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Poems

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Poems

Abstract

FORBIDDEN FRUIT, CROSSING THE MOUNTAINS, DARK RITUALS (1932)

Gerry Turcotte

FORBIDDEN FRUIT

Beneath the hanging sexuality
of Moreton Bays
where interwoven textures are unseen,
foreigners might feast their lovers' fingers
by fondling the testes
of the fig-leafed fruit.

Within the gardens barely known
young lovers might cavort
and trample Fringed Love Creepers,
caress the coy pink petals of Caladenia Carnea,
or covet lingeringly
an Orchid's Tartan Tongue.

Guileless lovers, stunned by strange alphabets of plants
might unwittingly snub a Wedding Bush —
overlook its pink absolving sacraments —
and innocently plait, instead,
the Austral Ladies' Tresses
by a Cockspur's hairy side.

Among this unfamiliar botany,
where each curve of fern is unpronounceable
and adventitious lovers innocently fondle maidenheads,
or probe with irrepresive zeal
those privet edges too secret
to be shared;

Beneath the foreign phrases
of Australian gardens,
lovers from another land

could transgress all propriety
and commit the most audacious moral crimes,
without ever having touched.

CROSSING THE MOUNTAINS

Entering these caverns is a step
into another world:

I am a traveller
taking leave;
that solemn bow at doorways
speaking fond farewell
and promising a last return —
but from the other side of life.

See the wizened caves —
calcareous deposits
furfuraceous sparks on heaving
hillside shoulders.
I should like to reach out my hand
and brush the dandruff
from its crumbled granite clothes.

And perched upon the jagged mouth of cave
I feel the pressure of the past,
a moment's touch
which cannot follow in. It is the glance of mother
begging child to stay,
before he moves to war;
fading even as it is performed.

I am a traveller leaving home. And I will never
turn again and see the landscape as before.

DARK RITUALS

(1932)

On the plywood doorstep,
dead infants
wrapped in burlap
His large hands collect the babies,
place them in shallow graves
behind the shed

Twenty mounds in two years —
The offal of prostitutes
who rent his rooms;

and in the evening
his calloused hands massage
the worn leather of the Bible,
pass it silently to his wife
that she may read
— a ritual of darkness

Eight youngsters press around
the kitchen table —
waiting

'Blessed are the children'
she says,
and his lidded eyes turn away,
toward the yard,
where his garden
yields dark fruit