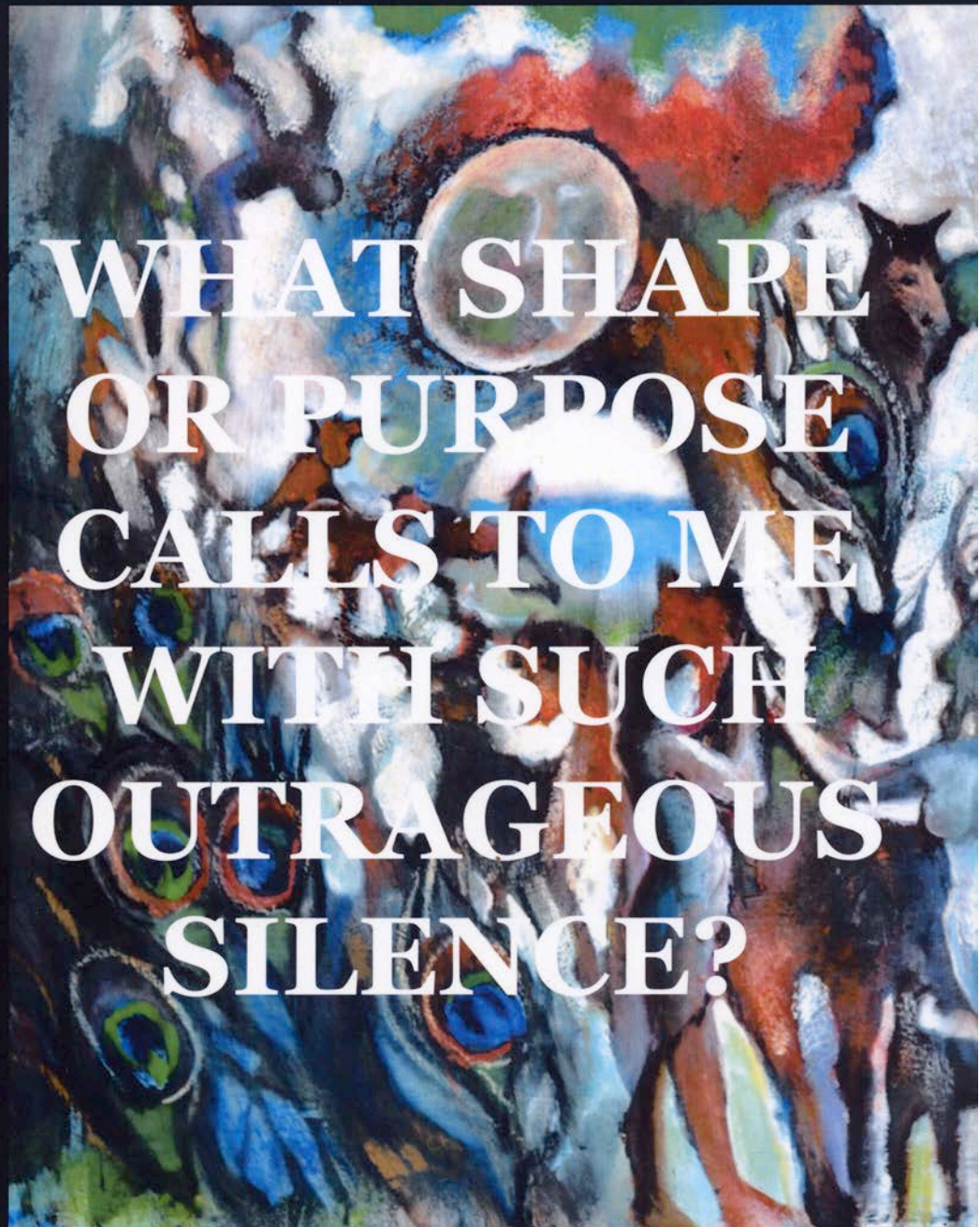
