

Wintersong

The sun has made its way behind the sea, slowly, its colors, its reds and its golds like fall leaves falling in a stream, and gone Winter winds slide across the water, their movements circular like ghosts, dancers maybe from long ago, or just last year. They enter this thin jacket, we share it, we've shared this coat before, and overhead a thousand little lights begin to shine. Behind me stands a moon as cold as bone and flat as a plate, glowing like a promise, a magic dream, maybe. Or maybe not-- the moon is tricky, and so is the sea. It's wild in this windy winter night, like chests of silver coin, heaved and scattered, a perpetual largesse upon the shore.

Tonight, though, it's those trees that catch my eye, the ones up on that hilltop over there, glowing in the moonlight, stately, serene, comfortably what they are, and patient with the infinite patience of all things that are not human. Are they the ones? If they are I'll miss them, and would rather they remain as they are than transformed to numbers in some rich man's bank account.

Somewhere, though, inside their midst I see the brightness of a far-off fire, one filled with power, but contained, restrained inside the circle etched out on the grass there, inside the darkness of that woodland I can make out shadows round that fire of dancers, silhouetted revelers, and I can hear the sounds of pipes and drums, and laughter, and giddy conversation covering those winter sprites like snow. It's that time of year you know, solstice time, when the constant cold, the ever-present fact of sacrifice prompts the finer blossoms of the human spirit to bloom and show their beauty.

Long ago, long, long ago, before the ignominy of the cross, long before the corporate takeover of this bone-chilling time of human need, we celebrated the year's smallest day like the babe it was, and as birth should be greeted we danced and sang and laughed about the happy times to come. The forest was where we met and mated in the cold and made our stand of innocence. Sometimes I think how things are now, this time when we have too much of what we do not need, and do not have enough of what's essential, water that is good to drink, and air that's pleasurable to breathe. And forestland to walk inside, safe places for spirits of long-ago ancestors to rest, bark for them to wear in winter until they choose to shed it, choose to rejoin us in our moonlit revels round the fire that is older than humanity, that winter fire that warms us in these times of dark, that keeps our faces pink, smiling, until the far-off southern sun returns to shine again upon our constant sea.

--Bill Clunie

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Lorna

The ocean carves sensual, ovarian holes  
In the cliff surrounding and protecting  
The curves of the woman  
Over the bottom  
Shadowing the starfish  
Palming stones rolled round through milleniums  
Of frictional, flowing of salt and water  
Wind carving, pounding  
Removing land's foundation  
Preparing the feast for eyes  
Running fingers through openings  
Bowl like carvings  
Where vacancy between  
Becomes the function  
To fill with eyes, hands, imagination  
Scars made beautiful, beauty scarred  
Lessons speaking through ancient human gills  
Scales floating out to sea with the sand

--Mary L. Misel

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