

The World in All Its Depths

Picture yourself going to sleep
and dreaming a boy who grows up
with a father who tells him over
and over he won't amount to much.

You continue the dream
and the boy grows up
to a life of trying
to prove himself.

Here you wake
and realize these are just
two characters you made up,
a story in time, convincing
while it was taking place,
with all the flavors
of family and home
and oppression
and failures at love.

A dream nonetheless.

Maybe you wonder
if all of us don't sometimes
wish to destroy another,
or some part of another
that oppresses us,
a wish we might hold fleetingly
or with fixed intent,
maybe even all the while
supporting that person
along his path
and sincerely too, meaning it,
rightly so, in the dark knot
where love and hate pull tight.

Perhaps too at this point
you start to wonder who *you* are,
this dreamer of dreams, glimpsing

perhaps you're no one
you can identify!
and the whole world forever
in all its depths!

and you try for moment
to figure *this* out but well, you can't -
it's just too much,

so you relax, you let go
and enjoy this slippery freedom
while it lasts, amazed to find
you're living it, you're just being it
and that everything hangs on trust.

Divertimento in E Flat

The moon was rising as Margot d'Archy set off from the sacred spring to rejoin her husband. For hours she cantered across the moor on horseback, her cape swirling behind. Tucked under her arm was the famous red silk parasol immortalized in her performances at the Opera Comique. It was equipped with a trigger that shot out a two-foot appendage with a troll's face screaming on the tip. Last year it had so startled the apoplectic Count de Travers in his assault upon her person that he expired on the spot.

Perhaps it was the hours of galloping that hastened the approach of term. She dismounted by an estuary to seek a soothing grove, when suddenly she found herself surrounded by a band of robbers. The troll only triggered roars of laughter. It was her eyes that mesmerized the robber chief, the haunting gaze of the Chateau d'Archy honed through the generations, commanding "assist me" to his moral soul, banishing his thoughts of theft or worse. Calling for hot water, he eased her to accouchement in the ferns, blindfolding himself out of respect for her ladyhood and delivering the child without difficulty. For before becoming a brigand he had been a male midwife at the convent hospital in Reaux where unrequited love for the abbess had turned him to robbing the human race rather than easing its pains.

Into the moonlight emerged a male child, fair and gurgly, beguiling as a Hindu god. He was unusually developed about the arms and shoulders, displaying the musculature characteristic of an archer, as though he had been practicing in the womb. This might explain the mounting tensions and sudden releases she'd suffered these past weeks, leading her to seek relief in the grove.

Now it so happened that among the highwaymen was one Eric Jodspur, the composer, captured and held for ransom while on his tour of sold-out recitals. Inspired by the ease of the birth in which they all felt sanctified, he composed a concerto to the infant, in E flat, and taught it to the brigands, all four movements, those who couldn't sing falling in spontaneously on the string bass, the didgeridoo and Jews harp, several raising their jerkins to thump the beat on their bellies. The whole company made a joyful noise around the child in the moonlight, which allowed the wily Eric to slip away and hide under an overturned skiff pulled up on the sand, escaping detection there, later launching the craft to sail away on a brisk breeze, taunting his captors on the shore, none of whom could swim.

Margot, relieved, thanked the chief and dismissed him, even though he offered himself as her slave. With a moan he snapped the parasol across his knee, revealing its sorry innards, the air channel with the impotent troll coiled at the end. The red silk he tore from its ribbing and hurled to the rocks where it swelled, then collapsed like a frail bit of nothing. The sight froze him in fascination for it seemed to spell the end of something, of Opera Comique perhaps, dear to his heart too, before it hardened.

Margot made use of this moment of distraction to leap upon her horse and away, the babe tucked where the parasol used to ride. They galloped over the scabble to the northwest where the moon threw its long reflection on the water. To horse, cried the chief, and the headlong crew, incensed to see their second captive flee, pursued her on the fastest steeds in the land, closing the gap mile after plunging mile.

Now on the moor her horse, Moon Beam, had eaten some weed that disagreed, bloating its stomach terribly. When the pursuers were almost upon her, hurling insults and whirling their lassoes, she kicked her charger *just there* back of the last rib where its stomach swelled with unbearable pressure. Her heel tripped an explosion of gas in a jet so strong that they shot ahead like a arrow, nearly unseating Margot and leaving the brigands far far behind, blinded and gagging, unable to continue the chase.

This measure Margot noted well, and she later chopped more weed out of the moor, compressing bales to the size of a bouillon cube and feeding it to her steed with a lump of sugar whenever they faced a dangerous situation, perfecting her kick *just there* and changing his name to Thunder.

At Nonce, in the traffic of beings, she gathered news of her husband's whereabouts. Podelsnycz had dismissed his army after the siege of Gurk, retiring to a castle to celebrate his victory over the hairy belching brutes. There, he and his chemist friends gathered close around a billiard table to observe a dung beetle rolling an emerald toward one of the pockets. The green mist that rose delighted the nose. They corked it in vials for its undetermined curative properties, dispatching it for testing on the ailing who moaned on litters in the annex.

Margot threw open the great doors, interrupting the secret session. Archer was in her arms. A bellow of joy escaped Podelsnycz as he heaved the table aside, scattering jewels and seeds. He rushed to her and clasped her to his chest, covering her face and shoulders with kisses, holding the boy at arm's length, roaring with delighted disbelief at the uncertain smile on his son's face, then peered back at Margot's cleavage, for throughout the siege he had thought of nothing else.

Night fell. The chattering grackles grew still. Rippling muscles drew the drawbridge up. A bald eunuch drew her bath. She nursed Archer, then settled him in his crib, mildly sedated on the music of the lyre. As she washed her hair, the scented waters restored her to her former maidenly form. She applied fragrances here and there, while the impatient Podelsnycz strode the ramparts, slathering marmalade on the thick chunks of bread that built his strength. A full moon shone on the water. A nightingale sang in the glade.

An owl swooped by the violet slotted windows as he rushed in and swept her up in his arms. The master bedroom groaned as it slowly wheeled and rose like Noah's Ark into a sky of meteor showers, ending this divertimento I composed last night before I found the skiff, to be played *moderato cantabile* – make sure! - on rainy days in the key of E flat.