

## JEREMIAD FOR A CRUEL QUEEN

Unnumbered songs and sonnets lie at Nature's royal feet--  
The sentimental drippings from the maudlin tongues of those  
Who try to catch her essence in a pentametric bleat,  
Who do not recognize a whore because she wears a rose.

Her ritual rhymes of season seem to charm the fool esthete;  
I see a certain sameness to her sins I would expose.  
She trysts with Satan at the poles or on some wild arete  
Then takes back everything she gives, each favor she bestows.

There was a time I mouthed her songs, believed her cliché-sweet  
In days when April softly feathered hidden wrath's repose--  
The resting time before the tyrant showed her vast deceit  
Concealed inside a breeze caressing streams' unhurried flows.

Her languid sighing promise makes her treachery complete.  
As all her panders purify her soul with Sunday prose,  
She kills a sleeping village spreading out her molten sheet  
To lie and birth a bastard peak where no man ever goes.

Benignly fertile silt and sod belie her ancient heat  
While many miles below, the devil's cauldron seethes and glows.  
Unfathomed plates and fissures and a sunken gulch compete  
In stealthy silent movement of opposing jagged rows

Until one day some unsuspecting residential street  
Is swallowed writhing, spewing brick and glass and bloody snows.  
And next the waiting sea is seized in manic fists to beat  
The fallen shores and hopeless hearths, defenseless to her blows.

Don't trust the warming solar rays she hangs out in retreat,  
Or feel at peace because a wanton woman changes clothes.  
I've watched her fiery ensign burn up miles of prairie wheat;  
I've seen the crops I planted hosting hordes of worms and crows.

She saw my need for rain; one day she came to my defeat  
With flood. The land and I cry out, but still the water grows.  
She leaves her slimy signature, her bona fide receipt  
For missing homes among the trails of sorrowing she sows.

She drives the revolution, making rival pressures meet  
To funnel down for bridge and barn as though they were her foes.  
She builds a pyre of pines to light her masses of conceit  
Then sprinkles forest bone and ash with every blight she knows.

I've smelled her perfumed breath and heard the mockingbirds repeat  
The legends of her lilled fields, her famous fabled pose.  
Oh yes, I've marveled at rebirth, her flaunted favorite feat,  
And drunk her moontime magic full of myth and false agos.

She parodies my sadness with her tears of slashing sleet,  
Yet I, long bitter, tremble still in autumn's passion throes.  
Despite her endless treason, once again I will entreat  
Her mercy, all the while recalling cattle that she froze.

She, the brute, the beautiful, capriciously will greet  
Each future generation with great wonders and great woes  
Until we storm her secret door and steal the keys to cheat  
This reigning house's charnel clutch, this queen we must depose.

FIRST PS of VA

More than any other in the contest, this poem has captured the beautiful yet terrible essence of nature using strong descriptive language (alliteration—panders purify, hosting hordes, pyre of pines, moontime magic; consonance—wears a rose, sameness to her sins I would expose) and irony (don't trust the warming solar rays she hangs out in retreat; entreat her mercy, all the while recalling cattle that she froze). It is a strong entry with a consistent style and richly concrete imagery (to lie and birth a bastard peak; tears of slashing sleet). The fluidity of the rhyme adds to the relentless message. I like it more every time I read it!