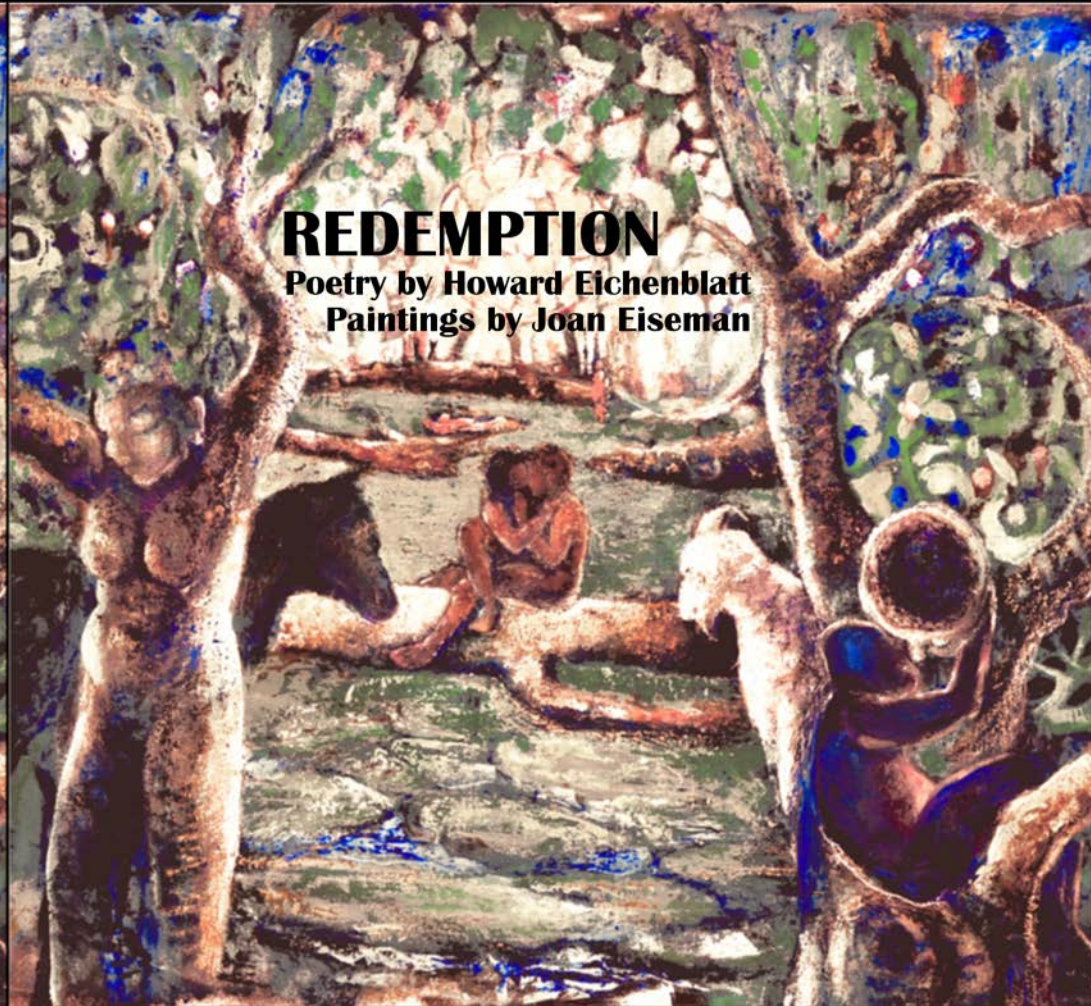


