

Carlomar Arcangel Daoana

*Two to Tango & Other Poems*



**Prayer**

At this edge (must be), the altar of the world  
(Given), a pile of words & significances tight  
As houses, light-ambushed & rain-cohered,  
I invoke your pure delight & luminosity, boy  
In a red jacket, registering as both breath &  
Emergency, as the bus dips—sideways—  
Into the three o'clock road. See you neither  
Falling nor swimming in the fog, simply,  
Standing & staring with no heft of purpose,  
Just gazing, marvelously, letting time precipitate  
As your slow body tilts toward the dissolved:  
Landscape bereft of contradictions. I call to you  
Instead of the muse, not just because we share  
The same millennium, the same hollowed-out  
Clouds of the unhinged city, but because—  
Let me put it this way: You venerate lostness.  
You know how to stop, & stopping, the blur  
Is summoned from the details, & the unknown  
Rolls like the spokes of white wheels, &  
Something gets polished inside you & what shines  
Is a small, incalculable belief in the little bit.

This morsel is what sustains me so the words  
May come with blood in them—reprehensible,  
Inert in many ways, hopefully human. As for you:  
A revelation of salt, earth & the curved sky  
Hiding beneath all this white. So bless me.  
Restore me to my edgedness. Intervene  
Against the wind shutting down the flames &  
The roses in my head. As soon I hit forehead  
Against the page, you should have known:  
That I write because you exist on the other side,  
Smoldering with a life that stays put (the way  
You want it) complete & incomparable  
In the total mist, needing me not one bit.

### **Diva**

Whoever denies this world and wishes for another one—  
Less mattered, light-lifted—is committing a serious mistake.  
How can you, for the sweet aching life of you, unravel a river  
Which is a scarf studded with sequins or dismantle the threads  
Of winter evoked as a white coat the elms don with such élan?  
Each time you caress petals and poems, are you not simply  
Reaching out to softness, to brightly-colored words,  
The rainbowed stones scattered in the inside sleeve of earth?  
Even angels and saints can be found in every drifting snow,  
On the windowpane to which a child has intimated his breath,  
The kingdom of smoke in each blown city. Ice is absolute—  
The transparent architecture of water—as well as our bodies.  
What we call morning is not a state of mind but really light  
About to cascade on the flowing robes of oceans and ranges.  
Things need not be anointed: from the brief blue flame  
To the raging meteorite, from the fire-orange cat in the kitchen  
To the mauve-plumed birds heading towards the certainty  
Of summer. Oh, how definite is the lightning, the metals  
Of scissors, the red velvet carpet the autumn spreads out  
As death, magnificent in his blind horse, gallops along.  
Surface is all: mineral, fur, shimmer, gold, feather, snakeskin,  
Even blood spilled declares its valid intentions. We walk

On grounds impeccable as gravity which licks every apple  
About to fall or not. Why not lean your body towards  
The clap of thunder, the rumor of waves? Why not delight  
In lush, in rough and tumble, in tough and order? After all,  
The arrogance of things visible is unshameable, insisting  
Its accordions, its agendas, its army of knives. I can't  
Understand this wish for the beyond when the beyond  
Is merely a set of brandished new conditions, a country  
With eloquent churches and people with flawless smiles.  
We are meant to tumble outwards: words and orgasms.  
Spilling, somersaulting, securing, our thoughts don't service  
Untouchable palaces; our tongues pay more homage to skin  
Than gods. Hospitable heaven is mankind's greatest fallacy.  
Here is the only world, the adorable queen we love, until  
We shed our sensation-drenched bodies and off we swim  
Back to a womb, stalactite-cool, dripping, without exit.

### **Fashionista's Soliloquy of a Landscape**

Yes, it's gorgeous—gorgeous in such a way  
That you don't have to insert anything more.

If you do, the landscape, the tilted horizon,  
Would look less pretty like a vase of severely cut,

Immaculately primmed daffodils. If only they were  
Let to wear the robes they were born with, their heads

Would be shining, like the sun above this,  
Only more ... scintillating. But some pruning,

Some gentle revision of the land would not be  
Such a bad idea, like the notion of eternal delight.

Perhaps, some further depth of color at the margin,  
Some more fire in the pines will do. Or maybe,

The clouds could hang low, bruise the tip  
Of the mountain which, oddly, is chiseled

In such a way that the left slope looks like  
Cragged ladder, broken teeth, an angle of anguish.

Oh, if only the angels in their flawlessness  
Could come down and airbrush it, perhaps,

We would be closer to heaven, applepie-scented  
And white as unbruised light. Unlike here,

Where the light dripping in some concealed corners  
Of the sky, makes shadows appear impotent,

All those huddling ghosts at the center  
Of what can only be called a brief apparition

Of civilization. Who was it, the Chinese philosopher  
Who hazarded, *You can't add anything more*

*To the universe?* What does thought serve  
If not to disrupt the sluggish flow of matter,

To manicure nature, to let scenes such as this  
Become digital camera-perfect because

Our comment bears the brunt of how things  
Should be perceived? Isn't the world

A made-over home? If only a road well-paved  
Snakes from there and gets lost somewhere

The landscape would have been more *suitable*  
And I will soak it all, calling it a fabulous idea.

## **Garment**

*After Portrait of Adele Bloch Bauer I by Gustav Klimt*

There are women inseparable from their garment  
As if the threads had been worked into their entire being  
And the body has no choice but to convey solely surface,

Spun gold and ornamented silver such as in the case  
Of Adele Bloch-Bauer, a glittering fish of a woman,

Her hair one concluding motion of the drowned. Look at her  
And see what Klimt had probably visualized in his mind  
Amid a background of disintegrating copper: neck  
Waylaid by metal, necessarily so, in order that the wrist  
May bend at an angle and all the slim fingers ringed

With nothing are entangled into a gesture of madness,  
One entire braceleted arm kept close to the side so that  
What should be unsaid may remain unsaid because  
Life is one complete loop whose center is silence. The feet  
Are honorably absent, understandably so, because

The painting is not sprung from the earth but from  
The froth of the invisible, what the scattering regime  
Of light has left behind—flecks and spirals, perfect  
Geometries of occurrences—leading one to think  
That she is exactly where she should be, at the dull,

Corroding tip of history. Her skirt spilling into isosceles,  
The warp and weft of her fixity, she is not, however,  
Forever unshameable despite the lips that may betray so.  
Witness the slow corruption of the skin as though  
Her blood, at this very instance, is tainted with rust,

Or perhaps it's just meant to mimic gold because  
The flesh is as unstable, has its own boiling point.  
No matter, there are consumptions that are inevitable,  
And not all sadnesses are diagonal like rain. Her gaze,  
Underlined by ailment, is at once certain and insistent,

And what happened between her death and this event  
Is nothing but the polite gesticulation of the self. What  
Will triumph is not art but the shiny foil that wraps it:  
The portrait, stolen by the Nazis and restored to her  
Familiar, was sold for a princely sum. She must be proud.