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On Heart Caught Like an Iris

Judah M. Turkat

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OH HEART CAUGHT LIKE AN IRIS

Alone I sit and mourn his death,
 The lost of line and grace—
 The tamarisk before my tent.
 These my now effortless hands
 Finger the fleece stained with blood
 From the flowering of my love.

As thoughts uncurl in my mind
 And cluster like wildflowers
 On the fringes of hills or rocks
 Or rise from sea depths in the heart
 They burn like cinnamon in the brain
 And taste like myrrh in my throat.

Oh heart caught like an iris
 Between the ivy and the flame
 Under Jehovah's eyes I crossed the riverford
 In the darkness of the night
 A fugitive seeking refuge.

2.

Where the stars toss and ride
 The salt foam of the skies
 Your oriole voice rings with truth
 From East to West
 And withered roots and leaves
 Revive like rose petals scarlet
 In the russet sunset light.

3.

Knowing the secret touch of her lips
 And smile deathless in her eyes
 I know but a glint
 Of the sweetness that lies beyond
 For you have stopped me
 O my Lord
 With a velvet curtain before my eyes
 As shadow falls on shadow
 And doubt on doubt lies.

Could I but see
The iris of his eyes
Face white
Sheltering a wise heart
I would cry aloud
There is nourishment in God!
Indeed, indeed,
There is nourishment in God!
Pity me O Lord
In the bitterness of my plight.
Lift the ash white veils
From my comfortless eyes!

JUDAH M. TURKAT

LOVE POEM

Like a giant beast that has no tongue
my love snarls fitfully

like the pool where an agate is
center-dropped it spreads

like a muscular organ constrained by clothes
cries release

like the terrible cautious finger pricked by thorn
it drops its blood

JOHN WILLIAMS

ELEGY FOR THOMAS WOLFE

These words at night, from beyond the town, return with the
sound of bells.

Railroadin', behind an eight driving engine, with the rails ringing.
In a southern town at night flat in the hot night air and hushed
by the earth the sound of bells.

Railroadin', behind an eight driving engine, with the rails ringing.
At night beyond the black belt, the lonely cries of infants, the
soft and garbled sounds of slumber.