

The Blonde Raven

The Blonde Raven is an actual being in my life. I saw her on a regular basis for two years, and see her intermittently, as in a dream, right up to this day. It is all so real that there is no sense in which it can't be. Thanks to the Rangoya Residence in Norway, and to Oyvind Rangoy, for the opportunity to complete this cycle of prose poems as a resident writer in the wonderful space he has created.

Cognition

The Blonde Raven is riven by thought. In the truest sense, she is a philosopher, knowing both that there is a real world and that she herself is trapped in her own mind. Often, she despairs of ever finding the real or even of finding herself in the flicker of her clipped cognitions; language divides her against herself. She pictures herself on another shore – another shore from language, and sometimes another shore from life, at least as it has been known.

Beauty

Beauty is a form of power, but a form of power with a trap door, which reduces the one perceived as beautiful into being exclusively that. When The Blonde Raven meets another animal sometimes there is a threshold, or a meeting point, or a recognition. Other times, the other animal immediately reacts only to her unique mingling of night and day, the trap door closing. If one day The Blonde Raven could meet a snow leopard, at a safe distance, from which each could contemplate the other, each astonishing, each astonished... Who knows what the Blonde Raven was in a previous lifetime?

Hummingbird

The Blonde Raven contemplates a hummingbird. Her expression is grave; the hummingbird is tiny. It hovers in place, each one of The Blonde Raven's eyes larger than the hummingbird taken as a whole.

The Blonde Raven is moved by the hummingbird's condition. Without a plan to be of help to it, her emotions writhe.

How will The Blonde Raven escape the trap of her own suffering, never mind protect the hummingbird? Her expression is concentrated. The delicacy of the hummingbird is the universe's center.

Fox

The Blonde Raven approaches a red fox.

The fox is immediately transfixed.

He knows something is off in her coloring, but he cannot immediately pinpoint it as a matter of the mien of her feathers.

Nor does the fox have any language with which he could reach her.

No fable could model what might next transpire.

The fox has previously panted at the sight of a vixen. This is different but related.

The Blonde Raven seems to sigh. She plunges back into her own desperation.

Boat

The boat is blue, the boat is gray, the boat is green, the boat is brown, the boat is blue, as it flickers, ever changing, in the light. The Blonde Raven approaches this craft pulled up on the side of the shore, seemingly abandoned, and is attracted by its shifting color.

It is the Blonde Raven that is dazzled; the texture and hue of the rowboat occupy her gaze. There is nothing inside the boat, not even oars, nothing at all but the mindless energy of the sun.

Something about the boat reminds her of a previous lifetime, a dim memory of a situation in which she could not fly and would have been dependent on the boat to cross. The paint on the boat is chipping.

Arrival

Like Persephone, the Blonde Raven returns. But not in spring, not in summer.
Is it in the winter, a light upon the snow, nearly blending in?
Seasons themselves seem to be suspended on her arrival.
Wound becomes threshold. Time becomes space.

Eel

The Blonde Raven approaches an eel at the edge of the ocean, where it
wriggles in the shallows over the smooth surface of a rock just barely
immersed in the brine.
Which is the figure, which is the ground? To The Blonde Raven's eyes, the rock
seems to wriggle.
Ground and figure come into question when encountering an eel in such an
environment. The Blonde Raven produces a similar effect in others.

The Drive

A young man was supposed to pick up The Blonde Raven and drive her back
to Gloucester, perched on the dashboard of his car. When his vehicle broke
down on the way down to NYC to pick her up, he carjacked someone else's
vehicle, so frantic was he to get to her.

I completely understood his conduct. To enter into the presence of The
Blonde Raven is a matter that dire.

Unfortunately for the young man, he was apprehended by the police just a few
miles after the carjacking. He never even got out of Massachusetts.

Which Muse Was It?

Which muse was it? I thought the muse was making music in me but it was

actually the stars I was being led to chart; I thought I was surrounded by sound but actually it was the planets I jostled up against, an unwitting astronomer.

Or I thought it was Erato, the Muse of love poetry, that I was channeling, but it turned out it was Thalia, the muse of comedy speaking through me all along, and the joke was on me.

These confusions are what The Blonde Raven experiences repeatedly. These are the confusions other creatures feel when they encounter The Blonde Raven.

Black Bear

Because a unique openness of her eyes survives the death of God, contact with her gaze wrings from her interlocutor another round of spiritual turmoil.

For the black bear, this may be the first time experiencing such turmoil.

The bear apprehends her on a branch, a bit over his head, on a tree near a stream. Immobilized by her gaze, bewildered by something he had never thought of before, his eyes so small in proportion to the bulk of his body... and yet, a highly intelligent creature.

So much of our mental life is habit! A blonde raven, driven by rules none of us can obey or even recognize, disrupts the color in everything else. A change in color creates a change of mind. You can see dawn breaking in the face of the bruin.

Active Suffering

The anguish of the word consumes her. How can anyone ever write anything when writing just that rules out every other possible word or phrase that could just then have been written?

