

2.6 Night Wind (2002)

Impetuous Zephyr!
whatever be thy name,
who wakst and workst all night
to sweep the welkin blue by morn
to chase away the mist's last shroud
and paint the islands clean
beyond the trackless azure sea.

What pains thee so, to thrash the
suffering bendy oak outside
and disrespectful enter in to dance around
the very chamber where we lie?
What devil's in thy breath,
what ghost disturbs thee, wind? impelled
by what fanatic mission must thou blow?
Dost thou not long, as we, to rest
and lay thy work aside?
But no, thou constant harrier,
violent child, the night's not time enough
to tire thee – all the morning, all the day,
thy fingers poke our very soul,
they catch the doors and bellow roaring
down the flues, they make the house
a tossing anchored ship
shuddering, foundering before
each fearsome gust and blast
in case this be the one that breaks the tree,
uproots the wall, and throws the window
into shards about our feet.

We do not see thee, must infer thy agency
from every shaken bough; yet canst not
even vow to leave us peaceful with the sun
when thou hast fled?

We have to suffer thee upon thy
unconditioned terms which make us
on reflection, think again
and not presume thy fault:
some mountain sent thee,
ocean sucked thee down the river's corridors.
The graven shifting visage of the sea does
not complain - in fact he laughs
a million glinting, frothy smiles
and shakes his shoulders underneath;
the white gull riding madly up the sky
is not afraid to breast thee;
and somewhere in the thickets by the shore
the nightingale looks songless out
and bides her time – she
seems to know thou bringst no harm to her.

In fact, it's only we it seems complain:
perhaps that devil lies in us
and goads us from within
to fear thee as his other self, perhaps
if we like gull and sea
and nightingale could relearn innocence,
thy restless sighs would be the music
apt to bury us in sleep.

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