

The Beast Turns Me Into a Tantrumbeast



AGNES MARTON

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You are me (said the beast).

From now on
I'm your nameless shelter.

Fear my dreams
half-awake, run.

Ripe in my poison
like cherries,
chase my ways.

Don't pray, dissolve
in my summer breath.

Our limbs are
overlapping meadows,
hazy honey landscape.

By myself (I told the beast).
Teeth away or I squeak.
Mellific, knotty bully
stepping on all what I bear.
Don't push me under your reign.
Who do you think you are.
Leave me alone, I build my own.
I fear my own, I dream my own.

Beastie, come on.

Taken

with respect to Edward Snowden

I want you inside out
and side to side,
holus-bolus.

I know your ear tag stamps, your daily rants,
the lies you told your lovers.
I know your pick-up lines,
your escape routes, your air miles.

I know you're often broke, I know you hate the Pope.
I know your drunken grin, I know your next of kin.

You feed me no end
and I peep for more –
but you feast on me too.

You try to throw me up
but I find my way back.

Each you confide in is my bitch.

Don't even dare ask.

You are mine.

Cactus Woman

You peep yourself for traces of the you-ness.
If you knew in advance the happy ending
or the loophole,
would you play along? Or?
Would you choose anyway the thrill of the untold?

What would you do to ease your barbed tongue,
linger on hymns and lullabies
or shout back
or just skirt around,
half-fidgeter, half-feeler?

You can't decide if it's thirst,
you feel like growing spines.
Your spongy flesh cannot be touched.
You reached Happy Valley, drowning by the Why.
Have you arrived? Yet...?

Migration

What if they betray me too,
those celestial cues?
What if the sun lies
like everyone else
and so does the earth's magnetic field?
The stars?
What if there is no such a thing as home,
or it's just big enough for sedentary birds?

No matter what,
at a certain point I have to go,
with the northern wheat ear, the arctic tern,
the short-tailed shearwater,
counting the days for a while,
then: "am I there yet?"

What-ifs again and why-nots.

Wish I could say yes to a life
or learn how to forget.

Wish I could ease my maphead.

The Runaway Madonna

There's a curtain of dark so smugly woven,
I cannot tell back from forward
even if I want to obey. And who would.
I bump into the interrogator
and, in a meek spring,
touch my parched lips
like I would touch a wound.

All I have is two skirts, brown and grey,
a November morning. The rucksack is lump,
limp, whatever. So are my cheeks
when I blurt 'Yes, Sir!'
to the howl 'Step back, Lizzie,
this border is not yours to pass.
You might enjoy some patting down
without being busted.
I'll never give you the all clear.'

My name is Elizabeth Rose Lurken,
and I'm hollow like a terracotta bust.
The X-ray focuses on the Nkisi-style nails
in my scalp; my interrogator pulls one
and peeps in to catch sight of the Devil.
A mirror would do instead, but I don't
say it. He stares at the shaft and barks
me to return to where I'm from. 'If you
get lucky, you might reveal a god
or even, if you behave,
grow back to be a virgin.'

The Male Witch

I climbed up
to his steam-kitchen
of clouds.

Mute years passed.

No tourist
would've stayed
in his B&B cave.

He cuddled
my distant home and
filled it with
hellacious mist.

He was blurred
and was never named
in my headlines.

I sharpened my eyes,
closed and open,
to capture his size.

I took a snapshot
of the nothing
and called it magic.

‘Come,’ said he, hoarse,

choosing me as his
partner for

the last pirouette of power. Me,

who in life

had done everything

to keep shape,

started to shift now,

with transparent

hands I’m stirring

my rain words into the mountain.

The Bear Guard's Advice

When a polar bear shows up,
don't play dead.
The bear would think you're a seal,
easy lunch.

Don't scream, don't run,
it would provoke a chase.

Make confident noise
with stones,
rattle your keys.

Emperor of your dummy head space,
hum your hymn.

Be the biggest bear
on the shore.

Don't listen to the beast's
amplified breath.

AGNES MARTON

Hungarian-born poet, writer, Reviews Editor of *The Off Press*, Fellow of The Royal Society of Arts, founding member of Phoneme Media.

Recent exhibitions and art projects: *European Sculpture: Methods, Materials, Poetry* (Sweden), *Guardian of the Edge – Visual artists respond to the poetry of Agnes Marton* (Luxembourg), *Poetica Botanica* (UK).

Recent publications she has been involved in: *Exquisite Duet* (USA), *Alice* (UK), *Human/Nature* (UK), *Not a Drop* (UK), *Umbrellas of Edinburgh* (UK), *A Face in the Mirror, a Hook on the Door: An Anthology of Urban Legends & Modern Folklore* (UK).

She participated in the Disquiet International Literary Program (Portugal), and residencies at the Scott Polar Research Institute (UK), at the TGC (Ireland), in the Arctic Circle, at Gullkistan (Iceland) and at La Macina (Italy).

The opera duet based on her poetry collection *Captain Fly's Bucket List* was premiered in London (2016, composer: Vasiliki Legaki).

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lars palm – *case*

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Comprehending Mortality
Dan Ryan – *Swamp Tales*
Sheri Reda – *Stubborn*
Christine Stoddard — *Chica/Mujer*
Aileen Ibardaloza, Paul Cassinetta, and Wesley St. Jo – *No*
Names
Nicholas Michael Ravnikaar – *Liberal elite media rag. SAD!*
Mark Young – *The Waitstaff of Mar-a-Largo*
Howard Yosha – *Stop Armageddon*
Andrew and Donora Rihn – *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*
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Michael Dickel – *Breakfast at the End of Capitalism*
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For P-Grubbers
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Carol Dorf – *Some Years Ask*
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