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“Pandemonium” Translation

Joyce Mansour

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Pandemonium (1976)

Joyce Mansour

Offer your throat to the night
Obsessive Africa
Spit your teeth your waste
Your dizziness
In the whipped cream
Of the church
The blowfly's trunk
Skinny sluggish Priapus
Satisfies his thirst
With amniotic fluid
From the burning coals pulls out a stone
A crown of thorns
Black vermillion like the seven lanterns
Of the embolism
Laugh nomads, old age is sedentary
Far away in the forest
A scarab
Glistens

Alone on a breezy dune
An asparagus tip sprouts
A cry
The wind the wind with a parrot's eyes
With funeral processions
And the spinning of famine
The wind flagellates your avid flanks
Your straw fetuses
Your toothless rump
Frenetic Africa
No cruelty spread in the blood
No constraint
Africa of the great night of Edenic death

The pearly gaze of the wolf-spider
Claims birth in the tomb
Of your black dry gullet
Ululate rhombus jackals
Offertories to virginities
Circumcisions
Rain

Hate with palpitating hands
Musically strikes (tattoos on) the skin
Of shadowy Uganda
Arise
May your underarms flame
Tipsy bluish-purple demented with liberty
Pay no mind to the excised gosling's
Squeaks rattles
Gently lift the polar skullcap
Offer the foreskin to the knife
Then crushed like a fig beneath an urban heel
Cause the stickleback to be laid like an egg without spilling sperm
The vegetal
The pointed arch not a Gothic vault
The phallic tree
Sobs as exorbitant as snowmen

Aiming their blunderbuss mouths
Avatars and metal fission
Memory
On the diaphanous carpet
Running with iridescent blood
The swaying hips of a language never learned
Call spell elaborate
Nightmare's alphabet
It is necessary to caress the throat of the one we kill
The flying buttress of the bronze serpent is visible beneath the silk
Offering one's sex to the night.

The evening star
Finally the androgyne
Poised between two doors
Wandering
The sun at sunset
The moon exactly at the crotch
Of a gothic cathedral

Shimmering to split the soul
In the mud of the route
One must stifle the wind that comes before the rain
Silence travelers' flesh
Hang it polluted
On Saturday night's hook
Winged rats
Birds of paradise volcanic glass Jewels
Waste
Sorcerers with large gestures
Who on the hidden side of the tomb
Scatter freckles
All glide while screeching over the black river of the ear
Placid
All Swollen with greenery and slow to vomit
All narrow-minded
Wake up The trade winds from Oriental shores are forever dappled
The somber spectacle of brains draining from nostrils
Would make Gargantua laugh
Mouth full
Which is death, after all
I sneeze

I have often dreamt those dreams
On train platforms
The serpent's belly swells
It will be my chariot
One thousand impenetrable words alight and sparkle
A rock flower
Wild chicory Pleated and curly
Surrounds the sun and its intimate greens
Rustling serrated illnesses
Your shape emerges from the shadows
I rest My head leaning on an old dream's flight
Desolated doughy
In the damp cotton wool of the dead hours
All I await is a silhouette at the end of the alleyway
Grease
Just a profile from the corner of the eye
That irritates and disturbs
Like an impression of smoke on a dirty window
All I await now is the night
The great wave of ash
Oceanic death

Tomorrow Africa
Life
Between dust and the piercing cry
The penis and the bellflower
The rising sun's pupil bleeding on the sand
Naked
The train moves backwards
The belly tortured like a braided cord
Sleep in stair landings moving upwards towards the valley
It was tomorrow
The call
The herniation that explodes between sideburns
Of fortune
No mirror could see
The stretched mouth
The bitter wince
The pale anus of alcoholics
Dawn's sad stink of urine

The very teeth would not know how to lie
The big lips
The sliding seasons
The immense yawn
The aspirating horror
The venom
The vomit
The scarlet rictus
The tarlatan death
Better to kiss the faded lips
Canvas lips cottonade lips
Bleeding lips never closed
Better shut the mouth
That vomits
Better penetrate the Mother
Her seed is the male's desire
His great soiled dream
Petered out
Better to die in rut
Than to renounce lust
Beautiful fruit of the revolution
The man who is free will conquer death

Translated from the French by Katharine Conley