

Wilderness House Literary Review 19/1

Matilda Elias

SUSPIRIA DE PROFUNDIS

Mater Suspiriorum; Our Lady of Sighs
Witch woman
From what flame, what ash, do you rise?
With your copper red hair
Faceless,
Aberrant mind
Where floor falls before you,
cracks and writhes,
We sink to our knees with languorous cries
Black nails screech scratch score at black blue flesh
We claw and claw
But to no prevail:
Your drink to the dregs of the gore.
Always, Mother Suspiriorum,
You ascend,
You kill kill kill.
O Venus,
O Aphrodite,
You are ludicrous and transitory
For all our poor prosaic minds
But you.
You Mater Suspiriorum,
Are murderously omnipotent,
We dream of this delectable deity
That is only a thousand women,
Gap toothed, on the floor, pedantic children
O litany of dreams,
You pull open your own chest,
To reveal the blackened mouth
Which wails and sighs.

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ANATOMY OF GIRLHOOD

Ladylike monstrosity
In her cardinal hair ribbons
Under pink makeup table light
She lies,
The festering, growing roots of effeminateness tugging at her thighs
A crucifix above the bedpost, slumped on white wall is watchful
As pink painted toes touch cluttered cream carpet
A floral nightgown flows over warm satin skin,
Perfumed and pricked right to the wick
And the still-lit candle cries from the bedside table,
Drip, drip
She is freshly returned from the front lawn,
Where she sat with the others,
Under a sultry summer sky
Their glare like a congregation of angels
A divine presence that fills the street like air
Softest, sweetest smelling fair hair
Coquettish laughter and nonsense-utterances pour from painted pink lips
To pool on the floor;
Spoilt milk lapped up by the onlookers,
Like hungry, clumsy kittens

So she lies; all gathered up on the bedroom floor
An exhalation of pollinated summer skies
Personality just beginning to re-route expression

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If only it wasn't for the devastation of disease,
So imminent and pervasive
Through the girls like hungry fire
A cataclysmic virus of thoughts and misunderstanding of the
Complex web of their flowering minds,
Perhaps her necklace laced chest would once again rise
And the cherry red flow from her wrists would subside,
To a sticky strawberry syrup,
As you might find in her mother's sweet jam pie.

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THE FATAL FLAW

Bright white opening of earth
The illustrator reaches down, down, down
Where the dew drop cries from the yellowing leaf
He molds ten delectable creatures of breath and flesh
With red run blood and ostentatious care,
He sets them afoot
On the pastures of green earth

His laugh of thunder rips the satin sky,
Down, down, down
It rains with delight

'Character?'

'Character!' He cries

'The sweet red apple lacks character, as do the petunia petals!

They are not any less beautiful for it!'

A final sigh,

With tragic lack of caricature eye,

He retires to the white paper pinprick through the charcoal sky,

And three hundred years begrudgingly limp by.

How wonderful!

On return,

Down, down, down

To his sublime creations,

He finds:

i. One empty face, with loss of two brown eyes, a mouth, nose, teeth
and wrinkle lines

Instead, blank blackening craters and a map of scarring

Of gouging and snapping of the skin,

Where the face should have been.

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ii. One sickly woman-thing
A second layer of plastic and product
Permeating the skin,
Billowing ruby dress:
Poised on a pedestal she sits,
As a performance for all to see!

iii One feeble grotesquery of a being,
Bent backwards,
Face bashed in,
Dressed only with blue black bruise.

iv. One softly breathing skeleton
Lying immobile and impassive,
Entering the air,
As a living decomposition.

v. One monstrous man
Rising 6 feet tall,
Big arms big legs big torso big head
A thing pumped full of thoughtless muscle.

The final five where nowhere to be found,
As the author of the beings
Crumpled to the ground
Down, down, down.

He sees the sweet red apples which have now turned to brown mush,
And the petunia petals,
Trampled underfoot.

The god writhes, bows below his creations
And cries:
'But I made you beautiful!'
And their broken bashed bodies

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Fold inwards,
Caving at the heart
Paper people they crumple:
Water soluble.

Where to start, where to start...
Scrambling to understand,
The fractious god wails;
'But I loved you!'
'That wasn't enough,'
They lie, with a final ineffable sigh.