

Shaman in Winter

I. Opening

1

The setting is nuclear winter
Life continues diminished

No Arno no Nile no Passaic
No Volga no Yangtze no Danube
No sweet local waters or bitter

No Creole no Yiddish no Gaelic
No Jamaican Patois no Shoshone
No sweet local waters or bitter

A place that exists as an absence.

French, Arabic, Farsi
Spanish, English, Swahili
German, Russian, Italian
Greek, Hebrew, Mandarin, Hindi
The great seas of language
Outlive their rivers:
Weakening...dying.

A place that exists as an absence.

2

One common ocean remains
In discourse only with ice

Only people far scattered
As stars in sky's ocean
Sing out into silence.

A Place that exists as an absence.

II. Invocation

The scene is an ice field

Chanting continues

Each repetition unique
Uniqueness again and again:

Word follows word
As the waves of the ocean:

“Breathe with us
Sing with us

Joseph The Lazarus
And Spring Lost In Winter:

Night after night
The journey towards sunrise:

Here beyond seasons
Here beneath bone sky

In kingdom of silence
In waning of blood light

Shaman Of All Seasons End
And The Gift Of The Ocean

Breathe with us
Sing with us.”

III Shaman Song

A. Ice Walk

1

I walked
On field of ice
To die

Sought
Thinnest point
Then
Without warning
Love
Lost
Young
In winter
Rose up within me
From the depth of the ocean

As water through ice skin
As drink for the thirsty
Dream song and death song
Arose in my dry mind.

She a ghost
I almost a ghost
Sing out into absence
Sing out into silence

Dancing on thin ice.

We entered the ocean of voices:

We enter blood converse
Of grandparent shamen:

Sang
Dream songs

Sang
Skull lust

Sang
Shadow

Sang
Twisted mirror
Junkyard of children
White machine
Absolute midnight

Sang
Foreshadow of All Seasons End.

3

Each vision song shaped
Lives in its own right

Child of our singing
Dream we inhabit.

Wave on wave of shadow and light...
Wave on wave of rise and fall of speech.

So much is lost despite love

B Songs of the Grandparent Shamen

The Junkyard of Children

Because the children of the poor are trapped in twisted mirrors

Because they are reflected
Steel sharp
Rat cruel
Fierce as dwarfs with tiger heads
Transforming gentle touch to twist of knife

Because they are abandoned
In endless schools
In endless junkyards
Abandoned to rain and mud... abandoned to the moon

Because they are quick to flight _ to ecstasy _ as birds
(For it is _ after all _ all done with mirrors),

Because blood presses against glass until glass bleeds

From rusting of illusionary steel
From weeping of imprisoned birds
From corpses of nonexistent rats

Air and water die.

The White Machine

1

Machine magnificent
World's wonder

Statues in motion
Wheel in wheel turning

White _ unchanging in light's variations – unsullied.

2

On top
Creator:

Almost breathing in marble
Almost natural motion.

Inheritors:
Conduits,

Imposing
Their
Rhythm
On those who
Beneath them
Move as one person.

3

Shadow,
Blood shadow,

Not blue as snow shadow
Or night black or purple,

Shadow as shadow...

Creator:

Chose and danced freely
Death's gesture completed,

Creator/betrayer.

Inheritors,
Shriveling like apples,
Spit venom
Then their faces clear:

Her mouth is acid seared...is burnt.

4

Locked together in a room
He draws his power from the cold machine

He her stabs.

Blood
Drips
On white. _

More than rain
Wore away this steel.

Absolute Midnight

1

Mechanical motion
System components
Items in flow charts

Sharp thin figures chanting:
“Inside or one of the marks
With it or out of the loop
Player or hung out to dry.”

2

Suddenly
At absolute midnight
Sunrise triumphant
The Beloved returning.

3

Sharp figures thin figures chanting:

“Believe us

Be frightened

This is no story:

The Beloved
Returning

Her light dissolves us
Our shadows eat us

Burn out your eyes
With molten metal
Puncture your ears
With knife or needle.

Kill all that moves.”

4

Deed done.

IV. Return

1

The story let me go

I saw myself
Alone on the ice field
All ghosts departed,

Faltering _failing_
In boneland of silence:

Here beyond seasons
At the eyeblink of passage

Love Lost Young In Winter
Reached out to hold me.

2

Dance walking
We turn towards the village

We sing to each other

The Song of the Shaman:

“Long nights seeking lost name’s secret vision
Where dreams suck poison from the wounded earth.

If hair is wire you are fire_
If hair is silk you are a bird in flight,

Streak of red in black sleep haunted night...”

We sang to each other
The Blessing of Flight Song:

“O solitary birds in lonely flight
Dream together through this winter’s night

Seasons of the blood, rebirth of light.”

V. Epilogue

1

Let us dance away from him now
(Leave him alone on the ice)

Let us dance away from him now
(Leave him in the ocean of voices)

Leave them together
(Now he is also a ghost).

2

We all know what happened.

We all know the story
We enter tomorrow
From sunrise to sunset.

Let us forget to remember.

3

Let us
Be with him
As
Feverish
Shaking
Already gray headed
Already limping
Through the cold night
Unknown
He
For the first time
Walks towards us.

Anything and nothing can happen.