

MAILER'S SONG

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Dedicated to Norman Mailer

Sitting with elders
between two trees,
You looked only eastward
and enjoyed the sun,

Then leapt
between the sphinx of time
gone by clouds and sounds
of ground storms in the gray seas,
mailing letters for remembering,

No more residing in the fondness of the summer moon
where true love lingers in petty sins,
and sips of bourbon caress
stone maidens on pedestals;
all is turned in crystals,

Amassing treasures of marbled Bombshells
and mayoral make-believers, who, with
bending knees tossed nickles
from a shadowy pool,
where New York pavement
licked the salt of your feet,

When listing down beneath the low tones
of tapping nightsticks, those

people in the underground
 blowing jazz, drank you up in
 jazz,
 and shakers who took to rolling stones
 like bibles to the journey man,
 married beneath the blown wreaths of your knowing;

Beating words like brains against
 the romantic brick walls of etiquette,
 You shook loose the hair of Lillith
 with Byronian blueness and visionary eyes,

Cooling tombs of ethereal storehouses,
 bored felines out to cut a wrist,
 musing nursemaids at the bossum
 of a stroked chest, came to bathe
 in your stream of secrets;
 entangling their locked hearts between perfect illusions,
 tied like boats in open harbours, stroked by waking tides,
 lost in the romantic emulsion of your possibility,
 were bound in wonder and mystery like sinew

aligning all that cradles vision
 with the unfamiliar sky of Ra's promise,

Shaking loose the valley of ashes
 from a throaty iris, He sunk
 within you like Marius;

Dreams, long-stemmed
 and thorny
 kicking before the immortal enemy of time;

Not a king, but a prince remade of unresting thought,
 whose soul now lies in ferment, has become
 the hidden root,
 thrilled by remote harmonies

“with the kind of eyes that can
stare into the sun.”

And so in flight you go as
tender is this night,
where silence
stirs the nightingale on blooms
amid the sighing valley,
and dream-dimmed eyes
caught in the chimes of richness,
cry
in the inevitable note of discovery,

that the moon, once again, has turned her back,

For she has gone to weep alone;
and mounting shadowy horses wrapped in
the flaming garments of twilight,
whilst ravens perch on broken limbs,
her light, cut by the envious wheel of transit,
climbs high upon an empty sky to a homeward sun,
to burst then beat again with perishable breath

Amid the mournful gaze of an autumn tide
that blurs the trecherous memory to
cut you free;
dissolving life
into eternal blindness,
where, within this place
the rabbi and the boxer unite
to set the moon on fire,
and dance upon her eyes
in our pale moonlight,
and romp within the mind of God,

Voyager, let loose your hand in the music of her wisper.

NOTES

Twoness: The mortality of a man and the immortality of the writer. The poem is split into two parts. One marking the life of the man sits in eleven stanzas, tied to Lillith's persona of the number 11. The second part sits in five stanzas tied to Jesus Christ's suffering and sacrifice.

The Two Trees: The tree of life and death (Kabbalah-Yeatsian), as well as the willow and the tree of knowledge tied to Lillith: one existing for pleasure because it leaves no fruit (no seed), the other that gives of itself and leaves the seed, allowing others to grow from what it has given of itself.

Lillith: Twoness marked by the double "l" spelling to symbolize her twoness along with the symbolic image of the number 11 (suggesting leadership, through struggle, sacrifice, and even martyrdom. Lillith is also connected to the sensitivity of Isis and the wisdom of the Priestess because Isis' glyph is 1111 and Lillith's is 11). Lillith is seen as taming the lion (a woman who could possibly tame Mailer and be equal to him in both intellect and sexual desire). She is one who is seen as good and evil, possesses pleasure and power, instills fear and passion, earthbound and astrologically connected, mythically was the other side of Adam (physically the beast with two backs) and is considered equal to Adam and a counterpart of God, one of two wives for Adam.

Her energy is anchored in the sun in Leo and also tied to the maternal moon. She functions from a place of personal dignity, is generous, youthful, self-assured, and affectionate, is willing to express herself and is fond of and protects children (some see her as a huntress of the night and killer of children. It is not used here in that way). She is seen here as the female side of Mailer. A woman of his choosing, often seen in female characters created by Mailer.

As Mailer possessed many of these same qualities in his life as well as in his writing, he uses the Lillith stereotype for many of his female characters, most notably in *An American Dream*.

Mailer Connections: His works, passions, and ambitions such as Marilyn Monroe, running for New York mayor, the Beats-Hipsters, *The Naked and the Dead*, *Maidstone*, *Ancient Evenings*, *An American Dream*, *Of a Fire on the Moon*, Feminist war, numerous wives and lovers.

Fitzgerald connections: As one who also lived large, wrote about his time, and wrestled demons. Quotation is from *The Great Gatsby*. As well, the eyes that blur for Nick after Gatsby's death, leaving the East "haunted" by

his absence. And like Nick, Mailer, also sees the “wild promise of all the mystery and the beauty in the world” and later gives way to the reality of death, “A dead man passed us in a hearse heaped with blooms” and drove “on toward death.” Mailer, like Gatsby is also associated with moon connections.

Harbour: British spelling to emphasize the romantic elements of Mailer and hidden connection to the sea as well as living by the sea. He also spoke of himself as a ship coming into its harbor.

Marius: Like Gatsby and Mailer, Marius was a prince of romantic disillusionment, living in the realms of imagination, also an idealist, as in Ernest Dowson’s poem “The Prince of Dreams,” a defeated hero.

Keats connections: Mailer is referenced as “The Nightingale”; moreover, Fitzgerald also loved this Keatsian poem “there is a space of life between boyhood and maturity in which the soul is in ferment, the characters undecided, the way of life uncertain, the ambition thick sighted” (*English Poetry and the Prose of the Romantic Movement*, ed. George B. Woods. New York: Scott, Foresman, 1950, 1957). A connection made here to Norman Mailer’s life.