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Bridge / Medusa

Joy Reid

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Additional Keywords

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BRIDGE

Silently he comes,
pausing for calculation.
I need no sounds
to tell of his arrival.
Do the blind need eyes
to feel the shade of a tree?

His eyes see what
I have not seen.
He sees the creek is narrow,
he sees the need for a bridge.

So stones must be heaved
leaving clay socket wounds.
Stones round as loaves
plunged into place,
stacked like the skulls
of an ancient genocide.
Spiders are made refugees,
lizards skitter in a flurry of panic.

When the bridge allows crossing
he defects with a leap,
grinning in triumph.

He on one side,
I on the other,
a sickle-shaped causeway between.

-- Joy Reid

MEDUSA

There comes yet another
with sword gripped in puddled palms
with plumes for courage
with shield as ward
greaved and helmeted he comes
comes to sink
toes
arch
heel
careful in crusted sand.
My ears bat-tuned cup every sound:
the crunch of shell
heave of raw breathing.
I feel terror
as a spider fingers prey hung tremulous
smell sour fear mist rising.
What is my sin that I am stalked?
Can the bear choose
to cast off claws
was my counsel sought
for this Gorgon form?

About the stones
seal wet and sleek
he scavenges for honour
crouched in caution
so that muscles crack
thighs equine quiver
so solemn he seems
so bent upon this heroic quest.
The sky's shield turns body to brine
mouth to dry sponge
yet still he comes
the low salt swish of restless surf
screens the hiss
of snakish companions -
how I long
to savour the slippery spurt
of release
I am tired of statues and the plaintive cries of gulls.

-- Joy Reid