

Wilderness House Literary Review 10/3

Jonathan Simkins
RIVER SONG

You visit me in the moment of waking
With a syringe full of river water.

If the river God is in my veins
His burning is colossal and ferocious.

I hear ten thousand women singing a song
I know I've heard but cannot name.

You have the face of a hundred spiders.
Your furry arms glisten and tremble.

You guide my hand to your leg,
And as you dig your nails into my chest

The sound of wings roars from your mouth,
A dam breaks in some infernal region,

The clock hands spin backwards,
And moths pour in through the air vents.

The way to the river is clear,
And the way to the heart is its compass.

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AFTER GIUSEPPE PALUMBO'S FISH GODDESS

*"No prophecies,
Remembered out of Babylonian almanacs,
Have closed the ladies' eyes, their minds are but a pool
Where even longing drowns under its own excess"
-W.B Yeats*

Rise now in the moon's tongue
With flame the precursor of ash:

The heat in your hand is golden.
Black bile sloughs from your skin

As the medium receives your light-
Caterpillar and angelic lamb

(With your knife in my forehead
No spirit leaves me).

Make the splashing open of my brow
A transmigrating ocean.

Open my skull to the sky.
Make a goblet for the rain.

Cut twenty seven doors
For the twenty seven fish.

Chisel the wisdom of water
That drowned and choked our hearts.

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SUMMER SOLSTICE IN ELDORADO CANYON

There is a path within the path
On the shortest night of the year.

We were once again foreigners
Trafficking in the riches of twilight.

Without the need for innocence
We fed on the child wisdom of pines.

Two deer greeted us, and one held
My gaze in his unswerving knowledge.

At the ridge top we breathed in bergamot.
Your moonstone kindling its luminescence,

Selene and the presences she brings near
Were a blood red sliver reigning over

The sandstone throne anointed by wine.
There was room within the path

For us to apprehend the darkness
In the warmth of the shortest night.