

Dec 4, 2022

The Planets are an Orchard of Pomegranates

An ekphrastic reading of Leonora Carrington's *Forbidden Fruit* (1969)

Patrick Farmer



Leonora Carrington's *Forbidden Fruit* (1969). Oil on canvas, 49 x 46cm. Private collection. From Susan Aberth, *Leonora Carrington, Surrealism, Alchemy and Art*. Lund Humphries, 2010.

Stable conditions need not be pleasant conditions, and so the pillars of the high priestess whirl and spiral as they're swung by stellar winds and aromal rays, emerging as the birds of Hermes. On closer inspection, separating the stylobate (such tombs that so resemble flowerbeds) upon which the mesmerising Doric entablature rests, it indeed appears that the solidity of this world is far from stable.

In progressive deterioration of temperament and tone, a bovine shadow emerges from the vertiginous bell of the swirling retort. Within this alembic, we do not see only what we see — carbonisation, calcination, condensation of molecular orchards in oil — but the green lion's solar fortuna, will-o'-the-wisp, bacterium of marsh-crystals lobbed from the aspic oils of the sun.

And yet there is an alchemical doctrine, a radial signature, invisible balm-soaked bandages that entangle stone, gas and vitreous Iris. Three sublunary beings. The synodic cycles of Venus as mad elephant surround the brain sand of the omphalos, pineal familiar — wetting Gaia with other cosmic zones, with the icy spasms of animals symbiotically bordered by the mycelial python — itching to animate, hoping to receive the resonant effluvia of astral rays that have travelled on the back of the cosmos, seeking sympathy with interplanetary logos, circular gnosis, the hilarious gold of mystery night.

Pressing green tourmaline, white sapphire and bloodstone to their skulls, they see voltage in the pond of things, a thickening Akashic blackness. In love with the air, poured into waxen auroras of citrine light, they ring out octaves of larval stillness.

♀ ♂ ♀

Over fifty days we etch clades of celestial symbols, heard as if hoof marks in putrefying ciphers, rams fat with freedom. Lacche ricochets as our eyes close to the oscillating pulse of phlegmatic Mercury, a votive cloaca of sewer myrtle, a plant that will forget it's a plant, that becomes a god, a clot of earth.

We are both young and old, Baubo and Iacchus. Our flanks wet with hellebore, rose and wild rue. A chaos of fermenting carbuncles suckle the underside of the Rebis and the stars approach without approaching, wild-rites, wild-rites, spiralling densities of wave-pleasure. Pomegranate seeds respire like the reddening grain of a bullfinch's vent.

Dreams of Venusian jasmine, ecstatic perfumes pulled up from our attributes like the smoke of burning spices as the tamarind trees shimmer with quincuncial manna. Grown from the bellowing meteor of Apep, the milk eyes of a dying viper.

Slops of ergot encircle our serpent's tail. Soon there will beam-skins of obliterative colouring, cut at the rising of the dog star. As we count to five, the circulus mythologicus, a burial site that sows itself, will sweat grain wet with pollen, brilliant black ants in a field of lumia.

♂ ♀ ♀

Inscribed on carnelian, the figure of a fly, cream-black smoke after a fire. A miasma of molten glass is blood from an ear. We are alone with the odour, song and foam. Remnants of words produce their own incestual hum. Our first quarter, red rye held to the queen of the tree, the limerent deceased argue with their graves.

These walls were once statues that bore fruit in their hands, children who sang to seeds becoming trees from their mouths. Vaporious fronds strip the snake in stretches of pomegranate, fig, and fennel. Inanna, Demeter and Eve. Wound-up, willow-eyed, neck-reddened in Anesidora's wren-wide throat.

We wash in the water of hot stones, returning language to the frequencies of planets. Shimmering like glass in a fire, the oil at our hooves kinks like a black road. An optimism of bulls is a delicate interior.

♀ ♀ ♂

Facing the moon in the hour of Jupiter we engrave the head of an ass and the body of a hare, we sing of old loss to the waves. The liver hears if we listen. The air, alive with resonant venae, scatters herbs doused with rose.

To be godlike is to be plantlike, eat the fruit that kneels on its own face. The insides of daybreak are cyanotic lips, mango urine flits of amber perched on sulphur. Life being alive. Three-body chaos emanates from the parabolas of the inanimate.

