



Image from Merab Abramishvili

Brian Martens

The Rilke

Homage to Rilke's poem, *The Panther*

Timid in hat and coat,
sitting on a bench
in the Paris Zoo,
he stares.

Sitting apart from comfort,
his body hidden,
barring him from an opening
to see into the animals.

He comes day after day
observing me, testing his will
to discover a path, to pierce
and expose inside.

Daily, imprisoned in hat and coat,
his vision paces less, moves further,
until he trusts.

His eyes seize me,
without the bars
passing, knows the thread is felt
between us, and suddenly he's aware,

I am Panther.

Take Me Away

Circus in town,
characters, actors, costumes,
passion.
Your athletic costume
riding your enchanted steed.

Legs rising strength to
standing. Spangled arms
in a mist of sawdust and smells.
Horse obeying feminine desire.

Ringleader whipping more rapture,
the excitement of you, riding
fiery passion, saddled, costumed,
perfect with fanfare.

Finished roar and applause, flame
of dancing imagination, seductive
shimmering lips, tender feast,
tasting you.

Leaving the ring, I follow,
dreaming myth, magic. Take
me away with your red smile,
hair of gold, ravens flying.

Walking to the edge,
joining the circus and you,
a feast of seduction,
under Omar's tent.

Sun in Ear

I awoke with the Sun in my ear,
hearing the first day's light.
This unusual rising in my ear,
telling me to wake to listening.

This image of sun in ear,
the light of listening.

I listened to the brightening room,
lifting and rising the day ahead.
This awakening, this dawning, my
senses filling every space of the day.

Repeating the mystery each day,
and this day remembered
for lighting the way to listening.

Raven Conspiracy

Opening my eyes to five Ravens,
outside my window. Reminding
me of a myth, an act of grace
presented years before
when I witnessed a conspiracy of ravens,
eighty feet up in a redwood, bantering
back and forth, croaking, and cawing
their opinions.

Two ravens coaxing a third, the appointed
soul perched below, alone on a horizontal.
The redwood their theater, suddenly,
it flapped, squawked, and hung
head-down from the branch.

Wings tightly holding its dark, iridescent
body. I stood mesmerized, witnessing
this fervent drama. More chatter
until unexpectedly, seeking freedom,
it let go.

I gasped, not trusting its bird-like ability.
Raven tucked like a speeding bullet, dove
head first, reached twenty feet above ground,

turned up into rarefied air and giggled away.

Those aerobic antics held in the
imagination of clear air, leaving me
in awe, grateful.

Remembering my vision, the five
here now, appeared as a curtain call
to remind me of the enduring
story of the impetuous raven.

They continued walking, and hopping,
suddenly, brushed away
by the wind, scattered like leaves,
imprinting the scene of the great
letting go, to trust the unseen.

Brian Martens first book of poetry, *Three Raven Gate*, was published in 2019. He offers creativity workshops and is a “CA Poets in the Schools” instructor. He also co-hosts the Santa Rosa Arts Center’s “Speakeasy” poetry and music open mic and has a podcast called “The Spoken Symbol.”