

Pink Mattress

Poems

Marc Tretin

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God's Decree to Marc Concerning Why the Dusty Rose Bedroom Walls Make Him Uneasy:

Because the color is what you call endometrial red
And you cannot return to the womb
And because you think you have learned from Heraclitus
The same man cannot enter the same women a second time
And because you are feeling your wife's nipple harden against your tongue
And because you feel her hand on your head like a yarmulke
And because it is Yom Kippur and you have ate of the pork fried rice
And because she said softly, "mouth"
And because you said, "Should I start with feet" and she laughed,
 "Oh God Yes" and after you have traveled down and traveled up
And because the red sea parted as you say Shma Yisroael with words weighty
And unpronounced and because she called out my name two times
And not because she said "Oh god Oh god" but
Said the name that could not be said with consonants or vowels
And because she put her palms on your head, as if to bless you and said,
 "We're done"
And because she is your prayer, your only prayer,
Through her I will inscribe you
One more year in the book of life
With letters the color of dusty rose and not
With the fiery soot of Hebrew that is the color
Of the wings of rising ravens who turn white
Upon entering heaven.

Let her lead you on.

The Female Aspect of God Speaks to Marc Who Is Buying Personal Items for His Mother in the Incontinence Aisle of the Pathmark Pharmacy

Hear Me! Hear Me! Oh Marc Tretin!
With your sweetness you cannot taste,
find my name of names in your mouth.
Your tongue's the mother of your love.
Your mother cannot see your face
when her eyes close. In her dream,
she saw a pregnant bride and pregnant
bride's maids holding up their gowns,
showing their shaved sweet impudence.
This world is my womb. Your mother
is awaiting to be born. The word that is
the verb *to entrance* and the noun
Entrance is my name.
Buy the wipes without antiseptic.
When I hid Moses in a cleft
of the rock, my glory passed
before his eyes. He saw my hinder parts
as I strode away. Tomorrow the aide
will be sick. Your wife will be at work.
Your mother will look embarrassed.
Moses never entered the promised land,
and you never visited your father's grave.
Buy the box of rubber gloves.

Humidity

This heat brought armadillos to Arkansas
and Spring was early coming down the mountain.
The kudzu got so thick we used a chainsaw
to clear it from the stones around the cistern.
We mucked the bottom of the catfish ponds;
that didn't stop the stink of their die-off.
We pulled more dead fish out than lily fronds
or willow shoots that every which-way threw off
roots that embrace this out of season heat.
Even the barnyard cats kittened sooner.
The rains, each noon, come at us in black sheets.
Whether it's a least-heat or gibbous moon or
the moon shimmery over the river basin,
this heat just breathes itself into a person.

Though She Never Was in Europe

Though she never was in Europe
my grandmother
made crosses of uncooked
bacon in her frying pan
then she'd turn the heat
up high and say
"See. See, that's how they did
the little children."
We slept in the same room.
When she took off her blouse
she'd use
her long gray hair
to hide her flat breasts.
Sometimes when I
couldn't sleep
she'd take me on her lap,
stroke my thighs, and
tell me about the death camps