1966

Jody

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Abstract
In lieu of an abstract, below is the essay's first paragraph.

"I have come home to the bed of my boyhood slightly drunk and weaving with dreams unstrung. Poppa is dead, and Jody, my little brother, sleeps beside me; his hands fragile as glass, his heart a silver bird."

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JODY

By MIKE GOODWIN

I have come home to the bed of my boyhood slightly drunk and weaving with dreams unstrung. Poppa is dead, and Jody, my little brother, sleeps beside me; his hands fragile as glass, his heart a silver bird.

Jody is a song so slowly played that oftentimes his bones ache. All the hidden stars and magic dreams unprojected in his skull will have him reeling soon. Let him sleep and gather strength.

I feel him growing, tawny lions revel in his hair. His mystic roots seek down through the bed to the core of the earth, his fingers are a transparent brilliance as they streak of lightning over my heart in sleep. He will search my heart deep and bury me in his spangled universe. Gypsy eyes has my Jody, long black spiderweb lashes and puddles of fireflies. I love him. He is my father's seed sprung to flower.

My mother is a dark warm womb fertile and suffering, cultivating in joy delicate flowers of blood from the earth. My mother is eyes and in her spinning my father was mystery. Emptiness and quiet light. The source and product of my mother's fitful blooming. Only from the spinning womb can my spinning eyes see.

I did not understand him, my father, he was the string, my mother music. She echoed and loomed out of his emptiness weaving colors of psychological song but always she returned tiptoe to his silent spring. My father's only music was time itself ticking off my mother's veins one by one, sucking milk and growing like balloons, her children.

October wind above the sugar shingles. Blind sensuous tension of a child's hand groping.

Circus quilted night, my little brother Jody shivers in tented dreams like a silver bell unrung and running in your chill. His slender hands in sleep have strained my heart and found the pain. Scarecrows rend his wind and his breath comes tumbling in blackbird air patches. Poppa is dead. Only field mice remain squinteyed asleep and trembling in funny furry balls beneath the leaves of corn between the breaths of hay. Jack Frost builds cities of ice from the minted breath of Jody's tinkling valleys. I need not tell him now. Poppa is dead.

Swiftly they pass
Me by,
These fledglings crass,
And I
Who twice their years
Almost
This 'vale of tears'
My post
Have kept, must lie
Aside
And let them fly!
Alas,
Unfeeling band,
Run, pass!
Fly on, nor stand
To view
My temple's gray
With hue
Of ash, nor stay,
Though meet
It be that you
Retreat . . .
For this I sue,
My due:
Just give me place
(My due!)
To set the pace
For YOU!

Musings
of
An Ancient
Pedagogue

Gay, carefree band,
Too soon
You'll learn to stand—
Too soon
You'll learn to wait
While boys
Of flying gait
And joys
Unclouded, dash
You by,
Unthinking, rash.
As I
Do now, then you
Will be
Too quick to rue
their glee
And mourn their waste
Of zeal . . .
And curse their haste
And feel
Your patience tried
And bruised,
Your cherished pride
Abused!