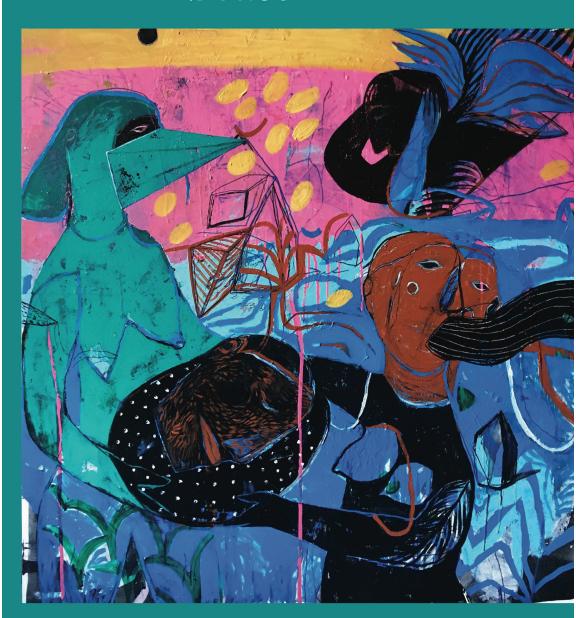
The Beast Turns Me Into a Tantrumbeast



AGNES MARTON

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You are me (said the beast).

From now on I'm your nameless shelter.

Fear my dreams half-awake, run.

Ripe in my poison like cherries, chase my ways.

Don't pray, dissolve in my summer breath.

Our limbs are overlapping meadows, hazy honey landscape.

By myself (I told the beast).
Teeth away or I squeak.
Mellific, knotty bully
stepping on all what I bear.
Don't push me under your reign.
Who do you think you are.
Leave me alone, I build my own.
I fear my own, I dream my own.

Beastie, come on.

Taken

with respect to Edward Snowden

I want you inside out and side to side, holus-bolus.

I know your ear tag stamps, your daily rants, the lies you told your lovers.
I know your pick-up lines, your escape routes, your air miles.

I know you're often broke, I know you hate the Pope. I know your drunken grin, I know your next of kin.

You feed me no end and I peep for more – but you feast on me too.

You try to throw me up but I find my way back.

Each you confide in is my bitch.

Don't even dare ask.

You are mine.

Cactus Woman

You peep yourself for traces of the you-ness. If you knew in advance the happy ending or the loophole, would you play along? Or? Would you choose anyway the thrill of the untold?

What would you do to ease your barbed tongue, linger on hymns and lullabies or shout back or just skirt around, half-fidgeter, half-feeler?

You can't decide if it's thirst, you feel like growing spines. Your spongy flesh cannot be touched. You reached Happy Valley, drowning by the Why. Have you arrived? Yet...?

Migration

What if they betray me too, those celestial cues? What if the sun lies like everyone else and so does the earth's magnetic field? The stars? What if there is no such a thing as home, or it's just big enough for sedentary birds?

No matter what, at a certain point I have to go, with the northern wheat ear, the arctic tern, the short-tailed shearwater, counting the days for a while, then: "am I there yet?"

What-ifs again and why-nots.

Wish I could say yes to a life or learn how to forget.

Wish I could ease my maphead.

The Runaway Madonna

There's a curtain of dark so smugly woven, I cannot tell back from forward even if I want to obey. And who would. I bump into the interrogator and, in a meek spring, touch my parched lips like I would touch a wound.

All I have is two skirts, brown and grey, a November morning. The rucksack is lump, limp, whatever. So are my cheeks when I blurt 'Yes, Sir!' to the howl 'Step back, Lizzie, this border is not yours to pass. You might enjoy some patting down without being busted. I'll never give you the all clear.'

My name is Elizabeth Rose Lurken, and I'm hollow like a terracotta bust. The X-ray focuses on the Nkisi-style nails in my scalp; my interrogator pulls one and peeps in to catch sight of the Devil. A mirror would do instead, but I don't say it. He stares at the shaft and barks me to return to where I'm from. 'If you get lucky, you might reveal a god or even, if you behave, grow back to be a virgin.'

The Male Witch

I climbed up

to his steam-kitchen

of clouds.

Mute years passed.

No tourist

would've stayed

in his B&B cave.

He cuddled

my distant home and

filled it with

hellacious mist.

He was blurred

and was never named

in my headlines.

I sharpened my eyes,

closed and open,

to capture his size.

I took a snapshot

of the nothing

and called it magic.

'Come,' said he, hoarse,

choosing me as his

partner for

the last pirouette of power. Me,

who in life

had done everything

to keep shape,

started to shift now,

with transparent

hands I'm stirring

my rain words into the mountain.

The Bear Guard's Advice

When a polar bear shows up, don't play dead. The bear would think you're a seal, easy lunch.

Don't scream, don't run, it would provoke a chase.

Make confident noise with stones, rattle your keys.

Emperor of your dummy head space, hum your hymn.

Be the biggest bear on the shore.

Don't listen to the beast's amplified breath.

AGNES MARTON

Hungarian-born poet, writer, Reviews Editor of The Ofi Press, Fellow of The Royal Society of Arts, founding member of Phoneme Media.

Recent exhibitions and art projects: European Sculpture: Methods, Materials, Poetry (Sweden), Guardian of the Edge – Visual artists respond to the poetry of Agnes Marton (Luxembourg), Poetica Botanica (UK).

Recent publications she has been involved in: *Exquisite Duet* (USA), *Alice* (UK), *Human/Nature* (UK), *Not a Drop* (UK), *Umbrellas of Edinburgh* (UK), *A Face in the Mirror, a Hook on the Door: An Anthology of Urban Legends & Modern Folklore* (UK).

She participated in the Disquiet International Literary Program (Portugal), and residencies at the Scott Polar Research Institute (UK), at the TGC (Ireland), in the Arctic Circle, at Gullkistan (Iceland) and at La Macina (Italy).

The opera duet based on her poetry collection *Captain Fly's Bucket List* was premiered in London (2016, composer: Vasiliki Legaki).

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Dan Ryan - Swamp Tales

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Christine Stoddard — Chica/Mujer

Aileen Ibardaloza, Paul Cassinetto, and Wesley St. Jo – No

Names

Nicholas Michael Ravnikar – Liberal elite media rag. SAD!

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