

The Dream Temple

Please take a moment to enjoy this dream/parable from my novel *Time Saw a Fly*. Our instincts can cast a shadow of evil and abomination if we shame them, or be the wellspring of hope, truth and ascension, should we choose to embrace them rightly.

As Sam fell asleep he could feel her, feel the night come to him pregnant with mysteries, adorned with fragrance and color wrapped in darkness. The night came to him, sweet and yielding, full and engorged with light and shadow, fat to bursting, each silent moment, pregnant, hiding and dark bent down in silence, and bestowed the night's awakening kiss, night's sweetness, her light wrapped in folds of darkness—and so did she dream of him.

Sam saw the temple, an alabaster stone monolith, smooth and unperturbed it stretched into the azure sky, its arching columns and the seamless unbroken sweep of the crowning pale white dome of stone and sun, as but a reflection of the vastness and promise of a hollow unknown hope, a question too large, empty, beautiful and aching, a question which can not be asked, too broad to hold as it arches over the sky...but must be answered. The turquoise Greek letters above the temple entryway were unknown, but familiar.

He knew she was there without looking—the slender vase of a goddess who held sway here, pale and delicate, she had every key hidden in her carelessness and her serenity, Sam's soul lightly held in her delicate ivory fingers, fingers which opened Sam's soul up, spread it open as a fan is slowly opened to reveal its pleated heart as a bashful wind of still breath stirs it to life in the hidden currents of whispered breezes, so did she know him. Her light already exhaled, unseen and laughing, to know him with each breath he drew, he sipped her light into his soul and danced as a fan gladly knows itself, the pleats and folds, the secret intimacies of its webbed gossamer broquet catching and shedding the light, alive and shimmering with her breath, an autumn bruised, a fall leaf dancing with the teasing breath of annihilation, spun light and a last tug of breath pull, pluck it into the air to dance with the cool pale light, to warm the fallen sun with rose and know itself for the moments as it falls. She looked into him and spoke: "This is your temple."

The words hung in a terrible stillness, an unquenchable quiet flattened him and narrowed Sam's soul into a dark sunken thing, small and tight, flat, cloistered and small, thick and mute with fear. She revealed the door. He pressed himself through the keyhole into an immense narrow darkness, stultifying and slick with an unbearable sweetness, the lidded nausea so over ripe and narrow, slick and double thick to breathe this over ripe rotten air, cupped into itself, sick and hidden behind and under itself so twice sweet and double rotten. Sam squeezed the black oily spirit of his hope between the dirty cracks and pressed into the heart of the edifice, so white and broad in the day, so narrow and putrid within. In the very center of the temple, Sam found them: The three sisters of his hell. Ugly and knotted, their blotched skin so hidden and sloughed, a disgrace that hides and oozes under the weight, the gravity and weight of unlookable eternal shame... which knows.

The first head spoke to him: "I am here for you, little one! Behold, for I am your secret! Do you still wish to know me? I am what makes the sun warm and the sky arching and blue, I am the eternal hope in torment, beauty itself spilled into life's most gracious cup of dawn, I am all illusion which knows better than truth and so is named 'hope,' I am you!" And Sam saw her and knew this terrible knotted visage, the hideous vile countenance which had wrapped itself in darkness and disgrace before all mortal souls— Sam saw the face of Lust! Her foul, shameful breath of fetid, lurking desire, staining all pure moments with her leering sultry filth and hollow scratching need which must be born! So has shame known and named her: Lust!

And now the next head of the dragon-witch spoke: "I am a sweetness in your breast as well, little one, oh yes, I am again your secret, yes twice again! I am all which rules the sky and orders the day, I am the law of strength and balance which has found its way, I am the wisdom of victory and the sure heart of your soul." Sam looked upon the mottled grimacing mound of filthy flesh with its bloody brown eyes and the dull hate leaking out from within their lying gaze. He smelled the rotten, putrid bloody drains of a thousand wars and a thousand sewers, the pleasure and hatred of the worst of man, the camps of the Nazis and the heaps of skulls under the gentle watchful eye of the eternal tyrant, Sam saw the blood soaked vile serpent of man's most putrid and shameful appetites proudly trumpeted as virtue. Sam saw the face of sadism, cruelty and evil, so did shame call them and so was she known to him— Cruelty itself leered out at him and from its dark lips came the words, "Know me, for I am you!"

