

Les Wicks

The Navigator

I was a spurty young man, my babies milled about
as useless as education. Autumn came,
they were driven to market their
cream & caramel skins that trembled prettily.
All my women ate well that dusk
& new offspring budded in the dark.

But this is not enough for heroes, we need
art & wars – so armed with sharp stories
I became famous, feared & followed.
Three peoples found themselves named after me
while I took their minerals.
Blessings are everywhere.

So much metal, I built a ship, the sailors
had new lead teeth.
Their slings downed giants
& warriors with equal penetration.

Discovered more men,
we are miraculous when we army.
I danced to discover
the warmth that comes from burning shelter.

Reading a holiday book I ran across the notion
of hordes, bought 3000 shares
which qualified me for bishop,
duke & nylon lines of credit which tied up
yet more enemies, this tangle of significance.

There were four diseases, they ate my nose.
Laughed & snorted at each temerity that
turned others' marrow towards peace.
Was brought more meals,
this world is consumption & shit.
I squatted above you all

but time squats above me.
With no more seed & eyes deceptive I falter –
though there may be journeys yet.
I stand upon the sand that you are
as gods beckon me to their knives.

The Mother

As the men roar about town
we women are taught nothing assiduously.
The weight of eggs hobble the world but
somehow I've fermented into power.

Did what was needed,
taught most of the babies to explode,
conscripted the rest to join my throng.

Having invaded the temples
found just money.
Slaves worked meticulously on the tapestries,
though in the end
liberty was the poem that put out their eyes.
Down by the filthy harbour
ambitious sisters root about the wreckage
of 40 sailors' dreams with scissor & claw.

Over at the souk
lesser ladies sell their ladies
for they are expensive meat.
Draped in silks & placental ribbons
successive deals have taught them
all about the block, & necessity.

The old king was surprised,
he looked about at what he gained,
could anyone want *this*?
I sucked on his cock
lay down at his feet
& cut them off.

So become a beast
I rule carrion with my flies & millipedes.
With a promise of the flail
the colours of my rage
still burn the dusk.

A pudgy sun needs this succour –
pain eats the awful eternity of its rhythm.
So moves without choice
towards the dark, towards me.

The Merchant

This heat.
No rain for months,
beneath my fans the cash ruffles tenderly
as fulgent cornfields cede to umber.
Each hunger is a transaction.
My scarlet blouse is a flag,
all loans will be harvested.

I have two blonde men leashed out in the yard.
Sure that they are masters
they are sweet, loopy yapping pups.
Their irrelevance sprays across the lawn.

Birds are disappearing,
some of my children are sick.
Love is an acquisition... have seen others burst
with feelings, it's just a mess.
Charity weakens our pockets
& guilt is a minor tarnish on the blade.

I have built a world,
albeit small.
It is one where argument cannot exist without
the durians of profit.
So this busyness of commerce that I am
lights fires deep in the last forest that remains.
It has a purpose:
as kindling I sell the popular light, a certainty that
my customers need never face their murk.

There are other globes, unavoidable competition
so I sweeten viziers' plates,
assure the princes they matter.
Yet more dealing but pace nowadays passes for virtue
& I will write all the books to come.

Holy One

Air conditioning has become a core part of spiritual life,
it's like Facebook you can breathe.
A choir is essential, at least
some sporadic chanting

You all are together now
beneath me. My hands can heal
myself, keep yours to yourself -
that taint, the blood.

When you pick at souls,
that unwind to wholes
then are spindled on up again
all the fibres are so busy
they think they're warmth.

I live between your battle arrays
ploughed into each garden
erected strategically on the vantage points
& carried to the flooding river like a sandbag.

This crooked joy that I am
keeps you living & in a job
though the guilt I sprinkle
stains the robes of your prospects.

An urgency for flight passes as my pulse.
The heart not tied
my eyes cored obligatory books &
led the cattle to their slaughter.

Whichever god is a player, sure,
it gets its due.
I keep the rest which
is no more than I deserve.

The key is *flexibility* – win the wars
& invent all that surrounds you.
Purpose is a narcotic
& who else has the supply?