

Two Poems

SIDNEY SNOW

An Obelisk For La Trappe

I rode the wings of an evil bird
who cawed on his way to the palace.
An odor of dampness immersed my freedom
and told me that the palace *was* the reward.
Another bird flew by, selling papercake
with knowing eyes;
A white bird, and caring, which ripped my mask
from unready face.
The searcher stood, naked before the dawn,
confessor and penitent made the same by personhood.
A feather from the raven fell, a vanguard from the palace,
gilded like plainchant upon the eyes.
Crumbs from the papercake lay between the grass.
Fulfilled, I stood, and the white bird returned
to my shoulder.
The palace chorus chanted psalms and penalties
in its best plainsong.
I dropped the raven's pen then, and added
my laughter to the chorus,
a harmony to complete the counterpoint.
We will not carve our names on ivy,
nor scratch them upon rocks.
I have touched a bird who will always be free,
who yet trembles beneath my hands.
I have fought a foe who was not the enemy;
I have shared and I have doubted,
And I have tasted banishment
for looking at the sky.

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