Enduring Current: A Possible Dream Sequence

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Published In
The Sloping Halls Review, 7.
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A Possible Dream Sequence

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1. The Descent

The instructions for dream
are written in Sanskrit
on the insides of your eyelids:

Look deep into the well,
its mossy walls disturbed
by shadows,
all of them yours.
Cast a bucket down.

2. Guardian Angel

You enter the flea market reproduction
hanging on the flowery wall
behind your canopied bed.

The floating lady guards
the boy and girl crossing
the wobbly bridge;
her long blue gown
fluttering. You trail
behind her. Blinded
by a sudden spray of cold
you clutch for rope—
one bare foot slips
between the boards.
A tap on your shoulder—
you turn and reach.
No one there—
but up ahead, a single crow
lands on twine.
3. Christmas Encounter

Fearful of the dark wings circling
your canopied ceiling, you sneak
out of the room and peek
at your mother half-tangled under covers
in a black velvet dress as you shuffle
past her open doorway. You tiptoe
down creaking stairs; spot
the round back of your father's head
reclined on the battered arm rest
of the family room couch.
His left hand hangs limp
above a bottle of Absolut;
his right clutches the remote.
A woman in red underwear pours
a grey business suit a drink.
He changes the channel
upon your padded approach:
The Grinch Who Stole Christmas.
He stumbles to the kitchen
for more ice; returns with a bucketful
and a glass of milk. Sitting next to him
on the coffee-stained couch, you try
to watch the grinch's antics without blinking—
he pours himself another drink—
you whimper. He wraps
you in his pinstriped pajama arms—
you gulp for oxygen; your eyeballs
glassy and wet as the sweaty bottle
that has toppled over.
The runoff puddles
your mother's dark red carpet.

4. A Warning

You are warning
the man of your dreams
seated in the large velvet chair
by your bedside
about the inevitability
of disaster. He offers
his usual scoff,
ashes his cigarette
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on the carpet, sips
his usual scotch.
Whirling wings
outside the window—
you beg him to notice
the slow downward spiral
of the wasp
beneath the lampshade,
the plane crashing outside.
He roughly grabs
your hands, weeps
for the passengers
on that slow-motion plane,
its scissor wings
heading towards the glass.
He wrenches you
from stiff sheets,
teaches you how to run
blindly from disaster.
The familiar staircase sags
beneath your weight.

On the street you watch
the delicate ghost of the plane,
a white moth, ascend
into a midnight sun.
The rising of your sleeping soul—
the flapping, angelic snore.

5. Christmas Confession

Your lover shakes you awake;
his icy fingers trail down your exposed back.
You reach for your dress, notice
the empty bottle blazing on the nightstand.
You slowly poke your head out of the black,
feel the velvet graze down your cheeks.

You run out the door, slipping on the ice patches
down the driveway to your mother’s old, beat-up car.
You turn the radio up full blast— the steering wheel
vibrates— you cannot drown out the choking
of your lover’s sobs. You roll down the windows—
flurries slapping against your cheeks from all sides—
cannot undo what he has done. You fly past billboards of women in red lace, men smoking cigars.

6. A Familiar Song

The scenes of Calvary run like a pornographic film. You are running up and down aisles chased by drugstore effigies; saints step down from their niches, form a long procession line to the Emergency Exit. A blazing afternoon sun on the screen—Jesus is poolside sipping a martini, humming the words *My god, my god why have you forsaken me?*

7. A Visitation

You wake up in a room crowded with actors swinging from trapezes, scarves loosely wrapped around their necks, defining delicate jaw lines. You try to tell yourself that all this glamour, all these private late-night parties, cocaine deserts, won't save anyone. The room swells with silence. The Star of the show floats into the center of the room in her long blue gown. Behind her the boy and girl from the bridge are dressed in drag. They lift her satin train above the ash-covered carpet. She approaches you in the large burgundy chair you dozed off in, and you close your eyes—await her platinum forgiveness.

8. A Reawakening

You return to the icy bridge and fall to your knees. Bracing yourself between two splintered boards, you carefully lower your body onto the frozen river. You know
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the gleaming silver object in the distance
is an ice pick and what you must do with it.

A child faceless as a stone
smoothed by years of enduring current
looks at you from under the ice.

Your fever swelling, the river
beneath your bare knees begins to thaw.
The pick’s fierce face glaring,
you realize you must lie flat and naked
on the ice to melt through.

*

After your guardian angel lifts
you out of cold water:
notice the sexless, porcelain child
at your side. Remove the icicles
from her eyes, hold her tightly
to your chest. Rub her forehead;
weep because you cannot erase
the faint claw marks.