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Please direct sales or editorial enquiries to:

tonykline@poetryintranslation.com



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L'APRES-MIDI D'UN FAUNE

ECLOGUE

THE FAUN

These nymphs, I would perpetuate them.

So bright

Their crimson flesh that hovers there, light

In the air drowsy with dense slumbers.

Did I love a dream?

My doubt, mass of ancient night, ends extreme

In many a subtle branch, that remaining the true

Woods themselves, proves, alas, that I too

Offered myself, alone, as triumph, the false ideal of roses.

Let's see....

or if those women you note

Reflect your fabulous senses' desire!

Faun, illusion escapes from the blue eye,

Cold, like a fount of tears, of the most chaste:

But the other, she, all sighs, contrasts you say

Like a breeze of day warm on your fleece?

No! Through the swoon, heavy and motionless

Stifling with heat the cool morning's struggles

No water, but that which my flute pours, murmurs
To the grove sprinkled with melodies: and the sole breeze
Out of the twin pipes, quick to breathe
Before it scatters the sound in an arid rain,
Is unstirred by any wrinkle of the horizon,
The visible breath, artificial and serene,
Of inspiration returning to heights unseen.

O Sicilian shores of a marshy calm
My vanity plunders vying with the sun,
Silent beneath scintillating flowers, RELATE
*‘That I was cutting hollow reeds here tamed
By talent: when, on the green gold of distant
Verdure offering its vine to the fountains,
An animal whiteness undulates to rest:
And as a slow prelude in which the pipes exist
This flight of swans, no, of Naiads cower
Or plunge...?’*

Inert, all things burn in the tawny hour
Not seeing by what art there fled away together
Too much of hymen desired by one who seeks there
The *natural A*: then I’ll wake to the primal fever
Erect, alone, beneath the ancient flood, light’s power,
Lily! And the one among you all for artlessness.

Other than this sweet nothing shown by their lip, the kiss
That softly gives assurance of treachery,
My breast, virgin of proof, reveals the mystery
Of the bite from some illustrious tooth planted;
Let that go! Such the arcane chose for confidant,
The great twin reed we play under the azure ceiling,
That turning towards itself the cheek's quivering,
Dreams, in a long solo, so we might amuse
The beauties round about by false notes that confuse
Between itself and our credulous singing;
And create as far as love can, modulating,
The vanishing, from the common dream of pure flank
Or back followed by my shuttered glances,
Of a sonorous, empty and monotonous line.

Try then, instrument of flights, O malign
Syrinx by the lake where you await me, to flower again!
I, proud of my murmur, intend to speak at length
Of goddesses: and with idolatrous paintings
Remove again from shadow their waists' bindings:
So that when I've sucked the grapes' brightness
To banish a regret done away with by my pretence,
Laughing, I raise the emptied stem to the summer's sky
And breathing into those luminous skins, then I,
Desiring drunkenness, gaze through them till evening.

O nymphs, let's rise again with many memories.

*'My eye, piercing the reeds, speared each immortal
Neck that drowns its burning in the water
With a cry of rage towards the forest sky;
And the splendid bath of hair slipped by
In brightness and shuddering, O jewels!
I rush there: when, at my feet, entwine (bruised
By the languor tasted in their being-two's evil)
Girls sleeping in each other's arms' sole peril:
I seize them without untangling them and run
To this bank of roses wasting in the sun
All perfume, hated by the frivolous shade
Where our frolic should be like a vanished day.'*

I adore you, wrath of virgins, O shy
Delight of the nude sacred burden that glides
Away to flee my fiery lip, drinking
The secret terrors of the flesh like quivering
Lightning: from the feet of the heartless one
To the heart of the timid, in a moment abandoned
By innocence wet with wild tears or less sad vapours.
*'Happy at conquering these treacherous fears
My crime's to have parted the disbevelled tangle
Of kisses that the gods kept so well mingled:
For I'd scarcely begun to hide an ardent laugh
In one girl's happy depths (holding back
With only a finger, so that her feathery candour*

Stéphane Mallarmé

*Might be tinted by the passion of her burning sister,
The little one, naïve and not even blushing)
Than from my arms, undone by vague dying,
This prey, forever ungrateful, frees itself and is gone,
Not pitying the sob with which I was still drunk.?*

No matter! Others will lead me towards happiness
By the horns on my brow knotted with many a tress:
You know, my passion, how ripe and purple already
Every pomegranate bursts, murmuring with the bees:
And our blood, enamoured of what will seize it,
Flows for all the eternal swarm of desire yet.
At the hour when this wood with gold and ashes heaves
A feast's excited among the extinguished leaves:
Etna! It's on your slopes, visited by Venus
Setting in your lava her heels so artless,
When a sad slumber thunders where the flame burns low.