



TWILIGHT CANTOS

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LUNA BISONTE PRODS

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“non tamen vilis eris inter umbras”
Seneca, Hercules Oetaeus



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1.

as much are the years gone now as snow
melting on mountain slope and downwards
flow all things to the base and unconscious
what memory is there of glass ? and in the petri
dish lies inert the flame-seed and talking
all around but not through the hour the meta-
physicians in their Chinese robes and gala
who know but do not comprehend what they
know leaving us in the stifled air grasping for
meaning and the bamboo fit into its slat
facing toward the setting lamp and the origins
once so abundant and rich with promise
scattered as drops of dew upon the retreating
earth without recall of the business and history
of merchant and prince and the overwhelmed
who now gaze as mendicants on the windows
where are displayed glove and gusset and
price lists for pearl and ointment and the sky
becomes a shell pink and ornamental to be
worn in the ear lobe the chastened members
of Demeter shining through the fane of sleep
where all are bidden to come and hear out
the lamentations of birth and for whom are
fortunes read and palms described with wrinkle
and torment of what lies ahead and if to have
consciousness even of the Sirens whose decibels
shrill the ear with unbearable song the beauties
of harmony and concord and the ringing on
the moon and the associations of leopard and
verse and the cacophony the umbilical sweep
the tensions we are tilled and sent thrumming
deep into the mold which they fill with hot
lead or iron and shape weapons and gear
to fire away at the unsuspecting whose forms
flit in the diminishing grey of the heavens

when will this be called the last ? and return
by nightfall to gather and count the remaining
who among us ? the shelf where the unopened
book with meter and secret vowels and rhyme
assumes its position among objects holy and
forgotten the mysteries and pageant of lies
the past with its enormous swarming and hives
legendary mute and only half finished like
colors stained across an empty canvas and meant
to represent what the breath cannot articulate
the empty and the void that follows the Hour
trace of insects or snail slime following the shadow
duplicated on the veranda for the reading of a
text and testament softened at the word-tags and
endings of paint and illustrations of the great fade
the pallid ominous of the spreading star-quilt
then must we abide by the pillars of Hercules
our shoulders bearing the burden of truths
letting out of the small egress near the pond
what is left of it of the inconsolable of the
darkness hissing out of the light

2.

I have borne much
and for this have come to know
the archaic gods not in night dark
or in dreams but in broad noon-light
in the glare of error and time
have sat with them in airport lounges
or worse in doctors' waiting rooms
where I saw them unravel their essences
themselves confounded by human speech
once their gift now an enigma and terror
amazed with linguistic change they no longer
can speak but as hunks of stone quarried
for mortal resemblances and somewhere

among them in their grappling with vowels
and syllables and misplaced consonants
something of their shining divinity
becomes as paint scraped off an easel
nevertheless they have burdened me with
the donation of tragedy and loss
requiring of me the afternoon lessons
in the Berlitz academy and long inferences
of clock-time and oranges peeled and left
uneaten and staring out windows
as if looking for a passing train
or a primitive steam engine or a device
that might destroy atoms and convert
matter into longing and unfinished poetry
they have sent me the ghost of old Anchises
and set him on my shoulders and
delivered me to the labyrinth to
unwind and wind again the thread
that leads nowhere the devilry of infinity
have caused me to break bread
with monsters and caviling angels
and made me to see in the midair of July
the most fantastic children beautiful
in their mistaken rags and shoes
civilizations have been painted on one wall
and paradises and infernos overlaid
and the patterns of mantras about salvation
and the putrid remnants of grammar
inexplicable rules of when and when not to
use the honorific pronoun to address the *One*
and for years marching in the wrong direction
and saluting blank mirrors for their ego
and fitful with the ordination of priests
whose immaculate idea of life
is to turn the eyes inward to the ocean
that seethes in the heart of man

a revolving door a pistol a gaze
from the executioner before dawn
there was a time when the goddess in her raiment
the color of light on the sea appeared
in the midst of traffic on Flatbush Avenue
and turning to her I appealed and
she answered me with a *poem*
which I cannot recall but for the hues
of ancient hills ruined temples and ink
devastating and spreading over the loves
encountered across the years
much have I borne since then and have sat
in the antechambers of anxiety and doubt
and scoured maps of the Pleiades
searching for the source of rain
only to hear the garbled discourse of gods
plaintive and mewling at times like the sound
of birds powerful and high above the waves
or if I ever stopped to look up
and count the number of clouds passing
in a single minute each with the fate
of an identity and a death in ribbons
and often splendid in its advent
then have I witnessed and understood
that what I have borne what I have borne
deep within the beating wound
the weight of air the gravity of breath
the limited echo finally
is nothing other than the end
the full stop of eternity
the gods unraveling their essences
and ascending as if nothing
from this illusory planet

3.

will I ever be again as I was
before the *Great Year* began ?
rock formations of spondee and dactyl
the meridian with its overwhelming silence of heat
the former circles of sky and night encrusted
with tiny Sanskrit gems allusions to
previous eras of time or alternate universes
graven out of murals depicting colors
of figures about to move in various shifts
of emotion and attitude the resolve to become human
and among them I with my codex and Primavera
a mortal idiom meandering on either bank
of memory a gesture in primary syllables
a beckoning with the index finger to integers
of girls themselves reincarnations of Vedic verses !
it was a chant in musk an inversion of heliotrope
and dandelion a slope of lessening dew
a mantra of nostalgia and the hills that resound
longing for an orient that has no beginning
yet ends somewhere near the Pillars of Hercules
and the woven Spanish gold of first awareness
and miles of ink like hair bound in silk rope
so much fertility in the light blossoming
from the grassy folds of pre-Dawn
and at the base of the eucalyptus grove
to await the singing and the oracle of
whatever it is that gives rise to dreams
a lifetime ahead ! motors of leaf and blossom
vales and mythology of glassware and shadow
when names take on the silhouettes of goddesses
or heroes forever adolescent in their ire
and love-making and the turrets and walls
and agape the furious city of consonants
battering rams of hexameter and unraveling
was there the war of bee and ant the syllabus

of thumb and the reckoning by hieroglyphs
of personality and ego and tragedy combined
the fall of the many who enamored of the mirror
could no longer step in rhyme with the image
and all about began to appear the talking
the corpses of movement and grammar
propounding on the syntax of history and illusion
moons in dialect phases of planet Jupiter
distinctions between the sun that rises and
the one that sets in the hemisphere of depths
where in this voluminous hiatus of dereliction
were the Muses to find shelter if not in the small
letter omicron inscribed on the scarab
that decorates the Sarcophagus ?
and everything else becomes a tumult a play
of words without meaning a fusion of intellect
and aphasia a madness to have it all at once
and in this riot and bewilderment the months
all twenty seven of the *Great Year* revolve
out of order the first becoming the last
and the rest all in the center of gravity
waiting for the deaths to arrive the myriad
perceptions of breath and the love it imbues
and the tenderness of hands in the shape of air
and having to learn to *Bury* with them
when nothing comes back and the body
now gravid with the knowledge of short-comings
I am no longer that one either a semblance
in cracked glass and recalling perfumes
scents of opium and lilac
branch extending its voice
echo in a dozen fragments
something of shape
a lack