

ANNE WALDMAN

Eleven Faces One Thousand Arms

So goes: first, *shape*
The creation --
A mist from the earth,
The whole face of the ground;
The *rhythm* –
And breathed breath of life;
Then *style* –
That from the eye its function takes –
“taste” we say – a living soul.
First glyph; then syllabary,
Then letters. Ratio after
Eyes, tale in sound. First, dance. Then
Voice. First, body –to be seen and to pulse
Happening together.
Before the void there was
Being nor non-being;
Desire, came warmth,
Or which, first?
Until the sages looked in their hearts
For the kinship of what is in what is not.
Or in the heart or in the head?
Quire after over three millennia.

Louis Zukofsky, “A”-12

Doubt did I doubt what did I doubt a circle or a cloud or a raw mix, cameras in the trees, what did the Pleistocene say about the notion of “outrider”? (Am I one of those? was what the Pleistocene said.) No such think-pursuit as “just” no such problem as “just”, just what you make of it individually with your compromised ethics and rehabilitation plan, not your quaint Victorian Pleistocene trying to walk a straight line. Rhetorical devices being as shards are, as middens are, the Cold War gestures are still coming, freezing us half to death as rhetoric is, did I not doubt that this work could scar the western world half to death with its relics? But what is “just” what is “doubt” . I did doubt gender in any passing literary indeterminacy’s irony as an old page (scribed, layered by the night and candle, by the oil of resilience) did doubt itself as myself representing “person” “poet” and as person better dare to be part of the history of your time. We were pre-occupied with the problems of the city states. Me too, me too. And Hiroshima? And Lebanon? New Orleans?

Farewell, my friends, I send you this honey mixed with white milk...

Or Arab poetics shifting and becoming modern in the 8th century. How you want it, early or late. Manly or queenly? Internal or external? Centripetal or centrifugal? Are we talking about a globe or a planet?

Whatever happened could be most grateful and forever in homage to then epic (Ionian) and the asiatic that would present tragic and comic dimensions of the human dilemma. I hoped to do that. It was the primordial inclination and composed in such a way for recitation of rapsodes to raise your temperature. You take my heat?

1. 108 butter lamps lit in the Kathmandu Valley for a father's passing
2. The all-girl Muslim prom in the US of A faced Mecca and the girls dined on a nice pasta
3. Politically incorrect Minister bows at a Shinto shrine

Down with the fathers

How can you...

I mean the burden

detritus on the corridor
rails on the backs of men

As if a spine could be...

down with them

How manage a way back
down

meander?

Metropolii on the hirsute line

DC Baltimore Philadelphia New Haven Newark New York

Boston where we prayed

what did I see when I was then

meandering

their end their ravage

their testosterone

down with them

cruelty of the plan

curtsy = duty

& the *pater familias* form stripped as train jolts

mistakes to reorient rhetoric by

an industrial reve

came so surely

mid-City scrap froth

scum

middens everywhere

clutter

broken stuff

piles of other life forms

what is it to love a fox?

more organized, our founders

father's mouth flounders poem

Where of protest?

2 white egrets (passing New London now)

then boats

pink clouds so evanescent you could weep

signpost what comment?

What connects this day to any other?

"we you I will all cyborgs be"

the green scientist said in her green scientist's voice

(a secret cell on the quiet rail car told her so)

& of uranium bullets back to haunt the children dead for their
country

down with

this?

bullet train to Kyoto

Bi-furcation familiar now, wiles of the patriarch embedded inside

conditions to put up with

There's a way Cixious de-configures through the examples of the family or

machinery's function, wartime karma

rapes in the Congo or unquiet bones of Japanese ancestors

pugnacious with a post-modern Blake-ness

& blanched white as rice powder

But is this voice speaking merely to a specialized audience?

can you hear me in the back?

down under?

(Hey ho, ghost)

Inside master iteration shares a common language

as in Help get me out of here

heterogeneity not possible in this Noh play

modest whistle announces

coming to arrest

dusk

it's coming

in consideration of all systems down: dusk

all pleasures of the U.S. of A at dusk

sailboats, say

or game courts in a Heian dream

Stonington Lumber whose existence is a privilege

mansion by the water's edge

could you bet on this as ransom

going cloud, rock, come again

going silver water

scree bouncy un-peopled universe traveling over

I said it was certainly dusk

going of no other haiku mind but dusk

& fluidity of dusk could be warmed by Buddhism

toward you

please talk a little

if you feel up to it

Was it to be in consideration of

your motherhood undone an heroic turn by entropy's dystopia?

the adaptation of the female, for example

in an interrogation of human *papillomavirus*

when nucleic acid inserts itself into host cells

for an invasion carried in you, poison as fluidity

is never apt

though it alter the normal process of cell division

or protect the innocents

wracked upon these coarse waves

Someone poignant said

“ we must feel compassion for our being the remnants of super novas”

& down with the torturers of innocents...

body replaces nerve cells with spirocete tails in the sperm

inward to Dogtown

Pen swap. Who to argue with? An essay on birds. What kind? The Sewage Treatment Plant will assist you in your tribulation to understand antecedents. So what has been built up for you in the hounded text so pointedly worked on all afternoon? What tit for tat? Tit of text tit willow holds attention as a libation o the sense of text. She hooks the reader in. Doing the very thing she does not dare espouse. What is a democratic language? Would we have to begin to be gone in a dare?

