

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.