



Mercurial Dream

By Wayne Visser

We find ourselves on a path, walking side by side through a lush forest. The first thing I notice is that my senses are heightened. The colourful textures of the flowers are more vivid, the subtle interplay of the light on the leaves is more noticeable, the dank humus of the spongy soil is more palpable, the harmonic sounds of the birds are more clear. I am also more aware of you. The steady rhythm of your breathing, the sheen of perspiration on your forehead, the rouge of exertion on your cheeks, the intoxicating smell of your body. Your vital presence.

As I open my mouth to speak, I find that all the words of all the great poets are known to me. More remarkable still, I can speak only in these rhymes, effortlessly selecting the perfect words to express what I am trying to say. I speak of the beauty of creation, and pause when I sense you wish to respond. I find it entirely natural that you too speak in the language of the poets. But as you start to speak, the environment around us begins to change. First, just inflections of colour are different. Then, the scenery itself begins to morph.

By the time you complete your lilting verse, which is about evolution, we are walking along the eroded floor of a deep canyon. You point out the layers of rock, each with a different hue, each with a different story to tell. As we focus on each different strata in turn, we hear them whisper of complex pasts and possible futures. You talk about layers within layers. I in turn speak of the elasticity of time and as I do, the light changes, as if the sun is setting over this terrestrial cleavage in the earth. Suddenly, I become acutely aware of your erotic sensuality. Transfixed by your skin, bathed in afterglow, I feel the change in my breath.

A momentary glance tells me you have noticed. My senses take over. I long to touch your face gently with the back of my hand; I yearn to lightly trace the outline of your cheek with my finger; I ache to feel the kiss of your probing tongue; I lust to bite your lip and taste its sweet blood. As the tidal gravitation of emotions washes over me, the sky changes colour in a spectacular aurora borealis display. The swirling eddies of my desires are reflected in the horizon, as it turns from blue to purple, to orange, to crimson. Finally, I summon the courage to act, but it is too late. In an instant, all has turned to black. Blind in the sudden darkness, I withdraw by my trembling hand and it brushes against your wrist. A bolt of current surges through my body, and I imagine that I saw a spark leap between us, but my mind immediately questions the honesty of my highly charged senses.

The moment of fire passes and leaves a chill in its place. The night air has cooled rapidly and even the stars that pierce the nothingness seem cold. You are speaking in rhyme again, your voice more distant now, almost strangled. Your words are about loss and as I strain to hear them, I am filled by an overwhelming sense of desolation. I have no words in reply. I can only listen, as the words echo and fade. I am aware that the scene has changed again. The canyon has been swallowed up by a vast desert.





As the moon rises, and the mood shifts, I can just make out the silhouette of enormous sand dunes on the horizon, as far as the panoramic eye can see. A hollowness wells up in my chest, and claws from my mouth as words of loneliness. As I speak, in a rasping whisper, my throat is unbearably parched, my tongue, like sandpaper. I yearn with every fibre for cool, crystal clear water, yet my thirst remains unquenched. In desperation, I drink in the soothing moonlight that is the tiniest glint reflected in your eyes, and the grip around my throat seems to ease ever so slightly. For what seems like eternity, we sit opposite on the sand, looking at one another, unable to move, unable to speak. We are frozen in time, bound by space. My only thought is: 'so this is the dark night of the soul'.

Eventually, I become vaguely aware of a rumble. Far away at first, but getting closer, and louder. I feel the vibration in my chest. It is a frightening sound. I see panic in your eyes and it resonates with the knot in my stomach. It is you who first breaks the silence. Your poem is about fear and I echo with words about anxiety. Soon, the roar of thunder has reached fever pitch and we have to shout to make ourselves heard. Suddenly, a bolt of lightning strikes the ground between us with an almighty crack. The pitch black of night is momentarily ablaze with searing white heat. With adrenaline still pumping, I become aware that I have been left deaf and blind. Fearing for your life, I scramble forward. When I find your searching hands, I burst into tears of relief. As I do, the heavens open and torrential rain begins to fall.

From fear to anxiety; from panic to relief. Now, with rain stinging our faces, we are flooded with feelings of wild jubilation and incoherent joy. Hands clasped, we dance in the rain like mad people, shouting and screaming and laughing hysterically. We dance and we dance and we dance, until we fall down exhausted and giggling in a heap.

Lying on our backs, filled with contentment, I become conscious that it is not sand, but soft grass, beneath us. And the rain has stopped. I hear the cry of a falcon and open my eyes. The sun is shining brightly and the desert has bloomed, transformed from a barren wasteland into a kaleidoscope of incandescence.

I glance across at you and see that you have also awoken to this new day. The poetry of transcendence that you are speaking is sublime, and yet your lips are not moving. I hear you in my head. Simultaneously, I realise that poetic words of ancient alchemists are streaming from my consciousness and I know that you hear them also. As the realisation of connectivity dawns on us, we both smile. I wink at you. You burst into laughter. I wake up. My pillow is wet, but there is a smile on my face and a glow in my heart. I get out of bed, knowing that my soul has wings.



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