Dear Karen,

Unresolved inter-connected-nesses, the need for the ancestor shrines, the way the imagination keeps playing back old (I am still stuck in romantic Heian period with Genji, Sei Shonagon, the sad diary called “Kagero Nikki”) yet newly activated images – holocaust/Hiroshima/pachinko parlors. How does all this play here? And what to make of it? “do” with it? “Do” anything? Is part of the poet’s vow to perpetually catch, distill, refine, re-imagine where one walk, what one notices? Plus all the verbal wordplay and associations.

The mysterious Noh plays’ court backdrop re-configures kingship/emperor/god/patriarchal power paradigm, and also- which is more important – engages “no action” which is what goes between the singing, music, stage movements.

The big gap.

“Life and death, past and present—
Marionettes on a toy stage.
When the strings are broken,

Behold the broken pieces!”

-Zeami Motokiyo (b. 1363), author of many No plays

Human life transmigrating between life and death.

So based -- but remember this is extremely evolved, refined art -- on much older shamanic/bardo death rites (which is where I am locating a lot of my work) and confrontation involving encounters like animal spirits. And making/imitating those sounds of the animal. Modal structures. Though I have recently been impersonating robots. But is it all like Kingfisher/wasteland. Are we just always writing in our Culture of Death? The old wounds/ yearnings must be healed so the land will thrive? So everything can “go on”. My former Naropa student poet Kenji, here, as we were riding the Chuo train line, says emphatically “No more Kings!” which continues this line of theistic thinking re: death, its cycles. Those power mongers sleep with Death, using it all the time to keep us enthralled, in state of perpetual fear. Can we not do that? So I write to get out of my own Empire of Death and Fear which is what I told students last summer. Help! No more margins on this page, the unconditional charnel ground.

Use of what we do? relative to these cultural studies? I often wish I had been a serious archeologist. What is this self-appointed poet job? is it always simple – on one level - re-act/ response mode, which is why I have been so grateful to be out of USA a spell and consequently not so primed to re-act, spout all the time what everyone in Our Camp knows, constantly replaying the delusion of the Masters of War, their version of reality mimicking, commenting on their euphemistic vocabulary etcetera and recounting my own Nightmares. vis a vis Them. What a bore. Not to ever forget their horrific deeds I will continue to record those in Iovis 3.

And what will the extraordinary richness of this “culture” – these cultures – which

includes praxis, religion manners and mores bring? I am obviously excited.

Kyoto: Rampant with syncretic layers. Fox shrine had it in mind back in a time when animals roamed and we were one with them. What is it to love a fox? Brought to mind the rat shrine in Calcutta, the bat shrines in Bali... saw/intuit resonance with stuff in Indonesia/Polynesia in the Shinto shrines- the animist/ancestor deal, now unfortunately associated with Japanese nationalism as the prime minister keeps honoring the Shinto place (in Tokyo) where WW II war criminals are “enshrined”.

Most affected by Hall of the 1001 Kannon bodhisattvas, named “Sanjusangendo”, founded originally 1164 A.D., rebuilt after a fire in 1266. 390 feet long, 54 feet wide. In the center is the chief image of Kannon (Quanyin, Avalokitesvara) with eleven faces and one thousand arms, 11.5 feet high. On both sides of him/her stand very close together, ready for “action” – like an army – 1000 more images of Kannon with multiple arms and accoutrements. The idea is an army of compassion.

The rock gardens - raked white pebbles - don't necessarily resemble anything and offer a nice conundrum. Like looking at Abstract Expressionism.

And on.

What are you studying? What does your world look like?

I wish I had a thousand arms.

symbiosis: a 4.6 billion year tradition, telling the day's events, sitting around the sun.

Love,

Anne-Grasping-the-Broom-More-Tightly-Than-Ever-Now

from Iovis 3: Colors In the Mechanism of Concealment

Have brought
me
back
to my
self

him?

alive
for a
night

picture him, the wastes of

no, Taoist look

him

strung the belongings
down
whir
spring abuts
demand:

March 18, 1997

I needed to make a quick exit from New York City. I got caught up again in a methadone nightmare, it was hell getting off. Now I'm 3 months clean. I've moved to another center, near Toulouse in the South of France, of the same association. The weather is great (at least lately), the quality of life much better than in Trouville (Verlaine and Rimbaud once roamed the countryside there). I have more time to write here (but it's still hard going).

Things worked out in the job department. They still want me! (They must be crazy). And I may receive disability \$ while I'm here. I go back to work July 1.

My rhythms have slowed down here in France, the life I left behind in New York seems distant like some half-remembered dream. I breezed through the city of Toulouse yesterday, a nice small city with lots of pretty French students roaming the streets.

Life is a bit difficult living in a community, at least for me. I miss my solitude (as well as a host of other things).

There are only 3 Americans here, the others are Spanish, Slovenian, French, and Portuguese. I speak either English or Italian. I'm still resisting the French language which feels totally foreign (bad pun) on my tongue.

Lots of love, Elio

My new address (till mid-June):
Chateau de Ruble
Gimat
82500 Beaumont De Lomagne
France

& she, the oracle, said Muster men for war...

where relationships are fluid
marked by time at war

(let it down, let it down -

firebooting on the fringes of civilization

cool war, calculated terror, pyramid of severed human heads

this Tartar life, this endless war...

& tall soft boots

& he wore a tunic

when in the east the steppe is higher

a long belted coat
quilted, or fur-lined

& if one felt if he were a Scythian he could be that for you

a turban against the summer sun

come up a steppe, come up

& rode a small horse

rather a pony hardier than a horse

& fought from that horse

with efficient bow

on the left

& arrows

in a quiver on the right

If he is rich, this one, ~a sword or saber

But never underestimate the power of the bow

From Iovis, an epic poem, forthcoming from Coffee House Press, 2009