

HARD PLACES

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Black Masks
Blue Light / Starting Over
The Magnificent Wurlitzer
Medusa
The Observatory
The Other Shore
The Red Tank
Runners

HARD PLACES

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RED SNOW

An Entertainment

‘Toute pensée émet un coup de dés’
Stéphane Mallarmé,
Un coup de dés jamais n’abolira l’hasard

‘O paradis cent fois retrouvé reperdu
Tes yeux sont mon Pérou ma Golconde mes Indes.’
Louis Aragon,
Les yeux d’Elsa

~ I ~

‘Hold on! Hold him!’
‘It’s hair! I can’t,’ she says.

‘Hold his hair. No, he’s gone,’ I say.

‘We pitched too near the edge. It was so beautiful,’ she says.

‘There he sails – oh no, like a bale of something. And – red snow!’ I say.

Elsa says, ‘Must be something sharp. Oh dear, how terrible.’

‘You let him go. Idiot. He died a hero’s death.’

She says, ‘He was asleep. He dreamt. Perhaps of me. He wriggled.’

‘A hero’s death,’ I say. ‘And who’s to know. That accolade the last, the least, thing we can do.’

She complains, ‘This stupid search. All the flowers are shut and under snow.’

‘Just chance. Another year will come.’

She says, ‘That’s excitement for today, enough! At least there aren’t people to be told.’

A flurry in the night.

‘You could have grabbed him,’ I say.

‘By his hair? It’s mad. Now, don’t start on me. He chose the spot, he warmed his way right down – the void, the void!’

Hard Places

‘Don’t get upset. You rock the tent.’

‘Not upset – doing my analysis, is all. Coming to terms.’

This sliding in the chill, the cold – enough!

Another scheme:

I say, ‘Paradise: food and flora.’ What do you think?’

She says, ‘Nice for the cover. As for the book itself – you’ve got it wrong. Paradise is when you’re dead. You must mean Eden – that’s where the Fall begins.’

‘There must be stuff on both. They’re basic gardens. The pity is – it’s Africa, that’s where it starts. Besides, between the fall and death, there’s just white time, just waiting for the bus. Our big idea is – immortality. Not eternity – that’s over in a flash. But going on, day after day, your legs in causal chains, your head is twisting side to side and getting wiser by the hour. What we must ask is – what animals, what flowers and such you need, to live the good, the everlasting life? That’s what the texts are all about, it’s where the heroes come to rest when all the slaying’s done.’

Elsa says, ‘You’re wrong. But sure – the idea’s a

seller, it's commercial.'

'Not just the bible stuff – all kinds of other tales, like Gilgamesh – there's deer and pomegranates, juice of peach, manna and mushrooms. And some feisty people too.'

'It's worth another expedition. Adventures – they'll arrive for sure,' she says.

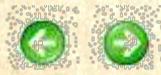
'This year the world won't end, the holes are plugged in earth and sky,' I say, 'so we'll go back, and on our watch again – casting runes, the tarot, chair arrangement, cheering up the old. Mysteries.'

She says, 'You've got the book already written. What's the point of more?'

I show her. The book, as it is. It's a block of cardboard, there's no text, just montage of an eye, a feather, mountain cave, a shoulderblade with bullet hole.

I say, 'The colour's sharp.'

Grey, yellow, indigo, a splash – vermilion in a white expanse. Could be an error. All to play for.



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