

BARET MAGARIAN

SELECTED POETRY

Can I stay with you

Can I stay with you just a little while
To take the pressure off
To put my feet up
To have a smoke, a drink with you
To loosen that corrugated noose round the world's neck
To elongate the glimmers of light sequestered into
Far flung corners of the shattered globe?

Could I stay with you just a little bit longer
Could you teach me to dance, tremble
In the eclipse between life and death?

Can I stop with you a while,
Before I don my armour again with etiolated limbs
Before I go out again into the war zone the interplanetary banshees
The flickering whips twitching the world's horizon of pain
Can I stay with you just for a little while longer?

MAGARIAN

I've spoken with seas and tides, been privy to the secrets of storms
Exchanged pleasantries with time, wrestled with the wind
Wondered among stars and planets, and seen the old blue earth from
afar

I've plunged into electric tides and felt the current of the universe
Plugged into the live circuitry of my form, I've been a Grecian urn,
A supine statue, a whirlwind, been spewed out and ejected
As though from the shaft of an active volcano
But I'm back, I lived to tell my tale, I've come to
Drink a toast with you, to marinate your limbs with pleasure,
And to bathe you, dress you, baptise you,
I'm still alive, I'm still here, I can be servant to your master,
The oriental spice that has no name, that travellers have searched for
in vain,
I can be your flame, torch, sunray, enchantment, the lament
Of the desert wind, the river's slow motion once more after the
eternal winter's cessation

I can be all this, and so much more, if you'd only let me reach you
But you sit, slow and furrowed, with a dark brow, you have reached
A staleness, a stillness, you are like some great bear in its cave

SELECTED POETRY

If you came to me number 1

If you came to me, in the night,
When all are asleep, except for contorted lovers,
If you came to me by moonlight, having scattered all the shadows
That the desert moonlight brings, and waited a while,
Waited for the moment, or courage,
Maybe even taking a drink of water at the fountain,
Lapping at it like a thirsty dog whose loyalty is always to his master,
If you came to me, and gave me courage, said, "Your heart
Is pounding so fast, I will ease it,
Your sight is dim
I will brighten it,
Your mind's confusions are legion,
I'll scatter them."
If you came to me, like this, in the gentle night,
If you came to me, if you did.

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If you came to me. 2

If you came to me in the night
and said I've been in forests
& glades, the valleys, the shades,
the dismembered ashes, the unmarked graves
I've fought with terrible foes and leering monsters
I've sucked blood from stones
and painted my face with the ombra of dreams
I've been dancing on the edges of precipices
and I have third degree burns tattooed
all along the trajectory of my corrugated body
I've done battle with evil
I've cauterised the world
and I've seen the devil stared him in the eyes
I've learnt from children in their haystacked bliss
I've imbibed wisdom from the undiscovered poets
and I've slept long beside the aroma of a winding river
all tanned and golden in the summer's burnish
if you came to me after all this
panting and breathing all soft and palpitating
surely I, surely I'd
kneel down in humility and offer you my loyalty and tears
my steadfast union, the hunks of bread I still had left
I'd be ready then for your benediction
I'd speak with sailors about the inscrutable marine undercurrents
I'd be still beside seamstresses as they undid the work of time
I'd pluck spices and scents from merchants
as they made life an aromatic sweetness
if you came to me, and we could somehow together
still the savage friction of the universe
and dissolve at last all the shadows of human suffering

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If you came to me. 3

If you came to me, in the night, and said
“Show me a place where I can unpack my bags
And slip off tired bandages
Show me the green earth, a place where the lilac
Is in bloom, and I am myself at last”
I might find in your callings
A fragment of a mirror,
The soul’s parameters,
The measurable insignia of
Joy, pathos, beauty
And maybe I might be propelled toward the edge
Of sureness and I could take up my bags
Fasten my bandages
With renewed energy
And cut a pathway
Through dark forests and garroted places
Where the bamboos and shrubs are welded
Where the trees slither with the grace of their age
To teach me things that can only be grasped
In silence
When the body’s grown tired of its
Disfiguring search for pleasure
Maybe with you I’d discern the music of space
I’d begin to hear the caress of knowing
And we’d start our ever-lasting dance
Our free fall into chasms and abysses
Free somehow of shattering
And bruises