REDEMPTION

Joan Eisenman Howard Eichenblatt



WHAT SHAPE
OR PURPOSE
CALLS TO ME
WITH SUCH
OUTRAGEOUS
SILENCE?



REDEMPTION

Poetry by Howard Eichenblatt
Paintings by Joan Eiseman

For my beloved Eddie
and to all my friends -
those with whom I speak,
and those who think I'm a flake.
- Joan Eiseman

To my Dad.
Thanks for teaching me to mow the lawn.
- Howard Eichenblatt

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I bid you welcome to these pages.

**Turn them cautiously,
For they may crumble
Like an ancient door.**

**Proceed into the glossy black.
On the walls are silhouettes
Of fauns in fits of laughter
And satyrs in a dance.**

**Set aside bleak, oily curtains,
Scan mute mirrors,
Gaze on chandeliers;
Their antique bulbs enhance**

**The contours of the banquet hall.
On a boundless granite slab,
A feast has been prepared
For your redemption.**





How To Share My Thoughts With This One

The father's wrinkled fingers
Trace the eyelids of the infant
As it gazes on a sheet of shadows.
How to share my thoughts with this one,
thinks the father,
How to bend the fruit so that the seeds
reveal the maker.

The infant claws at merest substances at first,
Imbuing them with size, weight, and density.
This ceaseless turning warps the meaning
And defines it in the father's tongue.

The infant,
Just a mouth upon a hand
And a hand upon the air
As if to taste the current in its grasp.
And then the forming of a question,
Shaping, suddenly, somehow
The very nature of living.

IN SEARCH OF AN OASIS



Basically, one's life,
Only a low-budget production,
Marked by countless dunes,
Occasional revelations,
And statues toppled by the sun.

Tired and confused
You stumble through the heat
In search of an oasis.

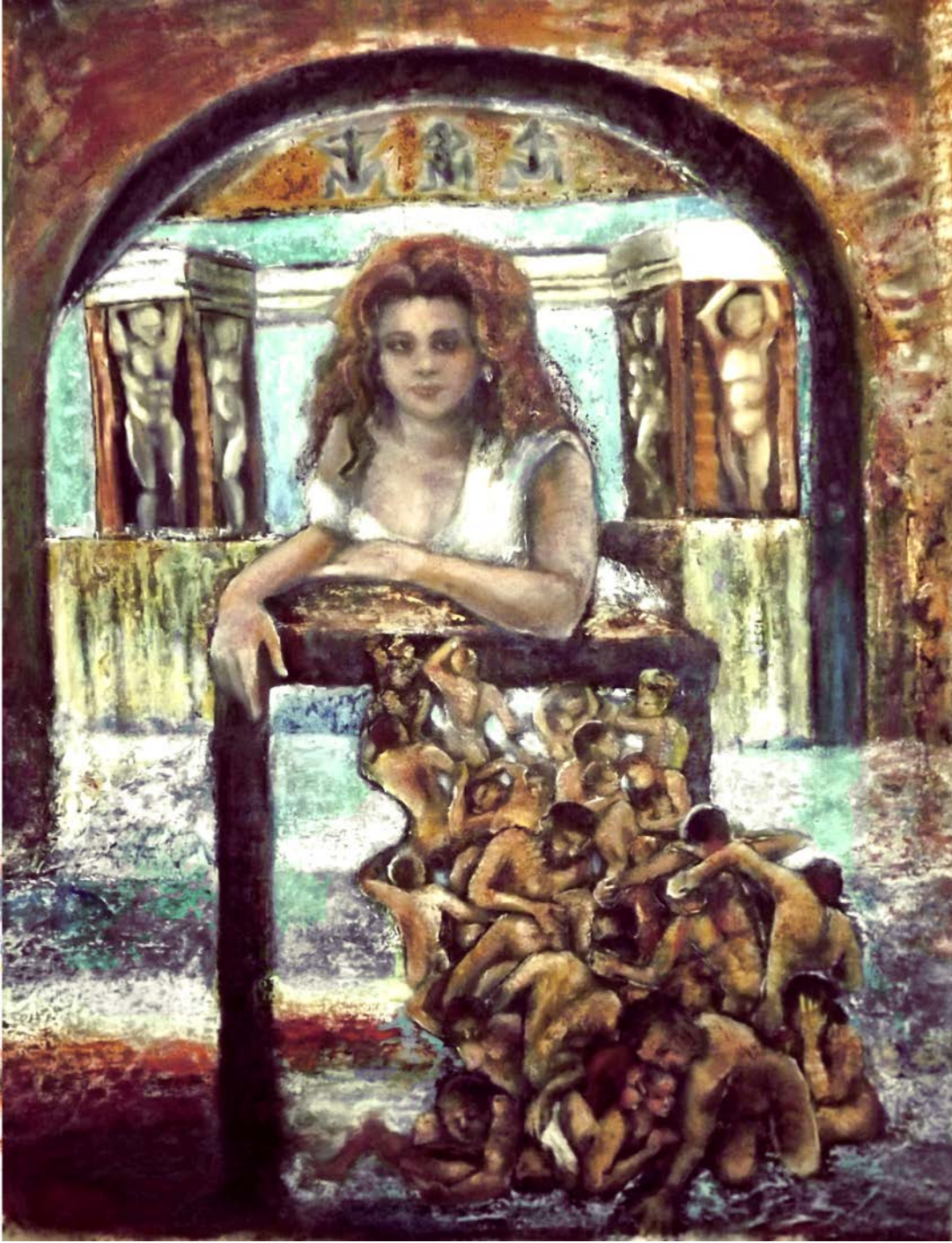
It appears you've found it.
A pool of supernatural clarity,
Palms affording shade and fallen dates.

