

## A SCANDALOUS GRACE

Joy of the shimmering fishes and king  
of unquenched fires  
who saw you naked by night and clad  
in the cloak of dawn  
flung down their ashes and ran  
to the falling hills, the walls  
of crumbling mountain and tectonic  
plain, the heaving of valleys  
there, to that prison of thirst they fled  
and lapsed into sorrows

sung to the old generations, friends  
of winds and thunders,  
who unafraid walked by deep waters and drew  
from the rocks comfort.  
Say the shame and the depths of hiding,  
the darkness unsettled  
this beast creeps through, chain and claws,  
the burnt ground mauled  
or barrened; over rocky unstreamed beds  
heights consecrated to vultures.

For there is no unfilled place, no empty  
without creatures innumerable  
unwaiting for you at the drop of death,  
but world wet-rounded,  
flood, stinging of sleet, viciously  
drowning alive,  
*moon shipping clouds from high mountains.*  
Of parched voice  
frail in my desert hours, make liquid  
these withered prayers

let praise, and let them, atomed, fall  
the farthest breath,  
bursting each day through the gates of the house  
of the dead, and light  
on flesh whose skull-trees satisfied  
will stand beneath  
the snowflake-fuming furnace, and  
acquire cold  
throstled plumage, a flaming sediment  
of desire

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