

That Long Revolution

Azadeh Feridoun Pour

*To all the brave women of my home country, Iran, who are
fighting against the monolith of Theocratic Patriarchy.
With deepest love and gratitude.*

I.

It was two hundred eighty million years ago when I was first washed ashore.
It was Permian,
everything was soon to be extinct,
the coming loss my birth mark.

—“A loss of something ever felt I — / The first that I could recollect
Bereft I was — of what I knew not / Too young that any should suspect”—

They gave me my ID card, marked by some straight scratches,
a “marker of that which no longer exists”.
They didn’t say to whom the loss was payable:
my fathers were not the Pilgrims but rebels on strike against God.
“Revolutions must always divide generations”,
and peace should be always “dependent on a balance of terror”.

—“[A]n eagle red with blood, / shall come a guest unbidden to your banquet.
All day long he will tear to rags your body, / great rents within the flesh,
feasting in fury on the blackened liver”—

I am battle-fatigued now and am watching the ships that will never sail to Heraclea.
The winds are blowing high, and the albatross is flying low.
The Ancyent Marinere is asleep yet and his rime unsung.
I won’t shoot the albatross,
but the mist will still sit low, day after day, upon the expansive fragility of oceans.

Thirst, since time immemorial, these lands have remembered.

—“Water, water, everywhere,

Nor any drop to drink”—

Yes, these are the lands of no desire, as arid as our bureaucratised souls.

We have suffered enough, even though we didn't shoot the albatross.

But I have slept with monsters: “[A]fter such knowledge, what forgiveness?”

Nobody cared that I was azure-blue, risen from the sea,

Venus Libertina, that Permanent Revolution.

They read me as some “seismic ripple effects”, dancing with the Undines.

But it was my back, the bridge you crossed over, suspended between two worlds:

“One dead, / The other powerless to be born”.

Aurora wove the dawn, Penelope the lies and I the grand finale: *Consummatum est*,
a tableau vivant of “Death by Milky Way”.

Yes, I set myself on fire.

I was a truth in masquerade when I burned to ashes.

It was the Ash Wednesday, and I was scorched by their Herr.

—“Herr God, Herr Lucifer / Beware / Beware.

Out of the ash / I rise with my red hair / And I eat men like air”—

Open the floodgates.

Call the Harpies before life happens.

Only they can sing songs of metamorphoses.

The Dead Sea Scrolls are still to be written.

They will bribe the History.

They will weave the story of History with the story in History.

They will write poetry before Auschwitz, before everything flies dead into its majestic spin.

Call them, I will keep the night open.

Call Sibyls.

Tell them to “forget about remembering”.

Tell them to write everything anew.

Their minds should be due for birth pangs, for a caesarean.

Call Leucothea.

We should sail further ahead to far lands, where Blue Girls are burning.¹

Call Tethys.

Helios is on his way.

His every track a flash of golden fire.

It would be hell, hell, a searing hell.

—“Water, water, everywhere,

Nor any drop to drink”—

II.

It was two hundred eighty million years ago when I was first washed ashore and saw an iceberg.

Everything was white, and my soul was leaking.

I took my hourglass, counted the sands and broke the glass:

I'm timeless now, the goddess of gods,

so weak, waiting for the next eagle.

—O Ancyent Marinere, O my Vitruvian Man,

Why have I been so in love with marchlands?

Feeling at home in passing “like night, from land to land”?—

It's not the cross I'm hanging about my neck but the moon,

and I'm that tall tower of a lighthouse now, waiting for Penelope and her army of Sirens.

Scylla will fly over my right shoulder, Charybdis over the left.

But there won't be a second coming, I know.

The Sun will die from a fever,

The Earth will crash into infinity, and the Universe will forget.

Lethe will flow in the Cave of Sleep again.

Particles of dust will shrine nothingness.

The gods will think of no more coronations, and the Night will reign again.

III.

It was two hundred eighty million years ago when I first saw the albatross.

“[A] Suspicion, like a Finger / Touches my Forehead now and then

That I am [still] looking oppositely” for the site of grapevines,

where everything began,

the epic of my lost years,

Semper Eadem, Semper Una,

solid and monotonous, like my sorrow, like my loss.

Azadeh Feridoun Pour arrived in Adelaide in 2016 to do her PhD in English and Creative Writing at the University of Adelaide. This beautiful city has been her home since. She has published a couple of poems in *Plath Profiles*, a peer-reviewed journal published at Indiana University, Northwest, US. She currently works at Flinders University.

ⁱ Sahar Khodayari, also known as the Blue Girl, was a devoted supporter of Esteghlal Football Club in Iran. She tried to attend a match played by her favorite team at the Azadi Stadium in Tehran in March 2019. However, given the national ban on women attending such events, Sahar had to disguise herself as a man. Unfortunately, she was caught and arrested. Later that year, in September, the Islamic Revolutionary Court of Tehran informed her that she might face a six-month jail sentence for her “offense” of watching the football match in disguise. After the court hearing, Sahar feared her patriarchal and religious father’s response and set herself on fire in front of the building, ultimately leading to her death. In an interview broadcast on Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB) after her death, Sahar’s father expressed his unwavering belief in the laws of the Islamic regime and Sharia and showed no regard for his daughter’s life and tragic death.