

Wilderness House Literary Review 16/4

David Brady

Dreaming of Gold in the Mountains of *La Rinconada*

A miner sweats in the snow.
A nugget of coca leaves churns
in the machine of his mouth.
High in Peruvian Andes,
where Mount Ananea
plunders the clouds.

Awicha, they call her. 'Grandmother'.
Her children learn to mourn with their hands,
dumping crushed hope on the slopes of quartz.
Her breath eases vapors over glacier lakes.
The mercury settles on the surface like prophecy.
Here, people still believe in magic. Of a female spirit
who will lead them to the richest veins of gold

Far below, a widow makes bracelets
from lemons in a corrugated hut. Cooks
with the plumpest heads of amber-
and in the cave of her heart,
sieves the mountains
for a ring of gold.

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When Summer Transitions

Leaves return to soil, coiled
in foetal positions,
while rain taps the
arid valleys.

Grief shivers by gravestones,
like prayers
to rekindle bone—

and the voyeur moon
spills its ink into the night sky,
authoring earthly tragedy.

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The Grandfather Clock

We dine together in the shadow of the grandfather clock.
I gaze at you. Perfect man. Greek God. Bad boy.
All rolled into one. Eyes like shiny shells. Lips
as moist as plums. The sweet allure of coconuts,
desiccated, or dripping delicately down the palm.
I will lose myself in that tonight.

We drink our fill of Cabernet Sauvignon,
perfected over decades in our sleepless cellar.
Ninety years old yet flush as a new-born cherub.

I propose a toast,
to the delicate tapestry of your Renaissance beauty,
holding your gaze through my crimsoned glass. A toast.
To the twirling liquid that sparkles like infant blood,
whose dancing legs play spring notes on our tongues.

To the ageless face of the grandfather clock,
whose slow, patient hands unravel all evenings to
a threadbare dusk.