



REMEMBER: OCELOT, or OCHRE by SANDY DORBIN



"Time passed on that mudbank as well as anywhere else, and it was not from a multiplicity of events, but from the lapse of time alone, that he expected relief. Yet in the sameness of days upon the shallows, time flowing ceaselessly, flowed imperceptibly; and since every man clings to his own, be it joy, be it grief, he was pleased after the unrest of his wanderings to be able to fancy the whole universe and even time itself apparently come to a standstill; as if unwilling to take him farther away from his sorrow, which was fading indeed but undiminished, as things fade, not in the distance but in the mist."

-- Conrad, The Rescue

proem

but we were to be the king and the queen of the mountain.
eating the forest in the morning, planting the new forest
in the afternoon, sleeping in the grown forest at night.
making it bloom with the richness of our love. but knowing
also the rocks, the cold as well as the warm eyes.

"what you were--"

It was naturally that she was a wonder
of the sort that is at the same time
familiar and sacred.

-- Conrad, The Rescue

your face was covered with peacock feathers
i looked and you were turquoise and silver
on your floor a mattress two candles incense burning
the lights down the coast moved sadly as we watched

we said we'd dance but talked most of the night
i guided you with care around the craters of your past
i was your father your brother the lover you knew would
come

and you were my mama too
my big wooden spoon

but then
O give me a baby you whispered
now

motel

for Mr. Gerry Mulligan

they gave us number 18 next to the highway
you lay on the bed reading
i sat in the kitchen fooling with the radio
listening to the tires whirr in the rain
i couldn't sleep was too afraid to try
to break it open writing
then you smeared honey over your crotch
and invited me in to dine

it was not your hair but sleeping
butterflies lay across the sheet
Tragic Beauty i called you
you answered with bells in your throat

what's wanting now is dancers
flowers in the waterglasses
the house full of your laugh

your friend and mine
she wanted to stuff him into her bed
so we might go home and
"talk things out"

we drank some more beer con-
vincing him it was all right
then skidded home and
fell asleep instead

the hot springs

high and so softly happy
with lots of moon and pickled figs
our velvet heads rubbed the sky
while down in water's sweaty hold
i thought we would never come apart
these poems are arms stuck in the sand

the new place

there was rose & lobster for dinner
hot & cool sauces salad nectarines
before they were gone we were on the floor
laughing & pulling at each other's clothes

now we know what belongs to which
that nappy green carpet was ours though
our one property in common

"The socalled lyric poets are jive
bombers. There's nothing more deadly
than romantic love. It's a form of
suicide, and they deserve
whatever they get."

"And that's the trouble with writing your therapy,"
he said, winding it up. "Excess of emotion has
ruined more good poetry than anything else."

-- B. M. S.

"WHEN ANYBODY SAYS SOMETHING THAT'S A DRAG
I JUST SAY SOMETHING THAT'S A BIGGER DRAG.
AIN'T NOBODY CAN BEAT ME AT IT EITHER."

-- T. S. Monk

quoted in TIME, 28 February 1964

the enlightenment

instead of arguing about it
about who gave whatever we got to whom
and how
i went to the doctor then came away
with a his-and-hers prescription

still life

my daughter was still here when your letter came
for three weeks i said nothing
just watched the calender move
i continued to water your plants
when the gardenia died i knew
you wouldn't be back

while your father's scalp was being sewn back
for pure love of life we fucked in their bed
before dawn you went back to your room
dry eyed

next time we went to that house as strangers
we tried to tell your mother who we were
but she wouldn't believe us
we zipped the bags together and slept on the living
room floor. she saw us in the morning
on her way out to mass. the first time
we slept together without making love

on figueroa mtn. with child and a dog

we gathered pinecones then got under my old blanket
on the horizon i saw rocks not quite touching
the dog straddled us dripping saliva he was
leaning against my head when i came
then he trotted off somewhere

your eyes moved open and close
opened and closed
ocelot all ocelot
and the little girl utterly silent
moving down the slope of a hill
toward where the sun should be

"O blush not so! O blush not so!
Or I shall find you knowing;
And if you smile the blushing while,
Then maidenheads are going."

-- Keats

that summer there was a dinner party
we turned out to be the only guests
down my shoulder the town & harbor
but your eyes never left mine except to pour
for three hours we drank wine & said everything we knew
then i came around the table & touched your foot
just where the bee had stung it
one night a month later my wife stood & said
I think it's time you two left

i'm tired of explaining to tired friends
then going home to wail it in the shower
Telling It All to the Elephant Lady every tuesday night

"Just fuck the bitches man," Sir Charles says
and two weeks ago when Benjamin told me
you were living with your shrink
the first thing i thought was
she always was more practical than me

somehow we ended up naked outside the cabin
lying on the walk our heads against the door
smelling the orangetree ten feet away
hearing Nikolai's guitar sound on night

our heads were soft rocks just touching
we giggled touched tongues and giggled
the night was full of hands

-- Sanford Dorbin

Santa Barbara, CA

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