

Poems by Mike McNamara

1.

Hours cast
like weighted ivory dice
between the larkspur and
the folk's glove,
a dawning truth
between middle age
and old age.
A long tale told
but never heard
in youth.

2.

Let us return now,
you and I,
to all those places
beneath a sky
of snow, of rain,
of sunshine,
breaking bread
to candle wine
that we marred
with bitterness
and seek
a sad forgiveness
from each other,
though it take our last forever.

NO ONE CAN FOLLOW ME

I am the last of The Great Magicians,
I smoke imaginary golden cigarettes
and disappear into this velvet maroon settee.
No one can follow me.

My eyes are the soulful doors
through which the world can whisper,
my syncopated hands will rhythmically reappear
empty but for salient fear.

There is a life behind the walls
and walls around this life.
Sackcloth and penance have this appeal:-
1.Eternity is ours but never theirs to steal.

Di-analysis disturblences the head,
drives the seeker's mind insane,
Hebrew texts, old tradition
keeps on depriving tutored fools of any real volition.

Ah, reach beyond me, Lilah child,
my Samson mane clipped short,
flash fly dark eyes at some other Nazarite,
oscillating Pictish whorls alone are my delight.

Welcome to the circus where
the ringmaster's killed by the clowns
(he was no digi-shufflemix Lazarus
but found in the dying to be just like us.)

I am the last of The Great Magicians,
I am the sackclothed Samsonic clown,
whisperated, he-brewed, robbed, enwalled,
unsane, inrich... long gone when called.

REDLILAC DREAM (after Paul Celan)

Kiss me,
arabesque,
I am the willow weeping
tears for your tenderness,
tears for their forgiveness.
We cannot say goodbye,
you nor I. You must not say
'I will set you
free.'

In the
redlilac
field I carried him,
a heavy weight,
my son, my blood, my bone.
The players of games played on.
I saw you, distant, young, your
graveyard smile on milky black
lips.

If the road leads only to
the place of death

how can I bear him
long?

There are flowers growing in the prison;
today the sun shines,

you and I walk
free.

PARLOURS OF DUST

In parlours of dust the grimy
mothen men remain.
Death faced and pebble eyed.
Upon their ashen heads
are carved the crowns of indecision.
Sleight handed they shore away the future
of those knelt in diurnal subjugation
and nocturnal self denial.

Come now, oh, lapwinged,
fair clipped voyager
and spill upon these shade draped parlours
the light of distant stars,
for that undimmed exotic light,
(for most unseen)
could cheer these long benighted,
eclipsed, puerperal parlours of dust.

6.

My net, woven from dying breaths
snares the star that spawned the world.
This rosy lantern lightens every shadow ever cast
and see, you yourself are living proof the dead shall rise again.
For the first and last time the secret song that heals
every broken heart shall be sung.
Then I must sail away.
Though you carry my picture and call my name
in a thousand unknown tongues
and pray
I can never return.

7.

Here in the ashes of our faith,
the catechismal recollection,
did you dance for us bright Mithra
before those dreams of resurrection?

Venus and the Moon, The Colleen Bawn,
The White Goddess. One waft of wood smoke,
the old tales, tragedy and birdsong;
8,000 years evoked.

AMERICAN MESSIAH

*'I heaved upon that cross, my gut burnt with vinegar wine;
Cursing, I vomited upon the women who, weeping, knelt below.'*

Men are but men and those who judge but men,
they harbour video film fantasies
and crave eccentric haired prestige.
They have blended expert opinions, inherited learning,
with their flaws and neuroses
casting shadows along the pathways of justice.
And see, just when I toiled within the field
like the lily, unnoticed, behind chained doors
and mute windows I was borne unwillingly
into the changing winds that breathed
new life into a dust laden culture.
Every outlet cried of the West's probation,
cracks in walls bled a new Renaissance,
TVs blinked black and white ideals,
a grand beginning of grown awareness,
youth's involvement in the ways of man,
while I learned from yellowed news sheets
of dreams that were woven in the outside world.
The four white angels, insect-like possessed me as
from flattened minor chords sprang up a concept
that rang across the universe.

