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Atalanta's Reign

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Atalanta's Reign

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Atalanta's Reign

If Tuesday morning urged it
I could run with Atalanta,
I could run with her over hills and rocks
And through forests and cities and mountains,
I could run with her and it would feel
like the first time cognac burned my throat,
the first time I cut myself shaving,
the first time my body felt overwhelmed
and succumbed by giving birth to a
sweaty bloodstained manuscript,
a manuscript whose yellowed letters carelessly flow through
the veins in my arms, my legs, my head
and sprout forth into words,
words that I spit out in a thick rush of phlegm,
that wraps and captures my audience
who sit at tables which sit on checkered floors
as they drink coffee and they drink tea
and they pray to God and to Allah
and grow beards and wear glasses
and bow to the east,
bow to the home of mosques
and ancient rivers and sacred stone roads,
roads that lead to castles and churches and schools
in Spain and France and Germany
where snow falls leaving a white shroud
over the country,
roads that fall and rise over protruding landscape
that falls and rises towards the sky,
roads that are made of brick,
brick that is holy, brick that is strong,
brick that silently breaks the portrait of the land,
brick that is used to create towns and to create villages
and to restore the roads that softly run
through the great expanse of the land,
roads that become paths that twist and
wind through forests,
forests that shed and give their
needles and leaves to the ground,
forests that lay calm, smothered in the
overwhelming fervor of the night,
forests that surrender their roads to the
inescapable radiance of day,
roads that shine with magnificent splendor,
Atalanta's Reign

If Tuesday morning urged it
I could run with Atalanta,
I could run with her over hills and rocks
And through forests and cities and mountains,
I could run with her and it would feel
like the first time cognac burned my throat,
the first time I cut myself shaving,
the first time my body felt overwhelmed
and succumbed by giving birth to a
sweaty bloodstained manuscript,
a manuscript whose yellowed letters carelessly flow through
the veins in my arms, my legs, my head
and sprout forth into words,
words that I spit out in a thick rush of phlegm,
that wraps and captures my audience
who sit at tables which sit on checkered floors
as they drink coffee and they drink tea
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and ancient rivers and sacred stone roads,
roads that lead to castles and churches and schools
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where snow falls leaving a white shroud
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and to restore the roads that softly run
through the great expanse of the land,
roads that become paths that twist and
wind through forests,
forests that shed and give their
needles and leaves to the ground,
forests that lay calm, smoothered in the
overwhelming fervor of the night,
forests that surrender their roads to the
inescapable radiance of day,
roads that shine with magnificent splendor,
roads that flow past towns and villages
and myself who could run with Atalanta,
but as Tuesdays sun falls
I put my swollen pen down
and watch as she
travels down a road which
I refuse to take.

—Mark Bowers

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