But nomads have been guarding it.
Their eyes shift subtly toward you,
And they wipe their leathered brows.

Your eyes glisten with a sudden confidence.
You reach toward the holster
For personal redemption.

Plastic cactus.
Mechanical jackals.
A glitch in the laughter...
You are seen from theater seats,
Pursuing your mirage.





And like a river

I walk along an abstract hall,
And in the void I watch a rainbow running.
Colossal figures mark the boundaries
Of what may be just a chamber, but is possibly a tomb.

Resting on a bronze receptacle,
My mother wears a sheet of white.
Within her eyes I gaze at colorless and tranquil mounds of time.

Her wrinkled hand stretches forward, touching her son's face.
His features and his tears are mine,
But I am somehow not him at the time.

And like a river,
A thousand beings pour out of her body.

See Nothing But Their Falling

I lived countless lives in the garden.
I loved your mouth and eyes in the garden.

But I grew tired of the talking animals.
Even the monkeys have not changed their games.

Every day I walked into the wilderness
And longed for the horizon in vain.

Many months I gazed the moon
Encountering its pointless phases.

The world is endlessly repeating this story,
Every budding flower leaves seeds of pain.

My eyes no longer separate the dusk and dawn.
They cannot see the stars, only the darkness.

Although my hair is white,
And my hands, just withered masses,

Somehow the soil is as pure and black
As when I raised it up and planted the first strains.

As the bee explores the autumn rose
You now examine my heart.

Once, I was amazed
By the innocence of your tears -

But watching them fall,
I now see nothing but their falling.

THE GROVE

As the land adorns late evening's robe,
The poet rests his head upon the mossy grove.
Above him sway the black fruit, rotting on the vine.
Their shadows move across his softly swollen eyes.

Like the worm that patiently gnaws on the brain,
So too does this thought, both subtle and dark
Trouble the fiber and grain of the mind;
But the tongue struggles with language.

Death and Beauty, both in black gowns,
Touch his brow with scepters and they pass him by.
He is only a child, suckling the Goddess Muse,
Full of words, her burning breast.

She smiles toward him cryptically.
A deluge of her black hair falls upon his eyes.
Within the comforting darkness,
He sees his lifeless body in the grove.





FOR NORMA DESMOND



A tattered robe
Grasped tightly
By a withered hand
Down the time-worn
Horizontal
Of the ancient stage.

Nothing left
But woe and memory

A cardboard moon
Illuminates
Her sensual eyes.

Weary lips,
Once weary of kisses,
Deliver a few
Meaningless syllables.

Her withered hand
Touches her face
And she collapses.

