



Tina Patel, IV

AENEAS IN THE UNDERWORLD

Aeneas
Wander where you dare
You mortal man so fair
Here are the ugly and the misshapen
For whom no one will care.

The underworld is an evil place
Where not many a mortal
Would show his face
For no one of substance is here
Only shadows which many would fear.

So come with me
Follow where you dare
Do not be afraid—(you know many there)—
To cross the rivers Cocytus and Acheron
Which we will cross with the aid of Charon.

We enter alone
At the challenge of Cerberus
But here I have a pass for us
To slip past him subtly
As he sleeps unable to wake.

Walk on and see those you know well
Dido, who loves you, but remembers you not
The men who fell with you at Troy
They see you, welcome you and are filled with joy
But pass on, for you must never stay.

Pass Tartarus, where the wicked are punished
Take the way to Elysium to the happy place
Where you will see many a joyful face
Those of Orpheus, and of Dardanus
Founder of Troy.

But for what you have come
You have achieved at will
For your father Anchises awaits you still
With tears you embrace
Your father shows you now your fate.

Your family and your heirs
Your sons and kings from afar
And Romulus who will found Rome
The History of the future to come
(Aeneas astonished found himself dumb)

But knowing this my fair young man
You are shown to the ivory door
Where you will forget and return to the world of living
(Anchises telling Aeneas he loved him more)
You return my gallant young man.

Victoria Marriott-Smith, IV V

TEARS

A gentle shining comforts me
Beyond imagination
It trickles like a waterfall
From a glass window in my eye
You can see the tear, but the light
Likes to confuse you
It cannot stain or be painful
But goes into a slumber and gently
Disappears on my tissue

Julie Hay, IV

RIEN!

Je suis toute seule
Je ne comprends pas ce que je fais
Pourquoi? Ne me demande pas!
Je ne sais pas!

Ma vie qu'est-ce qu'elle est?
Ce n'est rien pour moi
Je n'ai ni l'enthousiasme pour vivre ni pour mourir
Il n'y a rien!
Je n'ai rien!
Je ne suis rien!

Becky Clark, U VI

THERE WAS A FULL MOON THAT NIGHT

There was a full moon that night. As my long, thin fingers worked relentlessly at the window, exhausting all possible strength left in them to manipulate the screwdriver which slowly prised open the latch, I swept my eyes over the great expanse of garden which was lit up in the brilliant glow from the moon above. Away at the furthest end of the lawn where the great wall rose up like a sudden castle rampart, there was no light. The bushes and trees skulked in their blackness, eerie and foreboding.

With a final push I freed the latch and slowly, quietly, my heart a thunderous train in my chest, I opened the old, worn window. Gathering my skirts around me I climbed carefully over the ledge and straightened up, sniffing the night air. Behind me, the inmates shifted restlessly in their sleep, each one encased in his own private nightmare. One woman sat on the floor clutching a dirty blanket to her breast as she cried like a baby, pulling at her hair and scraping her fingers down her face. Turning my eyes from the familiar scene I sat down on the edge of the roof and lowered myself cautiously on to the lower parapet.

From my new position I found that I was able to reach the ground with ease and I stepped gingerly on to the gravelled path, my shoes crunching the stones beneath them. Suddenly I was gripped with terror at the realisation of my freedom and I whirled around, imagining a figure behind me. But there was no one there. No lights burned in the grey window and no one stirred. The poor, condemned inmates were asleep, far away in their troubled minds.

Silently, as if in a trance, I moved across the path to the lawn and moving faster now, I hurried over the wet blades; past the hut and on to where the trees rose up, their branches rigid and sparse in the chill of the night. Not until I reached the old oak tree which stood like a beacon in the grounds did I turn and stare fixedly at the great mansion behind me. My mind was racing wildly with many thoughts and I uttered a sharp gasp at the idea of the closeness of my escape. Sinking back against the tree, I entwined my fingers in the gnarled bark, clenching the worn wood until my hands hurt with the tearing pain. It seemed so strange to me, so unreal that after so many years confined within the realms of hell, my time had at last come. The nights I had spent lying shivering with fear in my damp, dirty bed, seemed an age away now, in another time, another place. The dreams I had dreamed on every starry night—of my family, my life before the institution and the freedom I had once had—now seemed to drift away and open up to a new, beautiful realisation of my imminent salvation.

I smiled to myself as I thought of my lover waiting on the other side of the wall, counting the minutes, the seconds until I would appear before him, freed of my chains. Turning my back on the great house, I stumbled on through the ever-thickening undergrowth, brushing by thorn bushes and stinging nettles oblivious to the pain. In an instant I saw the towering wall ahead of me, rearing up out of the dark, beckoning me. The rope was hanging limply down and as I reached it I gripped it tightly in my sweating hands, and pulled. Almost immediately the answering tug came back, and, my heart pounding in my chest, I began my climb.

Suddenly, from behind, I heard a noise; the rustle of a branch and the cracking of twigs in the undergrowth. Chilled by a sudden agonizing fear I clutched wildly at the rope, reaching, pulling furiously at it, willing myself up it to the top of the wall. But I seemed motionless, bound fast where I stood. I pulled and pulled, harder and harder, but I could not move. I was bound to the spot, held back by an imaginary force. Behind me the steps quickened, crashing through the undergrowth after me, faster, menacing me. Racked with blind terror I cried out in anguish, terrified, alone. But no sound came. Shuddering with uncontrollable tears, my every muscle numb with cold pain, I threw myself at the wall again and again, my fingers ripping as they tried to seize some hold on the rough surface. But they could not hold and I found myself slipping down to the ground, hiding my face to the wall in frenzied panic, tears streaming in torrents down my face, as the steps bore down on me from behind. I moaned in desperation and wrapped my fingers into my hair, screaming at myself, at the wall and the house

I opened my eyes suddenly, blinking back the tears and shivering in the chill of the room. My hands were clutched at my breast, my sheet wound around me in dirty disarray. In every direction, the women moaned their terrified plight as they twitched restlessly where they lay. I was staring at the window again, my eyes wide and tired. Closing them in tearful anguish I rested my head back against the pillow, my wet hair hanging around my burning, perspiring forehead. Another night, another month, but the nightmare never ceased in its torment of my mind.