The Sigh

The sigh-swept sky aches me again
Nostalgia draws up its exquisite five year plans
We watch the shadows tumble
Immersed in a Hopper-twirl
If only I could turbo-charge the dullness,
Freeze frame the nano-moments, make love last
Ensure that the farmers had a glorious harvest
Teach financiers about the secret soul
And loaf about with all the tigers and lords of the jungle
I'd be there smiling like a masterpieced idiot,
You beside me, wiping the sweat from my brow,
Tumblers of ice slowly revolving in
Your impossible eyes. You'd be golden
Like the first dawn
When the first settlers first set eyes upon the pellucid heavens
Thinking this is heaven
This must be the fucking place
And everyone on earth danced and hovered and slipped through
The interstices of matter, of place, of time
Five times flung out, six times embraced
Six times rejected, seven times healed
Seventeen subsidences, seventy awakenings
The cold landscape of mathematics
The sweet pulsations of music
I keep seeing the earth moving towards a harmony
We no longer like dull flies swept aside by angry cosmic forces
Man and nature in harmonied stillness at last
But perhaps I am too fatal, too romantic, too flimsy
And it's never really going to quite work out quite like that
As pen pushers & politicians privatise reality
And little sheep-people download existence itself
And in that stupefied trance racing towards the edges of life itself
We all get lumbered, tossed in, shrivelling like old grapes
At the bottom of a ballooning barrel
I pray some jolly, tear-singed Falstaff will come to rescue us

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world you who swirl
don't weep pearls and diamonds of green-blue
as you shyly curl
and happily shuffle and twirl
we're all just particles floating
in your cosmic silver lining
big bad world
with villains and swooning dames
making up forever rules for stupid games
keeping all our happiness trapped
world, you goddam dunce
throwing tantrums
smothering fountains
stay put, keep still, hush,
be a monk for once
for all the star-spangled cunts
down here will never stop their gold rush

MAGARIAN

You – supine monster, jilted lover, exploded necromancer
I order you to walk through the playground, to watch
The children playing, screaming – they are unknowing
Of time, of the weird conjuring tricks it plays,
Of memory, nostalgia, the aching, the longing to go back
And undo things, relive and relieve things, live better. You've lost
your map, compass, you're foaming at the mouth again, you old
fart.

Ask the way to those on park benches, young boys fusing with
young girls,
Try and smile, you atrophied boot, you glass of ouzo,
Smile, fucker, at their sunlight-saturated youth
Maybe they even write lines of verse in between lines of other drugs
You can't help but ask: what do they know about time?
They have no yesterdays to miss
No past that they look back on, chiselling it into the Golden Age
Or la Belle Epoque

Sacred beast, untold story, wizened homo sapiens, are you too blind,
Too skeletal, too wasted to see,
Further off, in the distance, older men; sporting scars,
Pimples, battered features, oozing the pus of time; their dance with
it
Starting to hasten
Glisten, become pernicious, time outrunning them
Showing them who's the boss,
Beating them into marshmallows,
And each sip of each coffee and each drag of each balance-sheeted
cigarette
Groaned towards a thwarting, a bruised attempt to embody stillness
To slow the clock and freeze things before things froze them

And yet still further, I, the grotesque attention seeker, the egotist,
saw all the ghostly selves scattered along a terrestrial shore where
the imagined, the real, the forgotten all knotted stickily together
Like one gigantic wave of ever coruscating complexity
And a merciful lighthouse smiled down pellucid beams of light and
handed us anaesthetics, plasters and adhesives dipped in ice
And everyone along that dazed, sepulchral beach was stupefied by

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the long arch of ages that sat athwart their shoulders as do gigantic
branches of an ageless tree
We were all racing we were all still at the same time
A point of stillness and miracle-making rejuvenation
Youth spliced by oblivion, childhood spliced into tears
By the reluctance of the glacial moment to pass
Old age and middle age skewered and healed by memory
We are all pirouetting, clutching merciful dreams and banishing
shadows like stalactites
We split the hull, the horizon of the vast, unending world.