ESTUARY AND POSEIDON

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I

The Great Poseidon, Salty Sea . . .

A sailor tattooed chest and arms

On his right forearm, a sperm whale flees

The wrath of a fierce Atlantic storm.

On his bulging biceps, countless deep-

sea denizens swarm in perfect sweep

& On his deep, sun scalded chest,

a great squid gestures, east and west!

II

Old mariner in his Navy stripes

A chief's outfit he proudly swags

Like the backdrop of a starry night

That conceals a great white's saw-toothed gag.

But Poseidon, sailor in dark-blue

Has come, as a mortal man to woo

A mulatto lady fairer than he

Who makes her home by a sawgrass sea.

In shallow swells, her dreams ignite

A brackish bliss fresh-watered bright

With mytoplankton, shrimp and seeds

Of every dimension, rank and lead.

& Beneath her frond-palmetto'd crown,

Young Estuary, lithe and brown –

A river siren, full with life –

Sings lullabies of paradise

& Dreams of a morning when she might ride

On the outgoing shoulders of a salt-sea tide!

III

Thus, would it come, one day to pass

Where brackish waters grow tall grass

And long-limbed birds with boney knees

Resemble rainbow feathered trees,

That the gruff Atlantic with his tales

Of octopi and Great Blue Whales

Set sail himself wherein to moor

His ship at Estuary's door

Wherein her youth and beauty lay

Brown-eyed and Tempting by the Bay.

IV

As a gift, he brought, from Sargasso Sea,

Some posies picked by none, but he

Then sat beside her by a stream

Where sheepshead swam and ducks took wing.

There, he seduced her with reprise

Of daring-do and foreign skies

Much like an old Othello did

When Desdemona heard his bid,

& judged him fit to give her hand

by virtue of his lives in foreign lands!

V

So, comely Estuary, Queen,

For her salt-tongued suitor, seen and unseen

Without excuse or apology fell

In a love no Bayside breeze could quell!

& In a bed of mangrove leaves and Spanish moss

would the two conceive

as Eve and Adam once had done,

a thousand twins conceived as one

To till the swamp and ply the air

To swim the soft-shell fiddler’s lair

& slither like the wily snake

whose wisdom was his first mistake!

VI

Gray Fox and Marsh Hare both knew life

By Poseidon and his perfumed wife

Whose middle name was Estrogene,

Forever-fertile-evergreen!

At night, her moans of rapture rose

Like rooting snouts in feral clothes,

With claws that dug at her lover’s throat

& squealed like a Bobcat, passion-soaked

It echoed in the shallows, saline-free

& Bubbled in the chasms of a brine-soaked sea!

VII

& Their children chose what they might do

As they left their parents, two-by-two

To cleans our planet, each-by-each,

More numerous than the crystals on a Sarasota beach,

From Estuary and the Sea,

They helped sustain Humanity,

Which was not easy, for, indeed,

Humanity was wracked with ambition and greed

& Though it often flirted with poor health,

chose often not to save itself,

or anything else that dared to stand

against the acquisition of power and land!

VIII

So, it spat crude-oil in Estuary's face

& Mocked her husband's salt-sea grace

With a flood that set the sea on fire

& raked its bosom with barbed wire

& The Great Blue Whale, whom God adored,

Was by Man, hounded 'till it was no more!

IX

The sailor and his once fresh bride

Were forced to swim against the tide

Of change in an ecology

Brought low by blind technology!

& Realtors who often barged

Through Estuary's private yard

To claim that space, which used to be

Reserved for her and her love, the Sea,

Took snapshots for greedy eyes

Who buzzed around wetlands like flies!

X

& What once was laughter, gagged with blood

& broken glass was ground in mud,

Which blossomed rich with seed, no more

Because of a stage, which lay off-shore . . .

Because of new palatial digs

That snuffled in rut like stucco'd pigs

Placed side-by-side where cypress trees

Once spread their green-majestic leaves!

XI

But Estuary was given a gift

A mangrove bracelet from the swift,

Unyielding fingers of her love

Who clasps her hands with his mariner’s gloves,

Then vows with a voice of Nor-Eastern winds

To violently check the world of Men!

Says the Old Atlantic Sea whose chest

Grows tight with rage, like a rogue wave’s crest,

By drown or drought, he tells his heart,

Her home shall see a second start,

Whose children whom they both gave birth,

Will refresh the air and re-cleanse the earth

& Everything that bears Man’s name

will be erased by storm or shame!

XII

But Estuary, though she bleeds,

Has a heart that does not feel the need

For blood-revenge, and tells him so,

Her true-beloved since long ago!

XIII

& So, he rolls his octopus eyes

like dinner platters, fierce, but wise

& He wraps his arms around his queen

To swear restraint ‘gainst human beings

and all that they have done to kill

Queen Estuary’s fertile will!

XIV

They wait with patience, he and she,

By the edge of an awfully tranquil sea

That seems, in a ragged breath, to say,

“I’ll fix Mankind, another day!”

They wait, yet, even when the bowl

Of crude petroleum overflows

& sops the sailor’s Navy coat

They pause in silence to take note

Of what we human’s next might do:

Give worse, or somehow try to renew

What we ourselves have caused to flood

Against thus-far resistant blood!

XV

Just now, they wait: Fresh water royalty

& her Sea-Salt wrapped in loyalty/ hopefully,

for a better time

when common sense regains its mind. . .

When human beings return to see

The ocean as their legacy

And Estuary as its bride

Whose motherhood is ocean-wide!

XVI

Yet, as for us in Tampa Bay,

Whose River Hillsborough winds its way

Among mangroves and manatees,

In a shallow, brackish hammerhead sea,

Though sometimes, it mumbles in its sleep,

We've pledged its confidence to keep

Between us and the nubile queen

Who mothers our wetlands and our dreams.

XVII

Says Estuary to the Sea,

“If you weren’t you and I weren’t me,

& nothing was what it seemed to be,

would the world still turn out placidly?”

Says the Sea to Estuary’s ear,

“I think you think too much, my Dear!”

& From their subtle give-and-take

The couple shares a birthday cake,

Complete with icing fluffy white!

While a snowy Ibis, poised for flight

Gives a “Ha-ha” Happy Birthday yell

To tell his neighbors all is well!

At least between the salty sea

And his love who lives by the mangrove trees!

& A red-tailed hawk is the setting sun

While a manatee applauds for a job well-done!

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