

# Pandemonium

Joyce Mansour

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# Pandemonium (1976)

Joyce Mansour

Offer your throat to the night  
Obsessive Africa  
Spit your teeth your waste  
Your dizziness  
In the whipped cream  
Of the church  
The blowfly's trunk  
Skinny sluggish Priapus  
Satisfies his thirst  
With amniotic fluid  
From the burning coals pulls out a stone  
A crown of thorns  
Black vermillion like the seven lanterns  
Of the embolism  
Laugh nomads, old age is sedentary  
Far away in the forest  
A scarab  
Glistens

Alone on a breezy dune  
An asparagus tip sprouts  
A cry  
The wind the wind with a parrot's eyes  
With funeral processions  
And the spinning of famine  
The wind flagellates your avid flanks  
Your straw fetuses  
Your toothless rump  
Frenetic Africa  
No cruelty spread in the blood  
No constraint  
Africa of the great night of Edenic death

The pearly gaze of the wolf-spider  
Claims birth in the tomb  
Of your black dry gullet  
Ululate rhombus jackals  
Offertories to virginites  
Circumcisions  
Rain

Hate with palpitating hands  
Musically strikes (tattoos on) the skin  
Of shadowy Uganda  
Arise  
May your underarms flame  
Tipsy bluish-purple demented with liberty  
Pay no mind to the excised gosling's  
Squeaks rattles  
Gently lift the polar skullcap  
Offer the foreskin to the knife  
Then crushed like a fig beneath an urban heel  
Cause the stickleback to be laid like an egg without spilling sperm  
The vegetal  
The pointed arch not a Gothic vault  
The phallic tree  
Sobs as exorbitant as snowmen

Aiming their blunderbuss mouths  
Avatars and metal fission  
Memory  
On the diaphanous carpet  
Running with iridescent blood  
The swaying hips of a language never learned  
Call spell elaborate  
Nightmare's alphabet  
It is necessary to caress the throat of the one we kill  
The flying buttress of the bronze serpent is visible beneath the silk  
Offering one's sex to the night.

The evening star  
Finally the androgyne  
Poised between two doors  
Wandering  
The sun at sunset  
The moon exactly at the crotch  
Of a gothic cathedral

Shimmering to split the soul  
In the mud of the route  
One must stifle the wind that comes before the rain  
Silence travelers' flesh  
Hang it polluted  
On Saturday night's hook  
Winged rats  
Birds of paradise volcanic glass Jewels  
Waste  
Sorcerers with large gestures  
Who on the hidden side of the tomb  
Scatter freckles  
All glide while screeching over the black river of the ear  
Placid  
All Swollen with greenery and slow to vomit  
All narrow-minded  
Wake up The trade winds from Oriental shores are forever dappled  
The somber spectacle of brains draining from nostrils  
Would make Gargantua laugh  
Mouth full  
Which is death, after all  
I sneeze

I have often dreamt those dreams  
On train platforms  
The serpent's belly swells  
It will be my chariot  
One thousand impenetrable words alight and sparkle  
A rock flower  
Wild chicory Pleated and curly  
Surrounds the sun and its intimate greens  
Rustling serrated illnesses  
Your shape emerges from the shadows  
I rest My head leaning on an old dream's flight  
Desolated doughy  
In the damp cotton wool of the dead hours  
All I await is a silhouette at the end of the alleyway  
Grease  
Just a profile from the corner of the eye  
That irritates and disturbs  
Like an impression of smoke on a dirty window  
All I await now is the night  
The great wave of ash  
Oceanic death

Tomorrow Africa  
Life  
Between dust and the piercing cry  
The penis and the bellflower  
The rising sun's pupil bleeding on the sand  
Naked  
The train moves backwards  
The belly tortured like a braided cord  
Sleep in stair landings moving upwards towards the valley  
It was tomorrow  
The call  
The herniation that explodes between sideburns  
Of fortune  
No mirror could see  
The stretched mouth  
The bitter wince  
The pale anus of alcoholics  
Dawn's sad stink of urine

The very teeth would not know how to lie  
The big lips  
The sliding seasons  
The immense yawn  
The aspirating horror  
The venom  
The vomit  
The scarlet rictus  
The tarlatan death  
Better to kiss the faded lips  
Canvas lips cottonade lips  
Bleeding lips never closed  
Better shut the mouth  
That vomits  
Better penetrate the Mother  
Her seed is the male's desire  
His great soiled dream  
Petered out  
Better to die in rut  
Than to renounce lust  
Beautiful fruit of the revolution  
The man who is free will conquer death

Translated from the French by Katharine Conley