



University of
Nottingham

UK | CHINA | MALAYSIA



Volume 13: 2020-21

ISSN: 2041-6776

Dead Buried in Wood and Leaf

Eleanor Flowerday



—dead buried in
wood and leaf—

I, Woolf

sinking
from nose to tail
on the socket of the bank
a watcher in the rushes
I go in,
rippling anklets wading
I thought of the horse-dealer's daughter
I, woolf,
heavy standing water
deepest – darkest
lightest trickling earth
,hound, I
hear her brother calling –
a headdress of slime
I come up
Aphrodite from the pond scum
in the shell of the water
with air's first prick – the hair on her arms
standing

A Garden is of Many Symbols

A garden, I look for symbols –
desperate to be wild – the
brooms and buckets blown in
when a hunt
of hags hung above the
tree-line and took away our
washing. It tastes something
between burnt toast and standing
water – a moss more green than grass – a
desperate green among a back throat
yellow – phantasmic tobacco making a haze.

A garden I come
looking for symbols, counted by the
cigarette ends turned pebbles among
the eggshells – another thing they've
dropped. It was a tight moment in time flung out
the bathroom window. Moons and
magpies – splaying plume
in a cacophony of an emperor's wardrobe.

But smoking by the back door you notice
the wild start to wear down the walls,
the damp and dark masses make your
skin fall off. Painfully desperate
I think the wind is meant for me.

Gothic Anxieties

I.

who is dripping on the stairs? the man – he lives above her bedroom – a tiny hatch – was – that there before? open it – to find flakes of skin dust – dust – whispers of movement in the pipes – a thread of hair in your bed? and the heavy smell of standing water – a gelatinous crawl through the air you thought was yours – dead things? little dead things? let's not think about it then we won't be afraid when he comes downstairs –

II.

why have they come so quickly again? with mischievous grins of fire-lit rabbits – and branches come to prong my eyes – where do they fall? to click finally against each other – brown no? no – yellow mustard seed – green so brown they could be dead – saturated moss – hazel? the hazel tree grows – don't make me watch the gloams and branches curl – do you like the smell of burning hair? they come as hoard – as hunt as warren made in rambling feasts and fucking – they eat themselves?

The Old Castle

I. Pylons have come alive
circle and encircle to sing
of the valleys they scope
penetrate sacrilegious earth
made rich through Druid wombs
– dead buried shot with arrows –
yet in time they come alive
circle and encircle dreams
tasting of ivy it warms my
fingers with the twang of electric
shot in lightening strings to see
these towers of industry
– dead buried in wood and leaf –
are pine trees – sharp as flint
now birthed the arrows a Cronos ground
gave up.

II. It's hot and dry your
joints come undone
they fall in August's electric
storms sent by gods to topple
giants. All tall and hard and
smelling of sweat – a coppery
sweetness when the smell of
new leaf is a musky haze
and a memory of autumn when the

light trickles down rippling yellow
from finger to finger – the valley
the trees the electricity threaded a
needle to pierce the sky.

Don't know where that music's coming from –
deep listening.

Jack in Green

There in the deep leaf
– Jack’s basket –
a nose from a Saxon church flared
chasm to reveal an ever-darkening
tunnel of wood. It gets colder and wetter
the further you go. The spot of his face
– disturbed grave ruffled flowerbed molehill –
all blemish and rot. It’s like searching for a god
in a church pew. Where petals were carved
in the ceiling to keep out the witches.
– his hair is russet is chestnut is burning green –
all tangled like rope, enough to string a violin
– Jack’s bird-call –
makes the wrinkles in the wood weep.
– painted on hillsides on paper on skin –
Jack lost his teeth among the nettles
and his thoughts are with the fleshy
spring flowers trod by wakened ghosts.
In chapels they keep deer heads in boxes
and wear them once a year.
They honour his face in hedgerow jackets.
Leaves like leather that dress his head
– shedding velvet leaves winter coats –

Last Night I Dreamt of Man Again

Last night I dreamt of man again. Polyphemus – he only has eyes for me.

Breaching –

some icy front as he captures my eye from across the jetty.

Nearby,

the wind –

catching canvas as my fleet is taking sail way across the map.

A confusion between –

making love and detangling my bones he doesn't know the difference

I dreamt his arms could

crawl across the map and cover his face – when he finds his way back,

he is lost beneath waves and folds of water bulbous buried in sediment – stretching as

far as his eye

could see.

He sees from the point of a pyramid. In a Tiresias of visions men are brought up from
the shallows

but somewhere –

a telescope stretches as Aeolus sweeps for miles and miles in a fury of blue to find an island
a rock a drifting curl of bark.

“I am trapped in the pyramid of his abjection. Too human to be beast too big to be human.
Every word I speak rots in the air at his will.”

As if a breeze had blown channels through my limbs – tracing a moat in the sand to beg the
sea to enter and I could float – a paper boat –
in burrowing winds and coils of air

I woke from a dream
of him again found myself at the cliffs
of Ithaca. I can rub his face from
my mind and pluck out a leaf.
It looks rather like an eye.

He used to whisper to the waves
his cheek upon the sand and his ears –
they curled like shells –
would fill with spit. He hopes if he
lies very still the night-scented
flock will come and chew on the
turf of his chest.

At night when I go to the cliffs of Ithaca
I unclasp my robes and turn my back
to sea – twist my neck to feel the rusty moon
of his blindness crawl to beam
upon my skin.

“In love he strips me to my bones and eats me fast asleep.”

I dreamt his arms
could map out my back, turn me over in
my sleep and roll me up again.
‘Till grass grew over the caverns of my spine
and my flesh filled out with soil and brine and
oh –
I am an island again.