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Centaur War

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Centaur War

Centaur War

by Amyann Faul

We are the half people,
Children of the Fall;
The dueling people,
Born of a sin.
We are the flesh-eaters
The sin-breeders
Tossed on the seas of impulse
Tethered to the last remains
Of some distant dream.
Do we remember our place
In the greater scheme?
The fusion of thought and urge;
We fight the constant war
Of reason and desire.
For we are both beast and god
Both lust and love;
Rain and fire.
Centaurus and Chiron,
Equally our brother,
Ixion and Chronos
Each our father.
And in the night of friction,
Of savage mutiny,
Whose descendant are you?
Which side do you choose?
To die by a friendly shot
Or live interminably
In Ixion's shame.
The choice belongs to us all;

The battle lies within.

Editorial note: Asked to supply a brief explanation of the mythological background of the Centaurs in order to illuminate this poem, Amyann Faul writes, "Spiritually, centaurs can symbolize the internal battle between reason and passion (or mind against emotions) in the human person; perhaps also the tension between wild, untamed nature and civilization. There are varying versions of centaur myth, but . . . I chose as background to include the lustful and adulterous pursuit of Hera, the Queen of the Gods, by the mortal king Ixion (whose eternal punishment for his desire was the torturous wheel in Tartarus). Jealous Zeus foils his treachery by fashioning a cloud-sprite into the likeness of his wife. [Ixion's] . . . union with the cloud produces Centaurus, a half-man, half-horse fiend driven by carnal lusts. . . . Alternatively, the Titan Cronus (although himself married), in the fecund joy of spring sets his sight on a water-nymph. She turns herself into a beautiful mare and runs from his advances. In playful bliss, Cronus also transforms himself into a stallion and their love engenders Chiron the Wise and Just. . . . Chiron becomes the mentor to many heroes of the Greek tradition—including Hercules. Chiron's offspring and some other centaurs choose to live a just life. These centaurs sought refuge in the wilderness and focused all their divine strength on peaceful studies."