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THE LANTERN'S DANCE  
IN THE BEEHIVE

BY SILVIA SCHEIBLI

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Silvia Scheibli

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Silvia Scheibli

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## LEAVE THE CURTAINS OPEN

Leave the curtains open.  
One drop of darkness the shape of pain  
remains untouched.

The sky's chest  
gathers pine needles at my window.

Last strands of blue Eucalyptus mountains  
speak in a cramp.

Leaves at arms' length swim like fish  
and shed their bandages endlessly on the earth.

With closed eyes grasses come running  
on feet of green dolphins.

I dance  
the lantern's dance in the beehive.

With its glow I rappel on ropes  
twisted by centuries  
and swing into ravines  
over pools of my green bones.

"ONE HOUR TO MADNESS AND JOY"

*Walt Whitman.*

The fire of jimson weed  
is much too bare  
for the desert alone.

There must be an ocean  
for roots.

The ocean of your thighs  
is room enough.

I am your eyes' universe  
the dawn  
only you unbutton.

"O TO DRINK THE MYSTIC DELIRIA DEEPER  
THAN ANY OTHER MAN"

*Walt Whitman*

When you take hold of the sea  
and the suns & moons  
in the sea  
at the moment  
she is full of dreams —  
so silent  
you'll be deaf with listening —  
the waves of your eyes  
unite  
with the waves of your heart  
and warm my womb  
all at once

'O DOLCI MANI'

When night  
opens your robe  
and seams of despair fall  
into the sea's fibers,

my breasts,  
and their eyelashes of dandelion  
wake up  
and nestle their bread  
in your mouth.

'IL MIO SOL PENSIER SEI TU, SEI TU....'

At last. At Last.

I have stepped off the mind's pavement  
and curled up  
on the shore of your eyes  
uniting with the dunes of my hands  
in a universe  
that reigns naked in my heart.

Your seeing arms guide me  
to a jasmine temple  
no longer out of reach  
whose vines magnify our voices  
our journey  
that lasts only  
as long as the eyelashes of egrets  
but whose bells & daggers  
sing  
throughout the palms of our blood.



## WATER SONG

A small white feather  
falls  
at my feet

Hair speaks  
of a forest  
of seagulls  
on a beach  
full  
of silent whispers  
of hundreds of  
baby sea turtles

One reaches me  
One hundred shadows  
of sea turtles  
linger  
near the surf

## ABSTRACT SONG

The homecoming  
of rosy finches to the field  
was also my homecoming.

The separation  
of absence from presence  
was really my wedding —  
the wedding of my selves.

Inhalations of sorrow  
burn their incense  
from my mouth.

I hear  
the chatter of chaos  
and tremble in the tree's veins  
and inside myself  
and know  
the aspen leaf's ecstasy.

## WHEN I LOOK THROUGH THE EYES

When I look  
                  through the eyes  
of the hollow  
                  pumpkin

I am  
          the green field  
  
of  
      violet star flowers  
  
full of autumn finches

When I look  
          inside  
  
the pumpkin  
          hold

one smooth  
      white  
      seed  
          leaves  
          stems  
          fruit  
              stretch  
through  
          the veins  
of my arm

The sun  
          on the surface  
of the  
      new pumpkin's  
                  outer skin  
is my new skin

## ON SPEAKING WITH LONG RIVER GRASSES

An owl's shriek  
shakes night  
from alder branches  
over my shoulders.

Stars stand on pine needles.

The moon cradles a river  
with my hands.

I close my eyes.

I am the darkness  
tearing stones  
out of the stream of my skin.

I am the long river grasses  
under stones  
flowing with the voice of the stream

Quietly  
a water ouzel dives through me  
to her granite nest  
behind water falls.

## WHEN I WEAR LEAVES

Aspen leaf. At midnight.  
With the moon's dress  
caught in the sky's tentacles.

When I see you  
you lose your despair.

Midnight leaf. I turn  
your face into many dreams  
and call to the voices of stars  
to strangle all mechanical things.

Not one leaf wants to wear  
anything but your nudity.

Absent leaf. All our nights  
are joined by oleanders.

