

Poems

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Rabelais' Mango

Poor Mr. Prufrock!
The most frightful breach
of manners his mermaids could imagine
was to let drip
a juicy drop of peach.
I smirk at his dilemma
while the dark yellow of mango
dribbles down my cheek.

Golden lobes of tropical sun
the lazy burn of a summer's afternoon
in that nectar concentrate;
all Gauguin fantasy wrapped inside its skin.
peel back, bite, let it trickle down your chin.

Such bliss cannot be consumed neatly;
not mopped with tissue
nor inhibited by any thought of courtesy.
It must be indulged with absolute daring,
a drooling Pantagrueling ecstasy,
with face plunged bravely into the ripe flesh,
there, to suck all pleasure from the pit.

A Day at Giverny

Nymphéas, water puppets,
baubles of wax color laze
on the black surface of a summer's day.
The green spikes of iris
bearing the standard of purple hearts
cluster at the water's edge
as wisteria droops artfully
over the green japanned bridge:
le nature mort en coquet déshabille.

Only four euros fifty
gets you this original vision
that you can reproduce endlessly
with your digital camera.
One man's version will cost you millions.

You've seen it all before
not only in books and museums,
but on diaries, coffee mugs, placemats,
pillow cases, jigsaw puzzles, lanterns, and mouse pads
multiplied beyond cliché,
fatigued beauty inexhaustibly on display.
So why come all this way
to see the original?

I haven't got Monet's eyes or hands
to recreate the garden in paint;
he has already captured it every hour
of every day, posing nature
like a female body,
already formulated in his mind
for the flowers to replicate.

Or has he?

That day, we saw the garden
Monet never drew, perhaps never dreamed.
An aerial attack launched
from beyond the confines of the gate
loosed seed pods in a storm
of cottony parachutes,

wafting yet falling,
falling, yet flying.
till finally landing.
Soft warm snow covered the pond,
thickly furring it, as mold
massed on mossy furrows,
clung to the bamboo and willows,
blurring definition beyond
Impressionism.

Grotesque! a visitor cried,
appalled at the trick nature had played.
She had come too far, waited too long
to see the garden imitate art
now to watch this wanton act of weeds
corrupt the beauty of the eternal mind.