

Please recycle to a friend.

ORIGAMIPOEMS.COM
or email:
origamipoems@gmail.com

Cover art by Helen Burke

Origami Poetry Project

The Leaves of Dachau
Helen Burke © 2012

ph.hobbit@tiscali.co.uk



Two Dreams

Two dreams I had, and not sure which to believe.
In the first I am in a dungeon.
No way out ever, and can't get home.
There is the sound of my own blood being drawn
And metal in the air, a smell of sulphur.
The feeling I came there on a horse – and he too
Has not escaped.
I am in white and wield great power and all of this
Has been my downfall.
In the second dream – I am a dancer again, waiting
For my turn in the wings.
A blue billowing curtain stands before my face
And while I wait I write my name
Over and over in the sand with my ballet shoes.
The music is sublime – and two old friends arrive
And argue as to who will dance with me.
They both say they will come back later,
But I know this will not happen.
This dance I wait to do is mine alone, a thing apart.
A lonely eagle calling out to air from the mountain
I have called my heart.
(There are promises we keep and cannot keep – even
In our dreams.)
Two dreams I had, and not sure which to believe.

The Last Time

The last time I saw my father I think we spoke about blackbirds.
The way they have no agenda, and in the snow are easy to spot.
The way they trust you will not harm them and in the middle of the afternoon
Suddenly, a song occurs to them which they must sing.
I remember it was not a sunny day, but there was a light
Playing through a window. Playing, as if it were a blackbird.
And I said – I'll write a poem for you – about the bird and he said
With an air of using his words like a song, a melody he did not know –
That there would not be time.
Only that he would be thinking of me, when I wrote the poem.
And that the words might be mine – but the tune and all the melody were his
And his alone.
And at that moment, a blackbird came to the window.
And a song occurred to me, - a rarity as I am not musical –
And from a distant room – a melody I did not know began to play.
And turning back towards him – I saw no further joke nor wave.
And I sit and write the poem – fool that I am – with my little pot of words
And the melody – spectacular.

The Leaves of Dachau

This is the language of leaves.
They who are gone
before they are gone.
"The moment you give in,
falling is forever," they whisper.
Inside this one leaf
I can see – life is hanging on.
I can see it is arrogant.
I can see it is stubborn.
Even though the cold has come.
Even though the other leaves are in hiding.
It will not fail.

On these trees there is no room to sit,
no place to breathe, to speak
no chance to say goodbye,
no farewell space.

Look.
This is the place where they fall.
Their bones crushed into the cold earth.

Winter happens under the very eyes of Spring.
Year after year, and still.
Nothing is done.
Just the black rage of buried leaves
falling victim to the air.
Winter has a file on ice.
Autumn goes to the shelf, reaches down
the dark book,
interrogates each one.
There is a power of frozen words
beneath the ice.
They are ours forever.
They who are gone. Before they are gone.

Where will it all end – this falling ??
Mother by father. Sister by brother.
The voices resound in the earth.
Dying comes easily to leaves.
This sky holds the blood of them,
season after season.
But, this one leaf, that is holding on.
It keeps something of the sun
in the corner of its soul's eye.
There is a whisper they will not shake it.