And the third head spoke unto him: "Know me too little one, for I am peace and resting, I am release, and of all things well and freshly done, I am the purpose, the countenance of cool repose, the reason. Oh yes, I am your finest hope and your best promise. I am peace." And Sam saw this last and worst of his three demons, she was terrible and unblinking, cold, sure and uncaring, black, mouldering, putrid and devouring without noticing, shame saw all needs summed in a single blackness, a single hunger, a pinprick where all appetites and defeats converge to annihilate even each other, leaving only hunger itself—and shame knew her and hid her, and so from under the darkness of shame she spoke unto Sam, "I am your highest gift for mankind and your highest hope: I am Death, and you hunger for one thing alone, little one... Me!" And so did Death speak to Sam, sick and hollow, hidden under the dark lidded curtain of immutable shame, sealed within this sepulcher, this splendid, breathless, alabaster tomb.

"If this is a temple, it is a temple of shame! A temple of false appearances, smooth white sun and pure walls which hide and house, seal and sustain every hiding, lying shame which fouls all of life! If this is my temple, I proclaim it a temple of shame and lies!" Sam swept his hand in an arc of circumference and the ceiling of darkness split open in a peal of laughter and he knew he had found it! Sam slit open the very belly of shame and beheld them—the three witches who under the brooding oily lid of shame had threatened to consume him with their knowledge, now unfolded themselves and poured their glad waters before him, nourishing all the land. The hideous head of Lust was born pure and golden, white and ice, deepest blue and rich purple, thick, wet and drenched

through, soaked with color and bubbling to overflowing are the waters of Eros, now all of the world subtle and glowing, crimson and swelling, falling and rouged in amber dusk, so did Eros embrace and enfold, encircle from without and enfold from within, as a pure silver stream did she spread her clear and colored waters to gladden the land, to enrich all sunken and lofty worlds and bring to the earth its reason, its rejoicing, its unknown promise. So is Lust revealed as Eros once born into day, once released from the fetid womb of darkest shame!

From the shamed form of cruelty came a proud golden ax and staff: The tools to do and to see done. And so is a man's will, his hope. In discipline is forged our triumph, our new day is earned laboring at her forge! And so did the forge of Sam's will glow cherry red with hope and the ascending waters of light, hope and all futures made real spring forth from this forge and stream upward, flowing into the sweep of the sky, red and sure, golden and right. Once born out into the light of day so does our will master the world, or become cruelty once shamed and made impotent.

From the sunken ugly head of Death came the brightest spring of all, the sun itself! A golden white river of light pouring into the vaulting heavens and filling all the empty void above with light and its pure speeding white hope, forced into brightness, burst into a spattering of yellow brass and white molten metal, liquid platinum and quicksilver light crushed into being by the very weight of death itself! So is death the spring of man's eternal striving and urgency, his quicksilver spring of hope and light itself born under the black footfall of death! Ahhh...the very reason for light is born in these leaden steps, immutable and barren, sure and unyielding, the tragic and meaningless blots of gravity that are the footfall which awaken the light in the heart of man! What but anguish could cause such pleasure, such exaltation and light could only be born of this! Only in knowing this—do we need it completely. For from what womb would light need spring but darkness? What else could cause such longing, where but in our certain darkness would a need so potent be born—a need so deep it became the birthplace of light itself? Only a knowledge as crushing as this might make it so, only in a cauldron as black and sure as this might we need so deeply that we find...ourselves. So are we all a taunt, a grin, a smudge of bright mist and light born out as quicksilver and gold, born as we are trampled underfoot.

Now Sam beheld the exquisite lush landscape of green carpeted hills, outstretched palms and cedars, weird colorful fish and sad mocking monkeys, pointing at each other and laughing. Smiling gazelle pronged for no reason, and shag sloths with their carpet of red and purple cords and laughing inverted eyes hung in the branches and looked at him, peering from the trees. Sam saw this wonderful painted world with its laughing colors and was happy. He looked within each of its creatures and found he knew them. He looked within the soul of the lion, saw it stretch before the noon sun and preen its bloated belly, fat from killing, content and warm. He saw into the soul of the peaceful sloth and lived within the tangles of its multicolored lugubrious laughter. Sam found the hidden heart within all things and knew them, and so found his rejoicing, his tears and his happiness flowing through him in this moment of knowing, and he heard her again, "This is your temple"—and he knew it.

Fondly, he took the sad things and brought them, so broken and pitiful, into the light, before the warmth of his purple noon he brought and encircled all broken brittle things, now tenderly set before him so he could know them. Now they rose, one after the other they floated, each after the next, as a staircase of bright and silver laughter, these frozen ripples broken free and flowing upward, uncaring and playful, teasing bright tears ascending from a resounding laughter, a laughter bright enough to stain the darkness, and awaken the true heart of Man.

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