Ruth Luxmoore, VT

DREAMING

The sun streams in through a narrow window,
Calling me to climb up its golden ladder of light.
I wish I could;
To leave this dreary room full of bent heads
And hyper-active hands would be . . .
Impossible.
But I wish I could.

Imagine what it's like up there!
The blue, blue sky and those fluffy clouds
That I know would love to carry us to leave.

If I shut my eyes for long enough I can fool
Myself that I am there, flying with the
Birds,
But when I open them, it's gone.
There's nothing left and I sit there, longing
For a dream that can never become a
Reality.

Minnie Black-James, IV V

THE RED DRAGON

It was no longer red. I knew that the layers of grease and dust,
caked on through years of lying forgotten in an old, dilapidated trunk
somewhat subdued the colour, because they were so thick that it
was impossible to see what colour it was at all; but when I washed
George, as I, some thirty years ago, had named the tiny wooden
animal, I could clearly see that he was a faded orange-pink, not
the garish, pillar-box red that I had remembered him to be. At least
half his carefully carved scales, once so realistic, had flaked off, and,
as they lay scattered on the bottom of the trunk, they reminded me
of jetsam floating on a calm sea after a storm. The spike of his stiffly
writhing tail was missing and one clawed foot had somehow, once
broken off, wedged itself in his toothy jaws. And even his black
eyes, which used to sparkle with as much fire as an opal, no longer
captured me with their bright and piercing gaze, but squinted feebly
as most of the enamel had worn off. I was disappointed with
George. He used to be my most precious possession, my treasure
of treasures and now he had grown old, so very old.

Somehow, because of what he had meant to me, and how
glamorously I had described him to my six year old son, I became
almost angry and determined that George should be restored to all
his former glory. Slowly and painstakingly, I found the dismembered
parts of the body, but some small fragments, including a hooked
claw and an ivory tooth, had vanished without trace.

Having armed myself with George's parts, I set off for the nearest
D.I.Y. shop. I marched along the avenues of paint-strippers and
iron nails, double-sided sellotapes and polyfillas, with a fierce and
indomitable step until I had chosen all that I needed to repair him:
a small tin of black enamel paint for ears, nostrils, eyes and claws,
a Crown Matchpot with the colour described as "Burning Fire" for
his body, several tubes of super glue and a bottle of varnish.

I worked on George for days, adding to him, painting, varnishing
and generally perfecting him. During the hours that I spent on him,
hidden away in my study, I became the head watchmaker at
Vacherin and Constantin, senior surgeon to the Queen and the
leading craftsman at Cartier. My neck grew stiff and my eyes and
fingers weary, but I doggedly continued, driven by an inner deter-
mination I never knew I had.

Finally the job was finished and I can truly say that George
looked as good as new. I felt my heart lighten as I critically sur-
veyed the creature — I had never realised that favourite toys could
make such an impression on a person, and as I went to present
my son with my old dragon, I wondered how he would like him, if
at all, but I decided that even if he did not want George, I had
not wasted my time, for George would always be mine and I was
as fond of him now as I had been when I was a child.

Minnie Black-James, IV V

CELEBRATIONS

I like
Decorations,
I like
Party food,
I like
Celebrations.
When
I'm
In
The
Mood. . .

Nicola Sheppard III I

TRIAL

The court of your courting is
Wintered with cold.
You would leave me to hang here —
The noose you would hold!
But then, would you free me, to
Die once again? You would
Never release me, but tighten the chain!
Our love is not fruitless,
Convicted with crime. Would you leave me an
Actress, to play-act and mime?
Please feed to the fire your camouflaged charms —
If you don't, I am sentenced, and
Locked in your arms.

Freya Rowe VT

COLLISION

My heart is a train, attacking the track.
You board, for adventure, with passport and pack.
I cut through the darkness and shine in moonlight.
I dance over meadows and scream through the night.
You take me for granted and cast away cares
The while I am crashing — you're climbing the stairs
Searching for new trains, to enter and flee, and
Scorning the accident débris, that's me.

Freya Rowe, VT

TEARS

Tears come with:
Emotions,
Loneliness,
Weariness,
When we hurt ourselves,
And when we need help.
Everyone sheds tears.
Some have dry tears,
Some have salty tears,
But whatever tears we have, they
Always come at
Some time,
Some place.

Catherine Hall, IY

DID YOU KNOW . . . ?

Where does the world end?
At the beginning of the next.

Are there aliens on other planets?
No, only on ours.

How far up is heaven?
It depends where you want your heaven to be.

How far is it to the heavens?
Too expensive to go by bus!

How can you catch a moon-beam?
With a rope of falling stars.

What colour is the sun at night?
The colour of a midnight star.

Why can't we see air?
It blends in too well.

How do you cut a flame in half?
With the wind.

What is the wind?
A fair-ride for the leaves.

What is darkness?
Something that gets lighter.

Where does the universe end?
After the last star.

What is life?
Something worth living for!

III H

