A Revisitation of Myth

four songs for viola, piano and medium voice

Joelle Wallach

(1998)
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four songs for viola, piano and medium voice
by Joelle Wallach

I
Icarus Swims

Think of it, love, what if the tales, the priceless paintings, all were wrong. What if they lied because the old cults thrived on sacrifice …and had to say he died.

What if the sun was midwife at a birth, melting the wax, letting him plunge naked to the christening sea, with infant mirth, with joy amphibious. So much is staked on our courage to recast the myths.

Imagine it, imagine it, and swim.

Luann Keener

II
Ms Lot

Well, if he treats me like a young girl still, That father of mine… And we’re still travelling into the hills – But everyone on the road knows he offered us To the Strangers when all they wanted was men, And the cloud of smoke still over the twin cities And mother a salt lick…. Who’s going to want me now? Mother did not even know She was not to turn around and look.

God spoke to Lot, my father. She was hard of hearing. He knew that… What kind of father is that…. He offered us to those men. They didn’t want women. Mother always used to say: Some normal man will come along and need you.

Muriel Rukeyser

III
Hymn to Eros

O Eros, silently smiling…, hear me. Let the Shadow of thy wings brush me. Let thy presence enfold me, as if darkness were swan-down.

Let me see that darkness lamp in hand. this country become the other country sacred to desire.

Drowsy god, slow the wheels of my thought …listen… to the snowfall hush of thy circling.

Close my beloved with me in the smoke ring of thy power, that we may be, each to the other, figures of flame, figures of smoke, figures of flesh newly seen in the dusk.

Denise Levertov

IV
Abraham and Orpheus

Abraham and Orpheus, be with me now: You saw your love’s face abstract, the weak-kneed stilts, You saw and knew, and knew how near “no more”… How poised on nothing, weighted on air, The touched, seen substance… of care: Surround me, be round me, be with me…

Abraham and Orpheus, be with me now.

Love, love exhausts and time goes round and round, And that which circles falls, falls endlessly, Falls endlessly, no music shapes the air Which did, can, shall restore the end of care, I shudder in traffic, buildings stand, Will fall, and night will fall, the electric light be snapped To spread its yellow genius on the floor, And you knew too who knew and knew “no more” That love exhausts …and time goes around.

Abraham and Orpheus, be with me now: No longer the grandstand… Love sucked me to the moving street below, I see the price of care, turning to keep, I am a price, I turn to keep, I care, But time which circles dissipates all care, As you knew too, who lifted up the knife, And you, musician in the after-life, Drowning in the shadow all love always bears, As every solid thing must shadow into light: …Abraham and Orpheus, be near, be near.

Delmore Schwartz


Think of it, love, what if the tales, the priceless

paintings all were wrong.

What if they lied, lied because the
old cults thrived on sacrifice, and had to say he died. What if the

sun was midwife at a birth melting the

wax, letting him plunge naked to the christening sea, with infant

What if the
mirth, with joy amphi-bi-ous.

So much is staked on our cou-rage to re-cast the myths.

I love you, sear you, cut you loose to fall.

poco p e poco pensivo

p dolce lontano

p lontano

con passione
Imagine it, imagine it, and swim.

We must save ourselves and him.

Imagine it, imagine it, and swim.
II
Ms Lot
(a whining adolescent tantrum)

Muriel Rukeyser

\( \text{\textit{muttering under the breath}} \)

\( \text{\textit{muttering under the breath}} \)

\( \text{\textit{muttering under the breath}} \)

\( \text{\textit{muttering under the breath}} \)

\( \text{\textit{muttering under the breath}} \)

Well,
in the hills. Who's going to want me now?
and we're still traveling

well, if he treats me like a young girl, still, that father of mine, Who's
but every one on the road knows he offered us

to Strangers when all they wanted was men...

but every one on the road knows he offered us

but every one on the road knows he offered us

men...
over the twin cities, And mother a salt lick! Who's

And the cloud of smoke all
27

sul ponticello

jangly
God spoke to Lot, my father. She could not even hear, and he knew: Mother could not even hear, she was conspiratorial.

not to turn around and look. He knew! Oh,
Who's going to want me now? Who's going to want me now?

Who's going to want me now? Who's going to want me now?

con sordino (16th figure at tip of bow)
Now, Mother used to say some normal man will come some
day and need you, but now who's __

senza sordino

Going to want me now? Who's
espr. molto ben lontano

now? want me now, to want me now.

to want me

pizz. con sordino al fine

arco dolce lontano

molto lontano poco lontano

ppp e ben lontano
III

Hymn to Eros

Denise Levertov

\( \text{\textdagger} = 66 \) wistful and yearning, caressing throughout

Joelle Wallach

\( \text{\textdagger} = 60 \)
wings brush me, let thy presence enfold me, as if darkness were swan.

country become another country, sacred to desire.

down.

Let me see that darkness, lamp in hand, this poco.

poco
Drowsy god,

slow the wheels of my thought, listen to the snowfall hush of thy

circling.
Close my beloved with me in the smoking ring of thy power that

to each other we may be figures of flame, figures of smoke,

figures of flesh newly seen in the dusk.

(solo)
Let me see that darkness lamp in hand, this country become another country,
that to each other we may be figures of flame, figures of smoke, figures of...
ros, si-lent-ly smil-ing, smi-ling, hear me!

Oh, E - ros, si-lent-ly smil-ing, smil-ing, hear me!

flesh new-ly seen in the dusk. Oh, E - ros, si-lent-ly smil-ing, smil-ing, hear me!

Dolce cantabile

ma più lontano

(newly seen in the dusk.)
IV

Abraham and Orpheus

Delmore Schwartz

\( j = 104 \) (\( j = 52 \))

Joelle Wallach

poco a poco più dolce

prophetic and declamatory
Abraham and Orpheus be with me now.

You saw your love’s face, you saw and knew, and knew how

near “no more” How poised on nothing, weight

Abraham and Orpheus be with me now.
Abraham and Orpheus, be with me now.
Abraham and Orpheus, surround me, be with me now.

Love, love exhausts and time goes round and round. Time circles in idiot defeat, circles.
end-lessly falls. No music shapes the air which

did, can, shall re-store the end of care, for love ex-hausts and time goes round and

round, I shud-der in traf-fic, build-ings stand, will fall, and night will fall, e -
electric light be snapped to spread its yellow genius on the floor;

and you knew too who knew and knew "no

more" that love exhausts and time goes round and round. Abraham and Orpheus, be with
poised on nothing, weighted on air, the touched, seen substance of care.

You saw and knew, and knew how near how
ham and Orpheus, be with me now. No longer the grand stand, love

sucked me to the moving street below. I see the price of care, turning to keep, I am a

price, I turn to keep, I care,
must shadow into light: Abraham and Orpheus, Abraham and Orpheus, Abraham and Orpheus,

but time which circles dissipated all care, as you knew
too, drowning in the shadow all love always bears, As ev'ry solid thing

(A tempo, con moto)

(A tempo, con moto)

(A tempo, con moto)
pheus be with me now.

e più dolce