## GREEN LEOPARD

The green leopard  
in the cactus wren's brandy eye

Finds me  
between limestone crevices

Embraces me  
with endless suns of acacia trees

Penetrates me  
with centuries of lightning  
in flooded arroyos

Consumes me

Consumes the earthquake  
visible as a red sun river  
flowing from wild horse mesa  
into the white vase of jimson weed

Alone

On the desert

## I WATCH TWO CONDORS

Two condors circle in the canyon.  
Wings climb my ribs embedded in the soil.

At the cliffs of their temples  
the sun sings hymns of despair.

The sky offers them its bowl of water.  
The wind builds my shelter in their feathers.

They disappear with my hands  
over the next ridge.

Together the tides of the grass  
the surf of lupines  
flow through me like a riptide.

Pounding against sandstone ledges  
in my face - crevices for gulls.

My eyelashes on the wind's wooden boats  
anchored in the sun.

## CACTUS WREN

A cactus wren is submerged in these rocks  
that glance in my direction  
but see no one.

I am in her dark feathers.

My voice sinks up to my ankles  
in limestone.

My ears are embedded  
up to my wrists in this dawn.

The smoke trees are flames now  
and my heart's child  
walks without feet  
walks with her pulse  
on the wind.



## LUNAR MOTH

The lunar moth's forests & seas  
show me  
dawn's quiet hands  
rising behind my eyes  
and leads me  
to lunar green turtles & nests  
in my own wings.

A moment's flight  
brings fields of lightning & rain  
when my hair  
is soaked with you.

## WAKING IN THE FOG, THE RAIN

Rain speaks  
with the fog this morning.

Rain stands on a bittern's wings  
in a field this morning.

Rain splashes an adobe voice  
against dandelions  
and their scriptures this morning.

Rain crawls in my hollow bones  
with the lights from tunnels  
this morning.

Cypress trees creep  
in the skin of salamanders  
and glisten on the whole earth  
with its cut branches this morning.

## AT MIDDAY

At midday the bay is completely nude.

Magical summer terns - sky's white hands —  
groom the fog from their sides  
and hang their moisture  
on the horizon's clothesline  
forming a white wall  
around the universe.

Red beaks plunge their gifts  
beneath the sea's skin  
who leans on elbows of wet sand  
creating & inhaling  
the rhythm of sea palms.

Fish dig their houses near the surf's wrists.

The sun's veins blaze  
in the shore's granite cliffs.

Poppies ascend musical scales  
on the reins of a new planet.

## PRINCETON HARBOR

On this sunset shore  
panting fish caught in a net  
splash over my head.

Unheard slaughtered whales  
shriek in my throat.

Baby harp seals clubbed faces  
contort the sand.

Brown pelicans surrender shadows  
to an approaching darkness.

A red sun scatters my blood  
with high-pitched voices of sandpipers  
across a herd of light on the horizon.

Stays in my skin  
with footprints on wet sand.

Sinks  
    Blooms  
Breaks granite like a cliff rose  
growing of itself.

MY DAUGHTERS - DESIRÉ & DANIELLE

I rub my hair  
between my daughters' toes

They bring me jewels  
in the evening

Their cheeks raise flags  
in the sky

We never wear shoes

## THIS IS JUST BETWEEN YOU AND ME

If you would like  
the silver mantle  
of your thighs  
back

Talk with the crickets

They know the place  
on the dark side  
of the moon

Or ask my green leopard

He sleeps in the long fields  
of your eyes

## SILENT POSTURE

I sit on a Navajo rug  
and listen  
to a dandelion's yellow.

I inhale yellow words  
that write themselves  
on the bare texts of my blood  
I carry like a child  
between my ribs.

My eyelids grow golden leaves  
that fall endlessly  
in the forests of my veins  
as I dance  
with the wind's foliage  
scattered at the door  
of my voice.

## FLYING LESSON

An albatross  
runs  
over  
wet sand.

She runs  
to give herself  
to the wind.

Below  
white caps  
become  
smaller & smaller  
until  
their  
white beards  
float  
into the hair of stars  
on the ocean.

I climb  
over  
the fog's walls.

Below me  
the moon.



