

i have been a river...

by Pamela Twining

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It's hard to believe this is a first book. The verse is seasoned, masterful, perfectly formed, and contains the most uplifting spirit incarnate eroticism I've ever read.

“ to come to you
don my loveliest dress
and envision you pushing it up
above my waist
while I wrap my legs around you
and pull you in

i feel your hands
and your lips
along my neural pathways
lighting me up
like a starry night

I shall wear diamonds tonight

What I enjoy about these lines:

The dress is the loveliest.

The action is without qualm.

The body lit up, “like a starry night” uncomplicated, yet many have seen stars but rare is the transfiguration of the body. Then I saw the immense night sky and soon thought of Van Gogh which augured action in my vision. It doesn't matter if the author intends reader response. It authentically is what it is. That is the Magna & Universality of perfect words.

The preciseness of neural pathways juxtaposed to the celestial ambiguity of the diamonds she wears.

The subject matter.

There is not a metaphor or simile in this book that doesn't achieve appropriateness of image & sound. Twining's descriptive facilities are front shelf.

“hear their voices in the Silence
marked by the musical chatter
of the creatures of dawn...”

“electric blue gaze of heaven
paralyzing...”

“the organic moment subsides into the gaseous
rising pure as light...”

“...the ravenous maw of the vacuum..”

“greedy pupils expand/contract
will the images fade
like photographs
overexposed?...”

“my lightning mother
stabs me to the heart with her beauty..”

Notice *to* the heart not *in*, more evocative, alluding to Journey, Deep.

“Again the sky is riven...”

“cacophony of naked stars...”

I love how she goes old school and capitalizes nouns that warrant emphasis, even verbs: Who would Give /must learn to Receive...” Yet she doesn’t capitalize the first person pronoun. Her lines are finely crafted and flow gracefully. There’s not a word that feels misplaced or superfluous.

There is no hedging in this collection, no posturing. The sincerity meshes well with the brilliance. This is a woman who is not afraid of her desires because they are clean. The constellations, the black holes, the Darkness, the Light, the entire cosmos is sexual & alive. Twining makes clear her path to cosmic consciousness: ” That’s the One/That Star out there/Brighter in the firmament/Than any other/That’s the One...” Her path is through love: ”...i want to touch you o so softly gently, / never stop/ and all the ways I would please you...”

When I heard Pamela read these lines I became envious, any man or woman would want this in a lover. Intelligence, Fervor, Totality.

Through out the collection Twining illuminates and odes her tools: Dance, Love Making, Awareness of Natural Beauty, Family, Her Poetry.

Her influences? I can only conjecture. The poems remind me of Whitman, DiPrima, Emily D out of the attic, JP Vega, Lenore Kandel, traditional Native American campfire verse, the Virasaiva & Sufi poets, Hafiz in particular.

I’m not much of a believer, though mysticism fascinates me, (I would say she is a mystic, like Whitman when you touch this book you touch a person) but I don’t think I practice it, yet this book has overwhelmed me with eloquence and promise. The care and devotion each poem received is self evident. I won’t argue with Genius or Beauty or the Mother.

Though the tenor of the book is freedom from suffering, some of the lines express “longing and isolation, the burden all wakened souls suffer...” as Chris Wood aptly stated in the Foreword. The burden of the Bodhisattvas, the cross of Christ, and what has driven many a poet mad.

Pamela Twining has a Way Out. “i am a river...”, has a Way Out, it’s in every poem. Were her work widely read and available it would and will be a better world. Pamela, I congratulate you on the beginning of a great career, may your Heart & Muse live forever.

Andy Clausen