

MAKE MERCURIAL + CALCIFY

Sue Rainsford

Long time to be sleeping, and growing more heavy-lidded all the while.

Sub-surface, strong-headed sea god; semi-demonic, semi-divine.  
More dismembered and mutilated than hybrid.

Still in a throne of sorts but time slips by somewhat emptily, thus unoccupied.

Hard to remember time as anything other than suet and whey to get fat on, its constant consumption simply another reason to feel tired.

Besides, it matters little, that you're tired.

No need to gather into a procession, here. No call for zealotry, with the moss grown around you like any other stone—and how *like* a stone you've become, in this deep spot you're riven to. Perpetually sedentary with all your arrivals all spent, all expired.

Did you know, when the seabed parted, this would be the last place you ever came to? Could you feel then that you'd never again be on your way, having caught first sight of a would-be invasion?

Never again put to use your skills of pillage and plunder.

It must have been impossible to imagine, at first, the length and breadth of this banishment. Impossible, initially, to grasp that into this foaming dark the rest of your days would unwind with the stones buffering smooth and the water growing evermore salted and your skin growing as tough as necessary to tolerate the cold.

Oh, Balor, who do you look on now with your ravenous, inky eye?  
Does your every glance still land fatal under so many gallons of water?  
Who bears the weight of your lashes these days, Balor?  
Who polishes your pupil to make it shine?  
And do you sleep there, inside your shuttered vision?  
Or are you wakeful? Biding time?

Once you were gone we took to wagering how long before you forgot the feel of land beneath you. Is it bitter or sweet to know that the land where it is loamy, shifting and granular, recalls keenly your tall, ample tread?

That it clucks and coos, even now, at the prospect of shifting again beneath you?

Regardless of whether you were demoted, were *once* celestial, you left something in the soil here. Call it a certain tenor, call it a set of tools.

But what happens, now, if your name is called, Balor?

Can you even hear them?

Calling?





It's a problem we've so far treated with speed, whirr and camber. An issue we've countered by cresting, by going flat out and full. It's an obstacle we've so far managed by perfecting undulation so that no matter the surface, no matter the conditions—sand, gravel, ice or snow—we swerve from one corner to the other and are fitted readily to each and every curvature that we have, in any case, long been braced for.

This is what we hold closest: bracing *in advance*, slipping out of the noose that is linear time and rehearsing every deviation that would see velocity and traction fail to align.



Despite the speed employed this is not a matter of evasion. It is a matter of shifting the precarity we've been left with—that someone *else* left behind. It's a matter of lessening estrangement and the constant, *constant* caution of irrevocably traversing an unseen line.

Evasion is temporary.

Our escape, when we make it, will have been for nothing if it doesn't prove a thing enduring.



*Your* passion, we know, was once a thing relentless and unbounded:

we know you set the sea to blazing  
and sentenced children to die by  
drowning  
we know you suffered bodies into  
blending with the sand



How did you bring to pass wishes so fervent and unfettered?

By what umbilical growth did you nurture such potent desire?

And how did you carry such a force as though it were any other simple organ? How did you manage living with your very heart on fire?



We took the steps we did because they were ancient. Well tried and often tested—timeless, seasoned methods such as

drought and blight  
raze and quell

that enabled us

make tenebrous  
make wither  
make dry

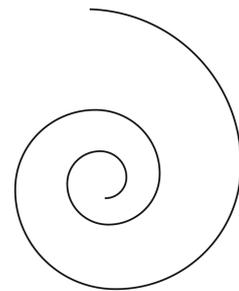
Sometimes an eel wrapped unnoticed 'round an enemy 'til their ribs were breaking or a Phantom Queen swept the battle toward her favoured side, and at others still a hooded crow would alight on the carmine stain some defeated body had left behind.

It's a matter of nothing other than *appetite*, of garnering a palette that savours what is volatile. It is a matter of sleeping next to the weapon you might be felled on, of awakening every morning to a poisoned thorn nudged a little more deeply into your side.

It takes less than you think for such an urgency to calcify, following which you need do very little to keep it alive.

There are words you might feel drawn to:

amass  
procure  
corral  
ensnare and beguile



but you would fare better to think of a  
flood and what a flood does,  
when it's moving.

Water is not violent when it fulfils its brutal, drenched desires and whatever may be asked of a flood, it is never asked to compromise.

Think of yourself as a flood.  
Think of yourself as a rising, viscous tide.



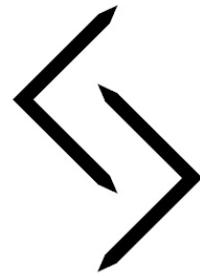
A beacon with its edges blazing, untouched by temperature or climate, prone only to molten, magnet pull. You are a planet that, though small, alters the moon's orbit while standing in its cold shadow. You are a seismic shift that sets the night to trembling until it turns fruit-like and edible, until it turns to a deep soft space you can make a cut inside; the softest part of the ripest pear that gives itself up when you put your mouth to it, without your even needing to bite.

You turn the night to a piece of fruit that knows what it is your mouth desires.

When you look over what's been restored to you, remember it is something which should never have been taken.

It is an animal, kneeling; an animal you forgot existed, temporarily, but which you now recognise.

Before you set it free, let it sleep in your lap; etch your name on its hide.



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