Beating of a Tiny Heart

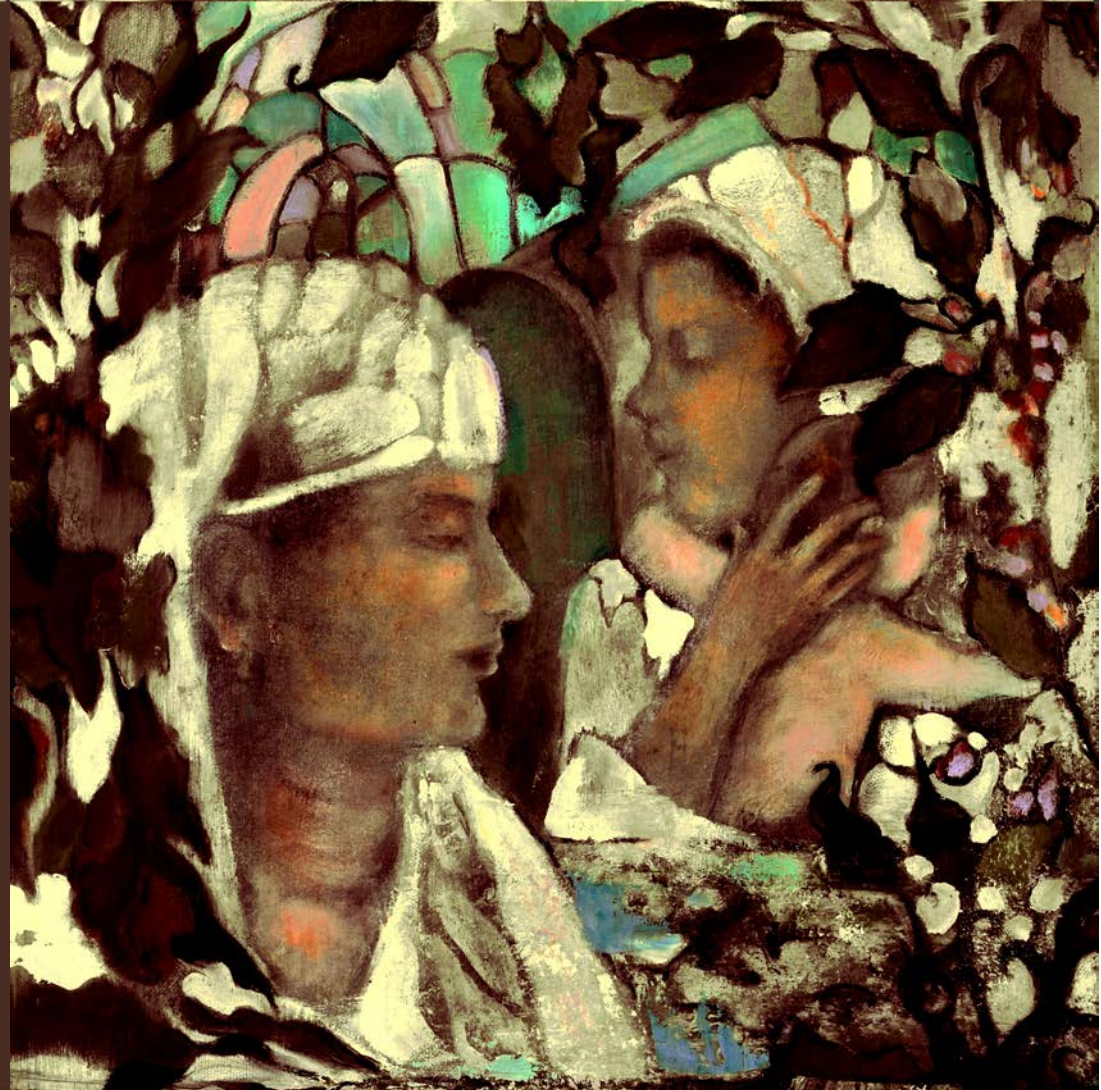
This baby is an emperor of the bewildering condition.
Untutored lips attempt the poems of the burning breast.
He too will learn the human tradition,
The technology of rock
The technology of metal
The technology of talking heads.

At first there was a kind of emptiness.
And in the emptiness a door appeared.
For what seemed like an eternity,
This single door.

Suddenly there came a knocking on the door.
It could be said that there was no one home
For no one answered this incessant knocking.
Was the visitor unworthy of acknowledgement?

Perhaps there was no door at all,
Nor was there any knocking -
The knocking was the beating
Of a tiny heart.

This heart, no larger than a thimble in the nothing,
This heart, a thimble full of blood.



Raskolnikov

I am a bard of crime.
And so, my crime remains impenetrable to the human eye.
Its substance is disclosure,
Its legacy is pain,
But this pain is my own.

