

"His flaming robes stream'd out beyond his heels"  
--Hyperion --John Keats

HYPERION NOW

Your rising is the same, assertive, vast,  
With radiating hues eye-aching bright  
To prod awake your realm, demanding homage.  
Keats said you even roared like earthly fire--  
Perhaps at impositions you foresaw.  
The pantheon was subject to rebellion:  
Uprisings from within, downfalling thrones,  
Emblazoned scepters changing hands again.

But much depended on the latitude  
Of viewers. Man's perceptions of the gods,  
Their machinations, jealousies and loves,  
Had ethnic stems, climatic veins. Some came  
From rotting grapes, and some were dream derived,  
Accompanied by lyres and satin whispers  
Of Erato. Her worldly devotees  
Were always ripe with lavish fruitful words.  
A searing summer could induce new tales  
Of usurpation: Helicon besieged,  
A flood, a lava tide, gyrating weather  
Could unseat Apollo, could restore  
Your name. Or wizened Saturn hung in space.

And twice in ancient Egypt, Amon Ra  
Fell from his chariot to raft the rivers  
Underground and cast dice with Osiris.  
His face denied to loyal worshippers  
For months, they lost their crops, their faith;  
their glyphs  
Recorded times of famine and of fear.  
Astrologers reported war in heaven.

(cont.)



A different angle in a farther land,  
Horizon tilted to a golder gaze,  
Engendered obelisks of onyx pointing  
To their chosen deity of life,  
Too sacred to be named by human tongue.  
And in the New World Tonatiuh rose  
Above the Aztec monuments to smear  
The sky incarnadine and all below.  
Ascendent Inti heated Incan priests,  
Sent colored rays through curling incense smoke  
As supplicants bowed low, beseeching favor.  
When you withheld it they assumed the blame,  
Appeasing you with living sacrifice.

You called on dying Keats to spread your legends,  
Knowing lovers' pens are predisposed  
To beauty, drama, grand hyperbole  
And artful hymns you prized in every setting.  
Poor Helios-Hyperion, you have  
No modern bards with garlands for your altars,  
Nor weavers of heroic narratives  
To thrill your minions-- only scientists  
Whose probes reveal your fire is dying too.  
Like any other star, your being, glory,  
Brilliance will collapse; black holes of time  
Will swallow all your names as Gaia spins  
A rime of lifeless white...no longer blue,  
This shining eye reflective of your reign.

--Glenna Holloway