

Days of Thor

by Iain James Robb

Mars' circled state is slain, no bird of Jove
That roosts protected in its green youth's flush;
Its storms no more bring moistness from above,
From blue beads cradled in one thunder's flash.
The god of War was husband once to Love:
Her arms were white around his carmine flesh,
The eagle drifting with the summer dove,
His beak enthroned within her feathers' mesh.
If Mars' sceptre set in thunder's realms shall be
As a red god's dried kingdom, wrapped in black,
Where the eternal night holds knightly regency-
Where tides of clearer times past won't run back...
With the lost king's greener robes, have faded now
To livid clefts of red, that make sea's dens
As wraiths long tombed, and all the ghosts of snow
Lie locked inland in sand's harsh gravelled prisons-
Then the path of Mars rests in its pink god's reign:
Who left our goddess Earth alone to weep,
In tears for Her reft love; no more shall sleep
 To wake, the harvest and the daily rain...
 In Mars' dark court, since seasons sleep,
 Since all His valleys lost their friends:
 The lightning-bolts that no more weep
For arid rock-buds, left for winds.

The planet's grasp has kept its fastness, through the eons
sleeping,
 And if it keeps its static wheel, round its high father sun,
 Will it turn round to face the cloudbursts that were once
rewheeling,
 Round the oceans that once held it, or no coasts again:
 To rise like furrows of blue wheatfields to the sea-shafts reeling,

Azure prince once and the princess-loved, the fathered one-
Who is interred now in space' open vault, no longer feeling
The sad dance of wheeling seas that knew their drays were
done?

Their phantoms sit in rainless vapour, with the trees once
dreaming,

With their ashes in the shuttled chutes of gales, whose reign
Has rocked the shoulders of the boulder-roads, where flutes of tin
Announced strange music, for a kingdom that has lost its king.

-
The eyes of distant spheres won't seek these sands, unseeing,
Where their gas or liquid vastness keeps its distance' trace-
If the colour of wind's hair is as a siren's, swinging
Silken redness at the sighing sound of ships that race:
Or if the azure sky we know is like a songbird singing,
When the muted air up there is like a pond's still face-
That never breaks in ripples moving from a bough to flecken
Trailing twigs, that catch the surface, at the moonlight's place:
And the ground becomes the long grave of the minutes broken,
And the wildling winds are ringing in their rainless bays-
To be stilled at noon or night, if silent clocks will reckon
Up the hours of the equinox of ageless
space.

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Not now will the peach dusk there that lasts through the nightfall
Turn to a different shade, within the deep, depthless dawn.
These lands have never known one respite at the day's call,
Of their meridian state between twin bodies that spawn
The twelve-hour turns, of blue and black skies that sever
Awake from sleeping hours here, where the sun and red moon
Stalk the orbits that play into our system's hands ever
Static, circling in their circlet's swoon.

Rocked to rest in your orbit, rest long, red gravelled planet,
That was in primitive times as Gaea-green as the breeze,

That thawed the ice of white tides: and if a shuttle shall plummet
As winged things that your heart held, that the Arctic's sun sees-
If the bore of a probe can find what life was once with you,
Then we might turn you towards what you owned, if we grow it,
As the lost life returns, and new blooms robe the rocks, at
The banks under the sky that was rouge, turned to
blue.

Perhaps a lady once lived in your stone cities now floundered,
And razed for good through the ages by decay's tragic mime,
And her spectre yet clings to the warmth that had wandered
By her bright lover's side. Now space, divided by Time,
Has no space for her prayers, for life's motionless movement
Within the present death rooted to these borders of clay:
Yet if she moved to a word's sound by the wind-funnel's trumpet,
That forebodes the fleet, cymballed siroccos, she'd
say,

-
"Now the late Spring has left us with the last lives of robins,
Or when lost light's dark angel on her star-brightened fens
Has left her even-wing's mantle, at the moonlight strands-
That bridged the sundowning's highway at the day-birds' dens:
 Will Aurora's corona sight upon these lands,
Return its missing remembrance, that remembrance pens,
 Once lost as times that passed us in the days of wrens?"

"Now long years have left us with the wraiths of the lost loves,
As silent leave, as leaves that pass through Autumn's coves,
Will there be light enough left inside a fresher year's havens,
For its new store of sights to chain those flown of the doves-
That would have long since far left, to seek the summer's harems,
 If they existed but in memory? The frigid gloves
That wing the loveless weigh of polar zones have slain the
doves.

“Now deadened dreams of seasons, that have left Time's errands,
Have left their soul-borne service to our life's love's ends,
We won't skip more within the tidelets roam through nether
caves,
Behind the nethermost petrel that the long wave sends:
For if a singsound songbird mourns in low-strung staves
Made and born for ocean's ways and night-tide's friends,
We have died, as song dies underneath Time's shifted
sands.”

Now her stray lament's ended, moved to sense or one sound
That has broken as snow-feathers melt, that won't float
Any longer by rose-coloured lanes skies have bound
At the altar of air's things forgotten, no clouds that
Will line the far borders of the atmosphere's shroud-
Within Mars' drier dominion, shall the earth's men return
In a thousand years coming to build lands that won't burn:
Returning warm, wet showers to the white woven
cloud?