I am a bandit of the insult.
I play my music by the moonlight in forgotten woods.
Only the night birds know for sure
What it was I said about your momma.

I climb the staircase of forgetfulness,
It leads me to the opiate...
In the basement, under yesterday's newspaper,
Lies my actual dead body.



In Honor of the Camel's Burden

Under palm tree shadow, we are protected from the screaming sun.
The nomads look about distrustfully, and grasp their trinkets.
I trade with them – my passion for a camel.
In honor of the camel's burden,
The threads of my own soul are thrown into the bargain.

Living things
Are the weights and measurements of living things.
A she-goat and a peacock
Is the pound of sweat and tears I shed
When building these vast pyramids of fear.

I drink the milk of the goat, but only taste my panic.
I gaze upon the peacock, warbling majestically on leagues of dunes,
But there is no redemption.

Here is sediment,
Here is sand,
Here are the tracks left by this human caravan, my own.
Now everything is blown away.



AMERICA



In the city,
Tediously they squeeze
The God Cash Cow.

In my apartment,
The grime of other people's dreams
And barren walls,
And detritus.

America.
Highways in the darkness, lit by stars.
Eating beans from cans, drinking rain,
Only a burnt out radio -
My solace, a cliché.



Unexpectedly,
An oddly glowing canyon.

My eyes,
Like two retarded sheep,
Wander its foothills.


I approach the precipice.
Cliffs, the color of flesh.

But a man can change
His name in the wind.


The Quietest Encounter



The phantom touches with the colors of the brush.
The raven peers from the barren birch.
The feline enters amidst falling flowers,
Flowers falling in a hush.



In all of nature, is there another as poetic?
An imperial mouth purring mysteries sublime,
Ears that shudder at the quietest encounters.



But there is only silence.
Autumn's flowers do not fall so silently.
Falling flowers, flowers falling,
Falling flowers, flowers
Falling.



THE CATS OF THE PLAINS



Waves approach the countless sands
And grasp with white sapphire hands.
But black hands move the stars above
And form the labyrinths of love.

Born on the bank of creation,
We stretch in a dreamy elation;
And in our hearts, the budding desire,
To taste once more the ice and fire.

Tempted by the vast design:
The glow of night, the glass of wine,
Mournful eyes and mournful mouth,
The exhalations of the south.

Gazing from a burning beach
Upon an island, out of reach,
We glimpse the cold, elusive spray
Collapse into the languished gray.

Traveling perilous shore upon shore,
The tides of passion fade and soar.
We extend, and purr, and moan
And slumber in a distant zone.



Gasps of the Divine



These eyes, a pair of hammers,
pound against a savage coast.
Massive clouds rush through the sky
like leagues of mice.
Gigantic waves are blown about
by gasps of the divine.

These hands caress the fibers of the human tapestry.
A thousand souls entwined in a mosaic.
Coarse, hewn from hair, flow on.

Down the rivers of thoughts flows a strange parade -
Some dressed in pinkish filaments of vanity,
Others riding steeds the color of seed.

This heart explores the details of the human mansion.
Endless hallways reek of sexuality,
Books about blood, smut, and paradise.
Cobwebs decorate the ancient corpses
Of forgotten lovers.

Two eyes, these blue-green knives, cut into the canvas,
And in my maddened state, I expected
An inferno of blazing language.

I press my ears against the whirling darkness;
There is no inferno of blazing language,
Not even the stuttering of embers dying.

At last, I reach into the soundless pigment...
"Who are you that lives beyond this surface?
And what shape or purpose calls to me,
With such outrageous silence!"

