

The Ballad of the Despairing Reader

Zeynep Özdeş Orakcı

I sat all night silently
Waited for ideas to come rapidly
But Creeley is not an easy bite
Reading his poems is like an international flight

I read all his poems one by one
He has a language as bright as the sun
But writing a response is not easy
After three hours I am feeling a little dizzy

I began with "Chasing the bird"
OK, I understand it's about hurt
But then what does the title mean?
It's apart from the poem, as the pea is from the bean.

The second poem was "The Flower"
The words in it have great power
I especially loved the last lines
Where Creeley said "like this one, like that one's"

"Wow," I said when I read "The Door"
It's four lines but I wanted more
I understand why the door cries,
Why the tears fall down from his eyes.

I was going to write a response on "Trees"
The feeling it gave me was like a strong breeze
Is it really true that poets are all alone,
Destined to live in a dangerous, solitary zone?

Language is the only thing you own
To describe what you feel from flesh to bone
In "A Token" words are the only way
For the poet, to take his lady's heart away

The mind is a kind of picture frame
In which the truth and memory are no longer the same
"The Mountains in the Desert" are the pictures in it
What the poet once saw and kept in, are tightly knit
The other poem is called "The Revelation"
The train won't come just because you wait at the station.
Not all the outcomes have a simple purpose
You should see the things hidden under the surface.

I should better end this poem now
Can somebody please tell me how?
Please tell me, please tell me...
Oh, Robert Creeley, you see what you've done to me?
Oh, Robert Creeley, I really need to drink a cup of tea.
Oh the talented Mr. Creeley, can you teach me how to write?
Oh, the talented Mr. Creeley, I promise I'll be alright.

Oh the talented poet, the time is getting late.
Oh the talented poet, I'm ready to serve my poem on a golden plate
Oh the most talented poet, the lines are already written down
Oh the most talented poet, to end I need a rhyming noun.

Oh sir, give me a few minutes to think.
Here it is! I'm finishing with a blink.

Ankara, 2004.

The Ballad of the Despairing Reader



Date: Fri, 19 Mar 2004 08:35:07 -0500

From: "Robert Creeley"

To: "zeynep ozdes"

Subject: Re: ballad of the despairing reader

Dear Zeynep Ozdes,

I am very sorry not to have thanked you for your terrific poem/take on my "Ballad of the Despairing Husband" long before this. It's wonderful! Ezra Pound said that doing something like that was the most active form of criticism possible, and I well believe it, reading what you were able to get done. So onward -- and take good care of yourself in this bleak time. I'm depending on you!

Best to you,
Robert Creeley

P.S. My best wishes also to old friend Baris Gumusbas -- would that we were all in some comfortable cafe there, just talking about the world around us as ever.

--

