MAYA-SONG

By

Kerry Shawn Keys
Lightyears ago I relinquished the thought of ever describing in words what poetry is. When penned, suddenly the animal would bound out tearing through the deadliest of barbwire, oblivious to the most diaphanous of definitions. Easier to say what the heart of poetry is: speech dancing into music; the semantics of milk and blood; silence and the resonance coupling Truth and Beauty...aha, too many words already, and what I might have said already escapes me.

—Kerry Shawn Keys
Frames
...keeping for you since...time...you
can see it in the eyes

Looking at your photo
at the age of five, six, seven,
who knows, staring so
intensely at me, beautiful
Absynnian lips, silken braids,
white-buttoned, rumpled sweater
with another underneath,
the background a silent wall
of clouds, a flat, or studio,
the black frame resting
on my lap, your pupils
half-black, half-white
from the flashback of light,
the irises hazel I suppose,
the cornea white as snow,

staring so, not seeing me
nor the space I inhabit
eye-level with the window,
exposed to the cold
Northern light of an artist's dream
seemingly framing us
into its presence...

and yet you see nothing,
as I close my eyes
and see it all.
Sunset Copulative

Sunset In Gotland

the sun sets pink
into a red sea...
it was your first
time
wasn't it.

Sunset Song

in this greenhouse of my careful existence
all months are the cruelest month

in that illusion of an illusion
let this testament be writ on dirt

this orchid creeping from my chest
the perfect homegrown parasite

its tentacles take in
what little light that's left

and its odorless white blossom
smells like death
Sojourn In Space

in-between the soul of a grass-snake and an oak
there is a buzzard bigger than the sky

in-between the sheets and the sunrise
there is a girl bearing a turtle’s song

in-between the rope and the target
there is an air of silence in the green room

in-between the actor and the chairs
there is a polygon resting on the script

in-between the two of them
there is a cross, a cow, and a fly

there is a bee, there is honey

in-between the door and the doorway
there is a nothing better to do
Into Radiance

It goes on under whatever it is
not said, under the skin, the leather and silk,
the way words work themselves
toward the heart......into the vernacular
of love, your flowering
now mine, ours, evergreen, there is
no changing the song still
sleeping now next to the flowers
that haven’t fallen,
that shine deep-blue in the night,
next to our breathing,
and it’s a celestial manger scene and it’s not
with your pet-sparrow singing
in its finger-tipped-woven nest,
and your breathing an evening raga
running down our skin like soft snowflakes
becoming rain, and I hear voices
that are not ours, and I smell the moss
of your sex, your thighs, up under
the arms like wild arum, a marsh flower
deep with the musk of wildness, the blond, downy fur,
a scent of fear and pleasure and ecstasy. Take it
with me, take it with me, dear......
how we are ours all night, and the mystery
is the slow, slowly
coming
into radiance,
and the slow, slow
sun on parole at the window—aubade, alba, whiteness—
and we sip tea and coffee
open our eyes to dress ourselves
in the unrefined honey of morning
and say yes we are ours at this moment
and the snow melts ever so slow
down the window
and we lean our bodies into one another
into the wishing-well
of liquid light.
Elemental Earth

“overhead the banches(sic) were tangled”
from Borges, “The Garden of Forking Paths”

Is it bunches or are they branches.
Birch? Do they flutter and say
let’s make love on the balcony
on the buckboard and count
the forest of stars backwards.
Is it art or elemental earth ungloved,
trapped by a bunch of swinging grapes.
The elemental earth receives all paths
diverging as they come together again.
The bearable weight of complexity is not
so simple as this tangle of trees.
The sunrise is as close as this story.
The lowlands are swamped with a terrible moon.
An arrow. A sparrow. For your canvas, my Love.
Through-Passengers

Uqbaring Passing Through

Round airy-light on dark
not not-burdock
blue-beating almost pulse-quiet
now vanishing door-way-less now

Day of Days On Orbis Tertius

the windows of earth opening wide
the milky flush of your breasts
ever sweeter as we pass through
this silken blue oval rising sun
Chimerical Garden

Nautch-Girl Nectar

“tarati”

You’ll return to me
through water
not like a fish
from lake or lagoon
but like a flower
on the half-shell
in the sunrise
covered with dew

I’ll swim here
in this pool
drawn by the honey

gulfed in amber

a million years
Renaissance Woman Remembers The Red Light

Once again
my remontant rose
your clothes slipping off
in a dream
to the floor
as you mount
your whore
taking me
over and over
so many seasons
of fragrance
pressed into
one.
Audit

The click and clack of bamboo.
I breathe this sound after seasons of sweeping
   my own dust out over dry grass.
And the too close chirp of the cricket signifying
   that I've been reading too much, mixing
   my father's lungs with asbestos and semiotics.
It's been a long time—twenty years.
Here I hear the silence surrounding the snow.
I hear the cough of something dead.
My own blood playing hide-and-seek.
I hear the feather of your dream-catcher
   dangle from your ear to brush a sparrow.
I hear the flame at the tip of the green candle
   and the pounding of my heart.
I hear your footsteps halt at the door,
   and your voice, Lord, calling me
   to come out and play in the dark.
"And Now..."

It went on and on.
Eye saw you.
Mouth swaying.
Clay and pollen. Pollen into stars. Stars were bees with blue paint in their hives.
It went on and on.
Translucent eye saw you.
A thinness accumulated in everything.
The basic ideogram was a rainbow where Krishna would lie down.
Eye saw you with Lord Krishna.
One pupil was a pastel. The other a fresco.
Your glasses are on the magic rug in your boots.
No, they're on the table.
No, they're in the forest of blindness.
No, you're wearing them inside-out.
It went on and on.
A thickness accumulated inside the proportions of innocence.
Metaphor abstracted itself from the mouth and hovered like a balloon attached to tooth.
Eye saw you chop off a wing, swallowing arches turning back into clay.
Liberation is the word, that slow curve of blood into air.
It goes on and on.
When the box opens, you will be whole again.