Because she is sensitive to all of possibility, to actualize one possibility feels like the death of all the others.

She is a blonde raven, this Blonde Raven, and everything is possible, which is also to say that everything is impossible due to the plethora of choices. The Blonde Raven's thought appears to be paralyzed.

As The Moon Rises

As the moon rises, signifying the coming of night, a night bathed in light, a chestnut horse contemplates the blue boat and its one oar. If the horse wants to cross the waters, it will have to swim across under its own power. There is no way it could stand in that little boat or operate the oar.

A horse likely could swim across the waters! So perhaps the horse's interest in the boat expresses a curiosity about the possibility of someone else's crossing.

Perhaps the boat's position on the shore signifies a newborn has just arrived, as opposed to an imminent departure in the direction of death.

The Blonde Raven considers both life and death. She gazes long at the horse, and the boat, and the shore. She is the ideal viewer of the painting.

The Next Animal

I have experienced light and I have experienced night. I know both banter and solemnity. I choose my words carefully; I allow the flow of conversation to loosen new worlds inside me, words that arrive from nowhere to shape my very cognitions. I struggle with how words should be arranged.

I have seen the Blonde Raven and survived. I have been abandoned by the Blonde Raven and perished. In my next lifetime I hope to be better prepared for light, for darkness, for the becoming of the mind. I hope to realize the moment of The Blonde Raven sooner. I would like to be able to help her.

Which Muse Was It // ?

Which muse was it? Melpomene engendered in me a theater of Tragedy that in truth turned out to be the inspiration of Clio, the muse of History – a story that was part of a much larger story, with a past and future to point towards, without the finality of the tragic.

Yes, tragedy puts stress on the moment of the crises, the crises as it breaks over the moment like a wave. While Clio promises a narrative whose current never ends.

The Blonde Raven puts the stress on the tragic moment. Other creatures experience the crises of the moment in contact with her; they forego any larger picture or flowing current. There is a rupture with History; she is absolute.

Book

The Blonde Raven is a book dipped into a stream of images that is not only not a book but is not in any way bound.

House

Not only ghosts enter the house through its walls but also the hyper-alive, for whom the walls are equally permeable. How to tell the difference between the hyper-charged-with-life and one of the ghosts?

And what of The Blonde Raven, famously perched on the mantle?

Amulet

The Blonde Raven flutters, in a fog. Her bearings are off.

But she has an amulet! She wears it around her throat.

And from that amulet might emerge the picture of a tree. A stone. The reflection of an animal. The trace of a sentient partner. Something to navigate by.

She must remember that she is wearing an amulet. It is easy to forget. To forget would be deadly.

Roost

When vultures fly out from me, I know I am the tree in which they roost and that I am allied with death.

When a flock of sheep amble out of me I realize I am merely a pasture, I grow calm and agreeable.

When tens of different species of snakes slither forth from me, I know in fact that I am a den in that pasture, the winter must be over, the hungry serpents have been awoken by the return of warmer weather.

When the Blonde Raven appears I know she came from Elsewhere. She eclipses me, and any understanding of what I am, where I have been, or where I am going.

The Writer

Like a pastor who has AI write his sermons for him or a city senselessly devoted to consumption and flash, all production hidden from the eye and, really, not necessary anymore – or, on the other hand, The Blonde Raven...

Every word, earned.

Every word a world, a wound.

Writers are creatures who have problems with language.

Direct Address

Because there is a rhythm to your face and that rhythm is the ruler. Because our eye contact is divine. Because to have a position in time I must be a fact... And I'm not. Because a body isn't the same as a fact, nor consciousness in its throes. Because of an immense space as alluring to words as it impenetrable, aloof...

As a droplet hangs from a faucet never falling, the face, in defeat, does not succumb to its defeatism, and, in the end, disorders all.

Which Muse Was It III?

Which muse is it? Calliope is the muse of epic poetry, balancing history and lyric stratagem, in her way.

The Blonde Raven considers the possibility that she is driven by Calliope. She has a Scottish castle in her past. There is a discernible flow of time between her discrete crises. There is a future for which she yearns. If The Blonde Raven is the central figure in an epic she is constructing, in a story that is being dictated to her by Event, she is relative, not absolute, situated in the drama of the moment.

But it also might be Polyhymnia that guides her – Polyhymnia, the muse of hymn and sacred poetry. In which case The Blonde Raven is caught in the action of a complex ritual.

Lake

Lake, bluer than sky, defiant amid the clouds its image somehow burns through, though the mountain it rests on remains completely hidden...

One of those large bodies of water one might lose oneself on, drifting on some flimsy float, the lake's tributaries invisible, if only one had ascended the mountain on which it sits in the first place....

The only lake I swim in now is the body I am, self-contained, tiny. Not that I despair of the larger water dome, glimpsing it sometimes in sleep. Events carried me away from it, in the other direction.

When a single drop of water evaporates all water evaporates. Or so it seems to that drop if it happens to be human, hemmed in by suffering and machines.