THE
MYST-
ERIES
OF
THE
CAN-
VAS

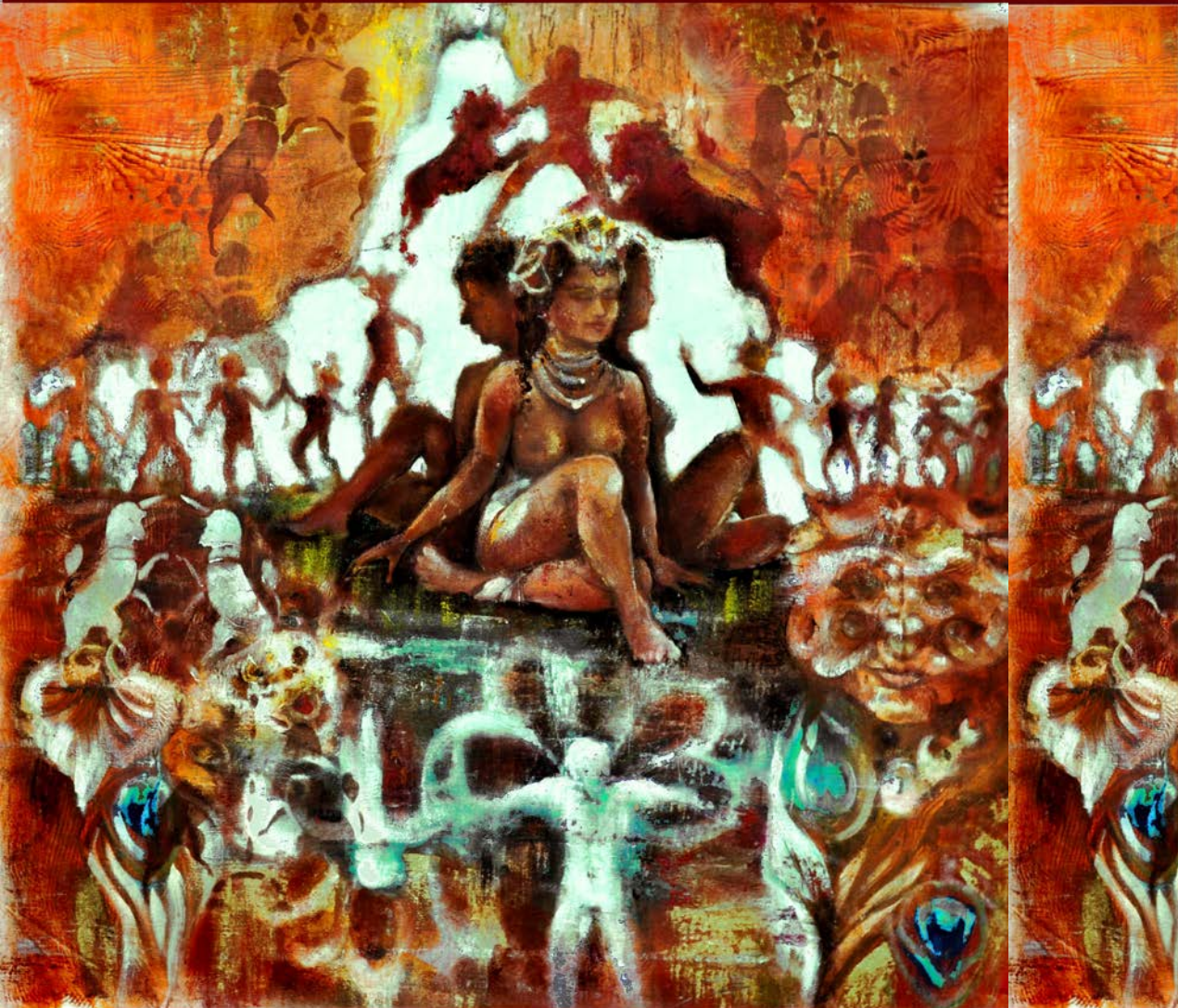
Silver strings,
Silver strings plucked by heavenly musicians.
Actually: a band of angels wearing sunglasses.

But this!
This plethora!
Of rich brown hair,
Like two fantastic fountains of honey,
Gushing and gushing and gushing and gushing.
Their shadows taste like figs and dates,
Their eyes - a blaze of irises within twin pools of milk.

What is your mystery, my Sirens?
What is this spell you've cast
Such that we carve these odes into our skin?
Natassja, Isabella - whatever names these centuries
Have bestowed upon your ageless, heavenly brows
I say them now. I sit here pining after you
With a gun in my hand
Dictating accolades
In the Law Offices
Of Libel, Larson, and Change.

