

Jake Berry

Evocations for Adelle

Come into being.

Remember.

When I kiss you farewell, remember.
When I hold your hand and whisper
words that only you will understand –
remember.

He wanted to run,
the way he ran as a boy,
through the fields on a hot summer day
down to the spring, dying of thirst,
and dive in –
buried in water so cold it took his breath away

He wanted to run again
to some distant place,
far beyond human reckoning
where he could sit still
until nothing remained –
gone out on the edge of silence
where the voices came
and he saw things
no one would understand –

Remember.

I am coming home
by the same route
I always take coming home from work.
Our neighborhood is the same
except everything is immaculately clean,
clean and vividly green,
more green than after a shower,
more green than I've ever seen it before.
The flowers are wildly blooming,
The colors, the perfumes,
the rush of wings
out of the trees as I pass
is so intoxicating I almost swoon.

Suddenly, all the houses have vanished.
The hills roll down to the bay
as they must have long ago.
Our house alone remains,
the lemon trees in back
so close to the kitchen window
you could reach out and take one.

Walking through the front door
I hear you in the kitchen.
You are singing as you cook.
The savory odor so comforting
so immediately home
meatballs – your mother's recipe –
You are still singing as you embrace me
and kiss the back of my neck

Remember.

What is that song?
I used to sing it *you*
long ago
when we were barely more than children

Remember.

“Now you have died and come into being,
O thrice happy one,
On this day”
“...on the right side, a spring
and a white cypress”
You are thirsty – you are parched – do not drink!
Remember
“ahead you will find a lake,
cold water pouring forth.”
Speak to the guardians there,
they are standing just to the left of the cypress,
tell them,
“I am of Earth and starry Sky,
I am parched with thirst,
. . . my race is heavenly, you know this.
Please grant me
drink from the spring.”

You must learn to see your image,

not your reflection in the mirror,
but the shape of your living
as it plays in space-time

the cells you cannot know
looping free of the sky

Do not be concerned with breathing.
You are breath itself.

I remember the great flock of blackbirds
we saw that cold day on the river
They stretched from one horizon to the other
we watched for hours
and never saw the end of them

I remember your face
as if I am seeing it for the first time –
I am falling in love with you
so suddenly, I am drowning in forever.
How many of us?
So many I cannot see them all –
The family we carry in our blood –
Our son, trembling in my arms –
I have waited so long to see you!
“A child of Earth and starry Sky.”

a razor
“a nick on the jaw”
a day the same unlike any other
“along the bloodline”

I remember the rituals we kept –
our private rites
held toward the sky inside
I repeat each one step by step
I know this dance so well,
so completely that I forget myself
I forget my self
as if the last step
is a light beyond Earth, sun and starry sky –

Remember, child, remember –
Drink deeply –
the water over your head
drowning forever in love

You have come into being

“a haze – nirwanna – rest and night – oblivion.”

The fresh wet light
The rain's sweet music

Remember

With you now, my love,
the multitude born in us
remembering, remembering!
gone out
in waves
unbound!

Nothing born of starlight knows this embrace.

The oblivion of your kiss.
The fresh wet light
remembering this

Be still a moment –
Can you hear
in this silence

the boundless water
calling?

Notes:

“Now you have died and come into being...” - excerpts from funerary tablets placed on the bodies of Orphic initiates 4th to 2nd centuries BCE.

“a nick on the jaw” - from Adelle Foley's poem and book “Along the Bloodline.”

“a haze – nirwanna...” - from Walt Whitman's poem “Twilight.”

Jake Berry is a widely published poet, musician, and visual artist. His books include *Species of Abandoned Light*, *Genesis Suicide* and three volumes of the visual-verbal poem *Brambu Drezi*. His most recent album, *Mystery Songs*, was released in spring 2016. He lives with his wife, cats, and a host of household spirits in Florence, Alabama.