

INBOX

Tom Hallet The Boar and the Shepherd

04.08 – 27.08.2023

Dear T. H. Sanglier,

I hope this letter finds you well,

Last night, I slept through an odd dream. The illusive afterimages and -tastes must have been crossing my mind at slumber or wake, dusk or dawn, as visual vestiges. Nightly, I dream in first person, but with hindsight, my proper body appeared as the lucid specter, wandering past a desolate horizon. My flesh encountered a constellation of multi-eyed birch that obstructed the only passage from O. to I. Under the X- and V-shaped trunks, I discerned a human chimera that looked strangely familiar to me. The sleepy sun set, or rose, and my shadowy replica grew gargantuan. It struck me that I could still/already witness a glimpse of the celestial zodiac. The excruciating heat ignited the ether to dance to the rhythm of a snoring, sultry breeze. Opaque fumes oppressed my bust with a feverish gravitational force, luring me closer into the mortal (portal):

I. A wild boar - his eye-balls glare with fire suffus'd with blood;¹

A wild body – its eyeballs have bruised brown irises that strangle milky pupils. The skull discloses an eruptive ravine, where two tectonic bones unveil a fontanel of cerebral magma.

II. His neck shoots up a thick-set thorny wood;²

The sequence of concussive earthquakes is immortalized in rippling wrinkles. Its ear's helix is slit, tinting its scalp ruby red. Erosive salt trails are the sediments of facial estuarian deltas.

III. His bristled back a trench impal'd appears,³

Rope-burns unearths a tamed larynx, while its Adam's apple crawls as stagnant as a glacier.

IV. And stands erected, like a field of spears;⁴

Sweaty osmosis forges dew drops upon its scarred skin. Purple lips harness mutilated tusks.

V. Froth fills his chaps, he sends a grunting sound,⁵

It must have fallen from the firmament onto this bedrock, just like the airborne Phaëton, sun's son of Helios, or Icarus, Daedalus' lastborn, buried in melted wax and burning feathers.

VI. And part he churns, and part befoams the ground,⁶

Clavicles armor a concave chest like a robin that spreads its wings. Its sternum sinks in the bodily massif as a valley that gathers briny rain. When licking the liquid from its thorax, I sense a soft zephyr that blows from a gaping wound - its mouth - striking my ear.

VII. And Jove's own thunder from his mouth he drove...⁷

Frequent freckles, bruises, lesions, and hickeys are connected by incised crevices, like one would draw star signs on celestial maps. Withered wounds are sheltered by red-hued bark.

VIII. ... From hence the boar was rous'd, and sprung amain,⁸

The weary wind is subtly scented with wilted wild pansy and moldy menacing lavender.

IX. Like lightning sudden, on the warrior train:⁹

In a faraway distance, a barn owl distresses the serene silence with screeching sirens.

*X. Beats down the trees before him, shakes the ground.*¹⁰

Its abdomen is cut through the navel, draining its interior currents. Birds of prey are circling in orbits above our bewildered heads, as they assemble for a promethean torment.

*XI. The forest echoes to the crackling sound;*¹¹

The pulse in its half-hard genitals is the only bodily relic of its arrhythmic heartbeat. Its bristly pubes resemble a coarse boar's coat, unfurling gradually from the pelvis onto its entire skin.

*XII. Shout the fierce youth, and clamours ring around.*¹²

Scars adorn its lower limbs and X-shaped knees as a palimpsest of tragic trauma and grey grief.

*O. All stood with their protended spears prepar'd,*¹³

Ashes of a mercurial phoenix lay as a gossamer stratum of mycelium over the pale membrane of the wild body –

Sincerely yours,

K. J. Persyn

1-7: Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, 8., 284–289, Translated by Sir Samuel Garth, John Dryden, et al., 1727
8-13: Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, 8., 338–342, Translated by Sir Samuel Garth, John Dryden, et al., 1727



Dedicated to Matthew Shepard, and all victims, past and current, of anti-queer violence. We were here first.