Autonomous images were branded on my brain,
tap water wrung visions of England,
bright city lights, rain-shrouded and pale
merged with apparitions of suburban lawns.
Tobacco smoke invoked unbidden glimpses of stately homes,
girls in short dresses, sensuous and carefree
appeared in swift response to some light, unguarded phrase.
In red brick walls were hewn the faces of the day
and a view of the same sky that covered London's streets
promised to drown me too in wild surrender.
I watched my finest hours decline,
monitored voices of The Dream through biased headphones.
Thus would I be lionized and adored, for I came
bound in chains of mystery and pain

suffering with a joy no-one dared share,
a plumed hunger perched crownlike on my skull,
this halo of bloodied thorns.

And who shall cast the first stone? See,
the ascetic exists beyond the yearning of the flesh.
All relationships lose meaning, all human folly
regarded with the eye of knowing, so too
does the schizoid man dwell beyond (though below)
all intercourse with life.

Then what remains?

Stripped of the coarse haired saintly robes,
choked by desire, he, gasping reaches out
to break the humid sky. He grasps at all,
drowning in a mire of alternate swamps
that sink the soul in false-self involvement.

Thus youth pronounced me great,
for in a world of hypocrisy and hype
I mastered means to survive.

Searching, as all fools do,
I stole from Everyman.

The media created flames that burned me and
the media would in turn
ignite my beacon to the young.
Like a cape of darkness then I gathered around me
children of rejection
for I had had much time to learn.

I had dreamed their dreams, known their fears.
Yet how hollow was this adoration from those who gaped
in adulation at my ageing, whiskered face.

Thus it all began.

The Lord of the Eternal Erection was born.

In my babbling tower I grew strong
while they, in turn diminished.

I raped psychology, returned answers that
were no more than a glib façade.

Haphazard games I played,
a faked knowing, while beneath me lay
a black abyss.

In the streets of the grateful dead I ruled
but the opposition of older men constrained me
and the lure of the Valley of Death was great.

Yet there were hours remembered,
like a cigarette shared
with a friend or lover
on a sunny day;
a clear patch on a frosted window,
a glimpse of reality that took form for a second
rising above the smothering mists of fantasy
and apathy. A fleeting glimpse of what might have been.
In the guise of the lutanist minstrel
I strummed my tunes along those fragrant streets,
I shook the dust from the tenement tower blocks
with a freshness born of eyes
that are free from the cataracts of everyday...
for all came new to me.
Like Lazarus raised again into the world to see
I saw a house alight with fire,
a golden blaze that does not burn, a tree
bristling with shimmering fervour,
a moment hazily aglow with burnished memories.
For these seconds alone I survived,
for these revelations I endured the wasted years
suffocating deep within myself.
Oh, how I was filled with the mystery of Being,
the voiceless call to nature's son as I stood
aglow in the light of the cradling moon.
The seasons raised me to commune with life
as I licked the dew from doorsteps and
cracked a smile at the clambering sun.
This inferno of feeling, soul scorching, intense,
was bounded only by the dark waters of otherness;
Oneness ruled the universal ego and I,
I was the universe.

And yet...
the awful vision of those who watched,
those unseen seers, knowing but unknown,
lodged within my spleen.
Thus sanctuary, a place of peace, was seldom found
as I feverishly jumped appeasement's puddles.
Outside of fulfilment of the flesh
there is no joy
and life is void.

I could dip my untaught intellect
into the fathomless cauldron of the East,
emerging with a raw religious stew
but my heart could not be sprinkled
with the spice of love.

All negations I possessed, fear and anger
and each day I awoke with desire,
a socket through which to connect
with the pulsating undercurrent of life.

And though I had seen men
grown ugly with lust, still I yearned
for the hour when I'd destroy
the sons of the first black man who'd fathered all
and craved too, to debase
the sisters of my motherless past.

I am but a small man, thirty years old
but my head will hang with your heroes.
In time you will look back and acknowledge
your debt for the weight I dragged
along the new Golgotha.

I, who can control your children,
erasing the false ideals you have thrust upon them,
those double edged, two faced Janus idols
of prestige and possession,
I, who you alienated and rejected
will set myself upon the throne of infamy
and grasp the sceptre of glory.

You who have fed me snakes and stones; beware!
I shall quench your thirst with fiery brands
and warm your hearts
with the frozen wilderness of my soul.