## DANIELLE'S SONG

I stand on a beach  
holding a scream in my hand.

Next to me is a boy  
cutting the scream's vowels  
from his wrists.

But no one seems to come.

The stems of our voices  
grow roots only in the ocean's ears.

Everyone is too busy  
writing numbers  
on the things we are holding.

The same numbers also written  
on the fur of whales  
dolphins  
harp seals  
otters  
starfish  
sea anemones.

We are standing in a long line  
of no consequence to anyone.

Except us.

## OLD WOMAN SONG

An old woman  
                    in cypress  
shakes her head  
                    She was the coachman

I will not  
let her in

She whips her horses of death

The tree  
                    splits  
                            its bark  
not even  
                    blackbirds  
perch on her branches

## ABSENCE SONG

Let me fill  
the glass  
in your afternoon  
with my poem

This morning  
a sparrow  
hovered  
in my throat

When I learned how to open  
the door  
of his cage  
he sat  
quietly beside my burnt hair  
on the  
green silk pillow

We spoke  
and our words  
sprouted  
a hemisphere  
of sunlight  
under  
driftwood

## HERMIT'S SONG

I blow  
          into some type of horn

A rose  
      falls  
          from my lips

Petals scatter  
              over the sky  
      in my hands

Two become the red patches  
      on a blackbird's wings

Stems  
      and thorns  
              dig  
their words  
      into my palms

## COLOR SONG

My white blouse is embroidered  
with many colors.

Purple from the nails of passion flowers.

Red from a summer tanager.

Green from the earth.

Yellow orange from fire poppies.

Tears.

All woven into the unseen side of your face.

## TONIGHT I AM THE DESERT

"THE CURVE OF YOUR EYES  
GOES ROUND MY HEART."

*Paul Eluard*

Tonight I am the desert.

These finches the fires of the desert.

The prickly pear's rough tongue  
and the coyote's fur are mine.

I am the jimson weed blossom  
and the sphinx moth  
is my constant companion.

The Mojave green rattlesnake  
under yellow green chollas is mine.

The blue iridescence of kingsnakes  
in limestone crevices belongs to me.

I am the hot coarse sand  
surrounding a desert lily  
and the flash flood  
giving birth to the desert lily.

I am the horny toad's leathery skin  
and the horny toad's bloody tear.

Where I see the chuckwalla disappear  
my voice disappears  
to join hands with limestone  
and enter the wind's house  
above the mesa.

In each of my breasts  
an oriole rises.

My sides are craters —  
purple mesas  
mirages  
the vulture's terrain  
the golden eagle's updraft  
the bighorn sheep drinking hole  
the burro's foot path  
the phoebe's fiery nest  
the fig leaf's ecstatic tremble  
the pinon's thunderhead  
the ringtail's rocky cave  
the lizard's bloody throat  
the planets' thighs  
the lovers' suns  
the stars of children's faces  
All sought  
    beheld  
    created  
    contained  
    unified  
        in the sky of my hands  
        in the lava of my blood.

## ON WHITE SAND

My arms  
have taken your arms'  
white sand dunes  
brimming with grasses  
sown by you.

You cut them every minute  
yet they remain the shelter  
of all sacred things —  
crickets, red-spotted toads,  
tarantulas —  
all searched for by the moon.

My legs have run away  
with these dunes  
faster & stronger  
than any roadrunner or kit fox  
although my veins  
are hot sand  
and my clothes  
are bare branches.

The horizon is braiding my hair  
with the moon's comb & the sun's clasp.

In my neck  
wanders the warm sky  
like a herd of wild sheep.



I travel with dawn's prancing mustang  
down dried arroyos  
over white sand dunes  
behind rhyolite rock falls.

Where I call your name.

Where I call you.

You whose mouth  
is the sky's spider web  
gently washing my limbs.

You  
whose hands weave all stars  
into a divine language.

You  
whose heat brings each space of me  
a blazing comet  
and sows my skin  
with unbending desire.

You whose lips know  
each of my breasts  
to be a weeping pomegranate.

You  
whose thighs  
change each blade of grass  
in my waist  
into a river of night-blooming jasmine.