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Pearl White Dream

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Pearl White Dream

Jane Muir Greene

As you melted down I inhaled the lemon grass
Of your ground, the base and florid earth of your fecundity
Dirt and destiny outwitted at every
Virginal, courageous dance
In every pearl white moment where we crash and burn
Saying as you did, I hate myself.

You stood there waiting for the smell of your days
The redwood cloister of your youth with its big Leona tree
The gauzy vision of a naked but willing acolyte
At your side, we two praying that the gods would
Let us survive, let us crack open to another breath of citrus
And muck, be buried above ground in our grave of drop dead gratefulness.

I grabbed you as though a pillar of salt and fire might fall
As though a melt-down in this moment
Had some alchemy to it, that you could
Become a puddle in the sky like Icarus, too close
To the sun, the firing of elemental combustion, a woman
Who would spiral down into the sea.

We stood in the theater wings waiting only on
Ourselves until I whispered in your ear
"You crack me up"
I took the mike with its snaky cord and
Ventured onto the stage planting
Myself, a pillar of salt in a sea of dreams.

I said some words dead like the mourning
We were in, the funk of birthing of our child --
A massive celebration all around --
Then I said my dear friend, my lemon grass
My puddle in the sky
You opened your mouth and butterflies flew out.

Six hundred butterflies aloft and each
Water painting their flight in
Stained glass windows of flutter
To find their mark in the passive hands
At rest in laps of six hundred people
Seated in that forest around the Leona tree.

The butterflies settled in palms and on
Fingers, alighted their touch and
Trembled whispers of birth and beginnings
As hands roused and quivered
Longed for willing wingedness
Sounding applause, applause, applause.

We left the stage, mere husks of our birthing
And you said "what did I say"
And I said "butterflies" as we staggered
Through dark wings gripping one another
In our little black dresses and platform heels
Grieving the delivery of our pearl white dream.