Wounded quartz bleeds white water, leonine heat of earthly feculence reddens our plexus, argillaceous dragon. Larval atavism carries our worm-bodies like bowls of desire, resounding as fruit drops like rain.

The serpent curdles its way from the goose, plasmic accidents of earth, deaf with age. A yellow spot grows with the soft whitening of belly, the lost intellect of our lungs. The mystery of yellowing night is a bath of gnats in the eye.

)

We creatures of cinnabar sweat mercurial trees, ignite in phosphoric bliss and the dissolution of vermillion. Facing east, carving a likeness of the Taurus moon into a stone of cow's butter, we hear each hair on our bodies, become almonds in oil, suspended under the sign of Lachesis.

Astrum of mercury, the maker of vertigoes, who is Eve, who is Inanna, who is Hekate... Astrum of Venus who is Dana, who is Hathor... Quetzalcoatl that is Cybele, Attis, Ino, Serpent and Goose, who is Gnosis. A tincture laced with diatoms of porphyry, the many venules of the vein.

We are fed with mantic opus of tone, aired between mushroom and Attis, penumbral nerves roll from the melee of the peacock's tail. Smearred wattles of symmetry dowse for stars above a mountain of deaf sharks.

Compose our bile, billow spit and old teeth, spleen is a stable of circular wave-mirrors cut from gasping retinas.

Be found in all things, in crowing waterbugs and resounding placenta. Constellate the seeding virgae, live and die, chew on the enstatic unity of our chimeric mound. Luna, sol, and the conjunction of the red giant.

Mercurius of many flowers, spiritus of many transformations. The clarified moon grows from date branches, the beam of its silver-gall extends toward the Martial succour of long nights and phloem.

Post

The heliacal rising of the solstitial sun inhabits each house in turn, and around CE 50 the age of Pisces began. The previous eon, that of Aries, dispersed as the cosmos

storied from one wave to another. From the sign of the fish arose a Piscean hallucination, a confrontation on the shore.

Slowly following the perfumed edges of Argos, mutely populated with noise, the circles of the moon slowed in obverse solar optimism of inner space. A depthless voice rattled its own edges with the green pines that blur and crack the mind. Great Pan is dead! Great Pan is dead! Soon we will lack the eyes to spin the cosmos.

Listening, no matter how hard it is to hear, the will of those attending to the opening of the stars held the world open on their tongues, licked by anemones. The Apologists took pitch and claimed this passing to be the change of eons, spanning the roughly two thousand year periods associated with the equinoctial precession.

Within this period the logos began to fall silent, obscure. Cosmological mutism enveloped magical thinking in an age of anxiety as words began to conspire in new ways. *Forbidden fruit* is an ingredient in revisioning this zodiacal wheel, vibrating fields in the ecliptic plane.

Works Referenced:

- 'omphalos' – K Kerényi. *The Gods of the Greeks*.
- 'interplanetary logos' – D.P. Walker. *Spiritual and Demonic Magic*.
- 'gnosis' – I Couliano. *The Tree of Gnosis. Gnostic Mythology from Early Christianity to Modern Nihilism*.
- 'wild rue' – D Flattery & M Schwarz. *Haoma and Harmaline*.
- 'lacche' – a chant reputedly called during the mother-cult mysteries of Eleusis. M.L. Von Franz. *The Problem of the Puer Aeternus*.
- 'Apep' – Ancient Egyptian embodiment of chaos.
- 'slops of ergot' – A Hofmann, C Ruck & G Wasson. *The Road to Eleusis*.
- 'circulus mythologicus' – K Kerényi. *Eleusis*.
- 'lumia' – pear lemon. See *The Lumia*, a painting by Johann Christoph Volkamer.
- 'Quetzalcoatl' – see Leonora Carrington's *Mujeres conciencia* poster. Part of the transcription on the back of the work reads: 'Eve gives Eve back the fruit'.
- 'Great Pan is dead!' – Plutarch. *On The Failure of Oracles*.
- 'and so the Apologists' – such as Lactantius, Tertullian, Origen and Eusebius. A.C. Dulles. *A History of Apologetics*.
- 'an age of anxiety' – Dodds, E.R. *Pagan and Christian in an Age of Anxiety*.

Patrick Farmer can be found online at: <https://patrickfarmer.org/>