to me, O mother mine,
What shrubs there grow and fruits, inside Death's garden.
Here where the moon melts and the cloud-banks harden
It is just the scrubs that touch the night's long shrine.
Should there be one perennial left, then just take her-
One flower that the rain might reap then leave its way,

Leave her: those lips, when I may go away
Will still bleed blue with dews, that slip and stray,
Or shine, or fail to shine.

I do not hold this face that, mother mine,
You knew by touch, when years to better months might follow-
That holding hers, beneath bright hall or hollow,
It had seemed our dual face might touch in trine.
And if you must save anyone, then just take her,
Dark strider through the twilight loom of day,
And cut my thread, spare hers; life weaves its willow
To strew my leaves abroad: but in its billow
She would seem keen, to stay.

You had signed this deal with me, my sweet attrition
Of faith, with doubts submerged, with mine gone down.
Your beauty ballasts me and stings my vision,
Who'd join me drowned who'd draw me when I drown.
My mouth seemed not as red, no briar as harrowed
By sunbursts bleeding from the summer's fun,
As hers which burns me with its coolness narrowed,
As the birds that burst in love, and hunt the sun.

*And across a wall of white, in jasmined darkness
Crucified, a noose that spears the tree,
Still denied, that eye that stars our starkness-
As I'm falling through you as you fall through me.*

Yet if you see me leaving by a different station
Than the one you've come from, and survive the dawn:
And our beauty yet to pass to life's negation-
Still no lotus goldness as our eidolon,
We'd yet look to death; but go, there are no narrow
Gates, but only wraiths to bind you soon
By mine. Let moon-blanchd eyelids be my barrow,

Not outpaled by harvest-tide, nor of the moon

*Across a wall of white, and in a jasmined darkness
Crucified, a noose that spears the tree:
And still denied, that eye that stars our starkness-
As I'm falling through you as you fall through me.*

III.

A fractured world we haunt; the streets, the schoolyards,
The floodlit roads where we shared drunk adonics,
No marbled halls but towers that stole the stars' eyes,
 Flat-roofed serrations against greys or blue.
The toppled courts that apple-topped our passions
Rebuilt now, whitewashed for the rain-washed children
Who take our place, in mists they may not see through
 Taking us two, now.

These are the portents laid against our eyelids,
That all shall know the things we shall not weep for;
They are not theirs now. Ours, the wreck of meadows,
 Portcullised rivers, and the fleeing firths.
The dead things held lost by the bending mercies
Of snow won't mourn the ones who join our distance,
Who made engagement wreaths of paper rainbows,
 Torn, before the rains.

But through all this, if one more fixed thing falters,
They too find permanence — change is the endless
Guest, some captive horse has lost its halters:
 Our sense the quest for its forgetfulness.
The supping spring once drunk with wounded roses
Neglects itself, as moons made blind by cloudlets-
That shroud your eye too as its own cloud closes,
 Yours, and only you-

And over what glints in its hidden crescent
I can catch once more at last the straits of towers,
The night processions of the lost and wanted,
 Failures, glories and the quest for flesh;
Beyond it all our words were fraying garlands,
Or tinselled crowns, for forms that sensed no haloes
That came from blocks and malls that outlived radiance
 Of the violet time.

And in coronations blue their eyes upon us
Sang of things that chant behind the starlight;
Their skeins on skin that seemed to mock the moonlight
 Left your flesh within its laving waves.
Caressed, caressing, in the rushing spillbright,
We dreamed the dead stars' paths would stay perennial
With us, as stalwart in the captive moon's might,
 Rudderless, astray:

Before the crab's sign loosed inside my body
Threatened love that strayed like something stalwart:
What left to lose but all that casts out beauty,
 That which breathes forth you?
Though to join me, straitened, not requested duty,
Two we leave the lamplit strands, with death not given
Its force to waste me with, your face not riven
 From our final view.

Come forth and let me weave my arms around you;
With deaths more deep than death your eyes seem heavy:
Though a game it is they play, of Punch and Judy,
 A lantern shadowshow:
Some magic mime of kings with all their clowning.
A cardboard knight rides high and plays the frown-king;
Though his clouds roll blank against man's flat horizon

We remain, alone.

To Be Continued