We will leave them alone now, all those phantoms whose forms
Were the same as our own once; if we build, we shall stay,
If the sheer cities of metal we'll erect through strong arms
Will be beacons, by which the tamed elements play.
Shall the lips of a girl, whose face is sanded in shrouds,
Speak to us at the brink of the hot zones and courts frozen?
She'll speak to us gently of her innocence, caged in
All the memories gone, and left far back as the clouds.

*Wan wraith, she's moved graveward, where dreams meet at the
sands where*

*Life's hopes blow in the deserts, stranded, fade as a worn ghost:
Far 'cross dust's strands, past the low brick plains, that set a
maze here*

*Wound out of wind in a wheel, to the dust to go, wherein she
strays lost.*

*Here range wide islands none, there as a memory they've gone:
Fallen, fading, will they rise once more to meet Spring
rain?*

*Where will youth go to, ghost-like? Fair young pools of a dark
stream*

*Look north from your phantom eyes there, wrought out in strange
ways,*

*Crossing from these winding winds through dearth of a fleet
dream;*

*Blazing breeze howls hymns blown forth from flame, out of
storm's blaze.*

*Here range where widened sands churn, as a melody outworn,
Dewless flutes of dun, untouched with the sun, through the red
vault's horn.*

Throughout the pandemonia, of the pipes of clay that break here,
Will there play another tune that modulates its ways:
Could we slay the tempest's essence 'neath a new-turned sphere,
When mills of metal pull their motion to the storm-path's maze?
They'll shine as satellites may shine that set their roads before us,
As the paths of man seek newer worlds his course may take.
Under sky now made of glass, Time turns through all their
quarries,

As the mother man shall make, until the air grows
meek.

Will the soft sand glisten as a rose may beckon,
With the wet dune-tides of dew the rain shall make?
If the long-ridged land will soak, the stars may reckon
A fate of many wet years more by which the sands shall slake
The thirsty ground that churns beside a river's border-
Before the lakes that eons will build, for all the men to be-

When the hard rocks bow down, as fluid things that flutter
Beneath the shifting surface of the sifting sea.

If the ground that was cracked can grow greener, the sky will
Grow darker with azure at the end of Time's day:
That has reddened the rocks that will soften as soil shall,
Below the sun-shower's sheen that shows the new birth of May.
If the rain can exist within the white thunder-flowers,
That blast their bugles in new billows of blue, it will seem
As something long ago surfaced from the last eon's hours,
 New life: last, or lasting, return of a dream.

Where the red sphere spreads out its canals, no green plants are-
Till the fresh days of air, the mother man shall make for them:
To turn through blue ether's arms like fresh, early sown trees, or
The loose vines on the cliff-face at the reddish land's hem:
As the last notes of the halcyon knell the dead days of Thor,
And spell the end of dry pasture that scorched the sand's rim.
Till the new age up there has carved its last panorama,
That has filled up the split, riven pits where cool ponds were,
We could hope in the future for a fresh world's drama,
If drought and dimming decay breathe through futurity here.
We could hear young cicadas and the starling's cantata,
Where the glittering teardrops of dew slide still sheer;
So man continues his history in the shadows sublime,
 Of the nethermost space that is divided by Time,
 From where the lilac yet dances and the amaranth blows,
Beneath the crystal courtyard of returning snows.

Here where gales with the ghosts, of those who once may have
dwelt here,
 Flay the rocks with the tempest's strength that pelts from pink
heaven,
 Roll the roads of canals, throughout a scourge void of water,

Rock the relics and ruins till the rough is made even-
Will the grass ever grow under man's supervision?
Will the winnowing wind take care to strafe the new grain?
When monsoons are returned to a new ocean's vision,
When the water will glaze the slow vault's pasture, then
Clouds will come with the sweetness of life's sharp incision,
Will sow with storm's seeds, writhe the
rain.

Here where dales may have been once the rose may still grow
here,
And its tone shall usurp the sharp shine of the sands;
When the sun's shadow shrills, by a mown field where rocks were,
Flocks that flew once come back to the snow-shower lands.
When the winter is part of the shimmering seasons,
When wind-funnelled clarions of air spare the plains,
Will the looking-place paths of the poles see the pinions
Of mills harnessing force in the frozen demesnes?
Light and energy come upon the landscape parks' visions,
When we'll chain their rage, where othersight of daylight reigns.

Satellite, satellite, your flight has brought for us,
Ere the probe has descended where my name has its place,
The first fruits of your secrets and our science' consensus:
Turn our eyes to the future of the peach planet's face-
And if our thousand-year dreams stay where our vision takes
wing,
We might yet plant our glass towers, where the gales' furies fling
Their distant noose of cater-coigned and caterwauling
strands
Made by air, aboard the border of the man-made lands.

Sit in stasis of the cosmic night that year-long binds you:
Your sphere might learn to hear again the songbirds winging;
And if the seasons to their harmonies change skies to blue-

And if the last notes of the halcyon are a siren's singing,
We shall die as swans die dreaming of their dark pools' harbours,
Where the last rays of the frigid moon cast past the stars.

As such we'll sit and watch them bask in all might's mirrors,
Reflected diamonds of their majesties, with sparkled spars
That spiral down through heavens in the dark paths where
stars are,

Down upon Mars' winding ways, where snow-buds steer:
Where children learn to laugh and lay again, amid the glow
That slips and touches their wet fingers, with the satin
snow.

