

APHRODISIAC

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JAMES WALLER

A selection of five poems from the collection

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The Tiger Steals Forth

The tiger steals forth
From the garden
Of his solitude,
A ray of splendour
Chasing the shadows of his soul
His eye of inner brightness
Transfixed
On the trace
Of his secret blaze;
A tunnel of furling fires
Forming
In the darkness of his myth.
Sage of the burning night,
Furious lover
Of the ancient stars
The tiger
Prowls
Throughout the heavens
With his fiery comet claws,
A reflection of the sun
Imprisoned by the void
Leaping through his cosmic bars

Like light

Lancing from soft thunder

Or golden birds

Flying

From a cage

Of tropical

Trees.

The Field of Creation

Stillness in the field,
Shadows softened by the breeze,
A curtain of light unveiling
The world to dreaming eyes.
I have stolen all the hours,
Placed time in a mythic cage,
Released the hounds of solitude
And stormed the barricades of silence.
Here I am,
The lightning
Of a forgotten star,
A stream of suns falling
Through the tunnels of my teeth.
Tongue-tide
Lancing wonder
From the gravel
Of the ancient tiger,
The ball of fury
Who leaps
From his sable of secrets
Through splendid bars of darkness

Into the light of the wind-whipped unknown,
The field of creation
Where the unconscious encounters the unconscious
In beams of sublime non-understanding,
In complete stillness,
In complete oneness.

A Seething Cloud of Woman

Sable of hidden fires,
Dream that wanders,
The golden dew that glistens
In the heat of the night.
I have waited for the tips of remembrance
To come
Like the claws
Of an unknown beast.
And here she is:
A seething cloud of woman
A tempest of burning lust
Unraveling the coil of sadness and spite
Releasing the knot and unchaining the monk
And arcing out
Into the filaments
Of free and untarnished space
Where we may breathe
Beyond the boundaries of prediction
A scent of wordless love.

The Tiger's Romance

Sex, like a hungry tiger
Springs from an ancient shadow
In the jungle of our bodies;
A roaring of centuries
Lines up the fires
Of millennia;
Sex born of love,
Sex riven by lust,
Sex stolen by the ravenous angels
Of greed.
Frothing at the pelvis of their mouths,
The beasts of the stolen fire
Curl inside like withered leaves.
Their gift is a torture
Of emptiness
Earned in the alleyways of hell.
The sparkling dream
That is the tiger's romance
Is given in its taking,
Is wombed in its release
But is driven by the same amoral charge,
The same carnal, infernal claws

As that which blooms in terror,
As that which cries with resistance;
And so we love,
Ablaze in the alleyways,
Surrounded by the mirrors of time
And pierced by the code
Of Nature's lightning

Song's Stone

The sublime heat
Of the day's purgery;
A willow of fire
Along the stream of romance
Song's stone
Blazing in remembrance
Of its lavaic soul.
Straddle
The white hot seat
Of this demonic wind:
Ride into delirium,
Sweat pouring
From the rocks
Of your tight-knotted back.
Stray into the page of forbidden rites,
A forest of limbs entangling
And bare bodies embracing
In the shadow of the tiger's fury,
In the jungle of this ancient body
Unsheathed from silence,
Awakened from prayer
And swaying

In the fountain

Of your love.