



Lady of the Mountain

Naomi Lowinsky

Some Questions for the Dream Maker

Why in the dream drama
do you cast me in such
a nasty role? Force me to force
a daughter of Atatürk out
of her family mansion in Istanbul? She

with the free flowing hair Me
turned collaborator with my old foe the patriarch
who would claim in my name her Ottoman inheritance
Istanbul? I've never even been to Istanbul
And the young woman I'm on her side Or

Is there an Istanbul within me? A city of long ago

glory An old lady city
whose empires have crumbled
whose melancholy clings to aging dwellings
Is there a dark-eyed young woman within me

pushed out of privilege lost to her stars
gazing at the Bosphorus through what used to be
her window Where can she go? There's turmoil
in the streets There's war next door A tyrant who murders
his own people Refugees flood the borders

This is an old story I think of my own
dark-eyed mother cast out of childhood
sent wandering from world to world
with false papers Who invaded her
many storied home before it was bombed?

Our lady of Istanbul charms me Offers me wine
from her father's cellar Shows me her grandmother's library
books I know well on the unearthed goddess "Your goddess" she
says
"is my goddess" It is dusk We sit among sepia photographs
She wants us to live here together inherit each other's ghosts

Doesn't she know what they do to collaborators?

Dream maker if this is high drama
meant to reveal what I can't comprehend

Couldn't you turn up the lights?

Sometimes Before First Light

I hear hobgoblin music elf lyre faerie fiddling banshee harpist plucking every note of
dread out of a slow dawn My right breast could be harboring an enemy The doctor points
to a suspicious shadow on his imaging machine amidst galaxies of magnified crushed
flesh This shadow in the shape of a cigar is just the size an elf might smoke while
dreaming up a trick to play upon a body trying to get back to sleep

The music turns processional I'm in a tribe of elfin folk proceeding gravely to the central
fire The Mother of the Mountain takes my hand Tongues lick the dark A carved mask
appears eyes and mouth aflame Don't you see? It burns but is not consumed? She kisses
me full on the mouth Is this Her claim on me? Her blessing? The beginning of my end?

Breast aches Stomach lurches Heart speaks Steady old girl Mind gone trouble shooting
amidst galaxies of magnified crushed flesh what does it know? Can't hear the music
Can't feel the fire Can't see the faerie folk fading into dawn

Naomi Ruth Lowinsky's chapbook *The Little House on Stilts Remembers* won the Blue Light Poetry Prize. Her books include *The Faust Woman Poems* and a memoir, *The Sister from Below: When the Muse Gets Her Way*. A new collection of essays, *The Rabbi, the Goddess and Jung: Getting the Word from Within* is forthcoming. Lowinsky blogs about poetry and life at sisterfrombelow.com.