

*P*EGASUS  
AT THE  
*P*LOW



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PEGASUS AT THE PLOW

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You sit there and you swill the coffee  
You're forced to prefer to gin  
You choke down some crumbs  
Of your meaningful self  
When the higher lackeys barge on in  
Your friends all call it burnout  
Switching files on old Chrome Dome  
Changing careers 'd make no difference  
It's just nostalgia for home.

Some days you feel like Pegasus  
Pegasus at the plow  
Though your wings are at their service  
Over one decade now  
Til their billboards block Parnassus  
You're gonna feel that plow.

The girl's transfigured body  
Shoots rays from that Other Place  
You know in your mind  
That you'd been their some time  
And you'd hoped she'd provide the trace  
Instead her love became the  
Luxury box for wealthy boars  
Pragmatists piss in the Holy Grail  
While idealists do their chores.

Somedays you feel like Pegasus  
Pegasus at the Plow  
Though you've worked for their vile causes  
Over one decade now  
Til one key defeats Parnassus  
You're gonna feel that plow.

You sit there and you swill the coffee  
You're forced to prefer to gin  
You choke down some crumbs  
Of your meaningful self  
When the higher lackeys barge on in  
And though you'd love to fly away  
Kicking dust on old Chrome Dome  
The invisible hand has tied your wings  
And sells you videos of home.

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THE COWARDLY LION'S EVENING PARTY

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You brave their faces once again;  
You sense the eyebrows lifting  
As though you were some novel strain  
That had researchers buzzing.

You circulate from tongue to ear.  
You dominate the room  
As might some tyrant, gripped with fear,  
Whose mere nods could deal doom.

You walk on eggs, you skate thin ice,  
You pull up on a dime.  
You later say, "Jeez, it's been nice.  
I've sure had a good time."

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A WAR POEM IN TIMES OF PEACE

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Life, had you but asked a more modest fee  
To issue again my heart's glory days,  
When Diane, mad huntress, held sway in her camps,  
I'd yell, "Quick, fetch firebrands again for me.  
God damn flaccid bards and their impotent lays;  
Let's make war, not commemorative stamps!"  
Ah, to sing her fierce arms when she was young,  
Castrati themselves would have given tongue.

Love, had you but proved a less costly whore,  
I'd gladly resume those dear martial uses  
Which have sucked my heart's coffers so dry of late.  
Ah, but then it had been a defensive war —  
And what red-blooded man stands for truces  
With the foe brandishing spears at his gate?  
Why, pressed by her fierce lips when she was young,  
God's angels themselves would have given tongue!

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LEPERS' SONG

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The sins of the fathers are visited on  
Children born in the light of dawn.  
The symptoms, glimpsed at morning play,  
Erupt full-scale in the hot midday.

All of the fathers are gone away;  
Their balmless lips have had their say.  
The children of vengeance feel their scars  
And plead for dew from the weeping stars.

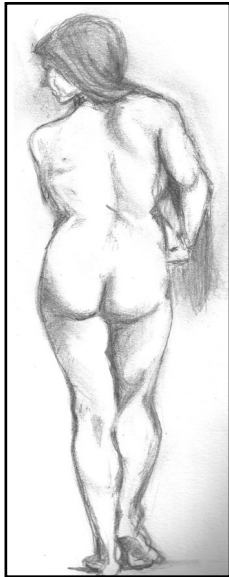
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BELLADONNA

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It is a fair evening;  
The moon shines, gibbous,  
And in its winking descries  
A pretty blond hair,  
Adroitly misplaced on her brow.  
Her eyes part the kiss  
Like startled brown flowers  
And demurely blink to shade a thought  
Of lips that are yours, but not quite.

She pulses with her own fair rhythm,  
Feeds her potent life on alien corn;  
And if this wakening bids your heart  
To drink a startled tear,  
It is all right, it is quite all right,  
For you relish in this bitter drop  
A strange, irreplaceable charm:  
What attar of woman goads the male heart  
Like this glorious freedom it craves to thwart?



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BECAUSE YOU ARE LIKE GOD...

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How can I be that man again  
You once did shape from common clay  
And lit the spark of life within,  
Evening and morning, our first day?

And can I now uneat that fruit  
You'd dangled so defiantly  
For boys who thought he'd be as God  
Who first did snack at your lush tree?

My eyes, unsealed now, know the plight,  
The hair shirt stitched for naked man:  
If you rain smiles on just and ill,  
Might they too count in your great plan?

These nights I'm prone to meditate,  
And I shall meditate again  
On evil's taunting mystery:  
Your seductions for other men.

In the beams of their eye worship,  
You look your most divine of all.  
Might you too pay, as God once paid,  
For this evil you just allow?

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CANTICLE FOR GAIL

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I saw the daughters of men  
And found that they were beautiful.  
With them my love has ripened:  
The fruits belong to you.

When we last spoke,  
Your voice had seemed so pale:  
What pensive moons had bleached away  
The colors in your voice?

To me your laughter is panpipes.  
How I long to make you laugh!

To me your tears are diamonds;  
Can I regret I've made you cry?

You've come to haunt me like a melody  
I've loved from early boyhood  
And at last have learned to name.

Come up to the mountain  
And gaze upon the world.  
Is there a place for me in it  
That does not contain you?

Like a willow you brood in silence  
Over life-giving waters.  
I'll shrivel if you fail to say,  
"Come rest beneath my boughs."

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SONG FOR HALLOWEEN

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Please take this queer song,  
It's meant for your ears.  
Just dip it in a month's blood  
And hide it for years.

Then, when the wrinkles  
Come fast on your brow,  
It'll conjure shamed kisses  
I'm giving you now.

I'll be in Paris  
Or Hong Kong by then;  
You'll be here watching Hitchcock,  
Recalling your men —

Or calling them up  
At séance in bars:  
The passionate young lovers  
Now scattered afar.

You'll still be brave then,  
Much braver than I;  
In a month I'll desert you  
Without telling why.

See, I've grown attached  
To your too-trusting eyes;  
If the lost beaus they weep for  
Are transparent lies,

There's touching bravado —  
And such poignant charm —  
In your confidential way  
Of touching one's arm.

Witch, one might love you —  
But I must leave soon.  
I'll be gone when October  
Has smothered his moon.