Tell me,
What fathomless metaphorical shore
Holds the sands on which you dance?
What titanic imaginary castle
Hosts you and your beautiful, unanswerable questions?





This Absurd Marrisonette

**A sudden gust shakes the frames
And a window opens to the immense twilight.
The window opens to a dreadful wintry breeze.
I shiver to the bones but I cannot close it.
But really, there's no point in closing it.**

**I move closer to the fire,
But the fire does not warm.
The fire only moves my limbs
In this absurd marionette.**

**I remove layers of lace in the emptiness.
I kiss your skin in the emptiness.
I leave petals of red in the emptiness.
At last, I collapse under the stars.
The stars are far away, I cannot touch them.
And yet they rain like tears from my eyes.**



In My Teacup

In my tea cup float the pieces of papyrus
Taken from the remnants of an ancient tomb.
Amber droplets trickle down the passages of time.

Breathing in the steam of the sarcophagus,
I peer into the whirling of the crimson and marine.

Steeped in the land of the dead,
A speechless body
Sunken eyes.

I raise the tea cup to my lips.
Down the drain, memory, memory, memory.



Joan discussing the fine points with imaginary friends

I was trudging through a swamp – it was sometime in the late summer, but I can't be sure of the exact date – as if the exact date matters – when suddenly I came across a curious shrine. Lillies clung to the walls and grotesque flowers bloomed from the eyes of statutes with melancholy faces. And that was how and when I met Joan – Joan the beautiful, Joan the wise, and Joan the possibly insane, sitting crossed legged and chanting the universal sound of creation and destruction. Suddenly, she noticed my presence and smiled cryptically toward me. Wiping the mascara from her eyes, she introduced herself to me as the Queen of Sheba.

She invited me to her studio to see her paintings. We literally had to peel hundreds of tapestries from the walls in order to see them all. Many of them disintegrated immediately at the touch. She must be at least six hundred years old in order to have painted so many of them. My God. They were monstrous... and yet fascinating. This book features a selection of her paintings that wouldn't force us into the mental asylum if they were published. At first she refused to have her name identified as the artist, since she "stole all of her ideas" from "Otto the Leprechaun". Recently I too have met Otto, and he is indeed a fine little fella.



Howard relaxing at the the beach

I saw Howard Eichenblatt for the first time during the winter of 2012. He was wearing a dark gray dress shirt, partially tucked into leather pants, and had no shoes on. He was running from the police down Broadway. I asked one of the officers why they were chasing him – the officer shook his head and explained that the kid had been loitering in the ladies room at a prestigious hotel, writing poetry on the bathroom stalls while watching the occupants through peepholes he made with an electric drill. I told the officer he was my nephew, and the officer let me take him home with me.

It is true that Howard expressed his gratitude by robbing me of several family heirlooms. It is also true that Howard repaid my acts of kindness by logging into my computer and purchasing many kilos of cocaine from a nefarious vendor using my credit card account. But I'll be damned – the boy writes some fine poetry, and I list him as my only friend.

Dimensions

I Bid You Welcome to These Pages (Orig. Painting 36" x 24")

How to Share My Thoughts With This One (Orig. Painting 33" x 45")

In Search of an Oasis (Orig. Painting 36" x 18")

And Like a River (Orig. Painting 55" x 40")

See Nothing But Their Falling (Orig. Painting 35" x 45")

The Grove (Orig. Painting 33" x 45")

For Norma Desmond (Orig. Painting 21" x 44")

Beating of a Tiny Heart (Orig. Painting 32" x 45")

Raskolnikov (Orig. Painting 24" x 18")

In Honor of the Camel's Burden (Orig. Painting 36" x 36")

America (Orig. Painting 35" x 40")

Quietest Encounter (Orig. Painting 16" x 20")

Cats of the Plains (Orig. Painting 18" x 30")

Gasps of the Divine (Orig. Painting 37" x 50")

Mysteries of the Canvas (Orig. Painting 36" x 24")

This Absurd Marionette (Orig. Painting 24" x 18")

In My Teacup (Orig. Painting 49" x 38")

All paintings are Oil on Canvas

Prices Availabe Upon Request

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