

# 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