Eurydice

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Epic Threads

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Artist's Statement

This poem is a feminist reimagining of the Orpheus and Eurydice myth. Rather than a tragic lost bride, Eurydice is given a voice after the bite and refuses to be reclaimed. The poem explores how love can become possession, and what it costs to finally demand to be let go.

Eurydice

After the bite, the blur.
It was almost a relief—the snake.
The fangs a mercy.

No pain, but a gate opening, and
a rush of cool air from a place
that had always been waiting.

She cupped her hands into the Lethe and
drank until her name dissolved,
until the tumult of him—
the golden lyre, the golden lies, the gaze like leashes—
sank into silt at the bottom of a river.

The judges sent her to the Asphodel meadows.
Not torment. Not joy.
Just clouded in the colour of forgetting,
a field where souls drift like ash
that no longer remembers the fire.

She walked without aim,
unwatched, unheld, unclaimed.
Her blood cooled. Her heart,
which he had once vowed to protect,
slowed to the rhythm of nothing.

In the distance, she heard something familiar in the footsteps,
and the waters of the Lethe began to tremble—
The vibration of obsession,
a man who could not abide a locked door.

Why did he come back?

Love does not drag the dead upward
by the roots of their hair.
Love does not smash the seal of the tomb.

He charmed the ferryman with honeyed song,
lulled the three-headed hound with melody.
He crossed the fiery Phlegethon with waters that boil the wicked,
and remained unburned
because even hell recognizes
a man whose hunger is its own inferno.

He fell to his knees before Hades' obsidian throne,
before Persephone with her pomegranate stains.
His grief poured out as a raw, ragged song—
Give her back to me. I promise I will not look.

She watched with terror
as the bargain was struck.

Why must he charm the dead awake
just to bury me again?
I would have forgotten him.
I had already forgotten him.

She felt his hand reach for hers—
not a lover's touch,
but a captor's.
The grasp of someone who mistakes
possession for devotion,
control for care.

He led her back to the ferry—
the oars straining against the current,
the caves dripping onto littered bones,
the darkness swallowing their footsteps,
its vastness stealing even the echoes.

Once more, she walked behind him,
not in trust, but in fury.
Each step, a betrayal.
Each breath, his breath,
the same air that had filled her lungs
with promises he could not keep.

At the threshold,
a blinding strip of sky,
the green scent of the living.
She felt his hope surge
like a tide of poison.

And then she spoke.
Not with the soft voice of a wife
or the trembling plea of the pursued.

Her voice was the Styx itself—
cold, final, unbreakable.
Turn back.

He froze.

Turn back now, or I will curse you.
I will not be your Eurydice.
I will not be your prize.
You have no right to me.

She spoke to the edge of his face—
I prefer the grey of the meadows
to the colours you chose for me.
You have done this before,
pulled me from my peace,
kept me tethered to hope.
I would rather be nothing in death than to be your wife.
Let me go.

She watched the face she had once loved,

once trusted,
once believed in
contort as he saw her—
not as his lost bride,
but as his deepest shame—
and the mist swept her back into the black.

References

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