

1987

Our Native Images

Cam Martin
Denison University

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Recommended Citation

Martin, Cam (1987) "Our Native Images," *Exile*: Vol. 34 : No. 1 , Article 13.
Available at: <https://digitalcommons.denison.edu/exile/vol34/iss1/13>

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Our Native Images

a collection by Cam Martin

"Dare to crack open
the ink on these pages,
letting the wondrous
creative spirit
leap out at you:
from the source of the silent light,
into the ink on these pages,
into your mind."

"A Fairy Tale"

Paul Palnik

Continuum

I

Cast to the river,
I watch a life
of devotion and virtue
sink ... surface...
only to sink again
as the balance of the flow
compares today,
to yesterday,
to tomorrow —
all at once.

II

An echo from upriver
casts shadows of a life
cruel and malicious.
I swallow truth,
taste justice,
balancing
all there is,
with all there was,
with all there will be —
all at once.

III

A voice downriver
heralds successful lessons,
showing that I learned well
the ebb,
the flow,
contrasting decadence with decency
to adjust today
in light of yesterday
for change tomorrow —
all at once.

Coming of Age

I never had to look
for She was there all along. Inside

this crystalline structure, hollowed
from within like a tunneled labyrinth,
pulses echo from a distant light
to remind and awaken a physical form.

Struggling to surface, silent pleadings
from forgotten space illumine
the black atmosphere smothering
the angelic form of human consciousness. Within,

I traverse, closing my eyes
to the darkness, sinking
to light, across barriers anchored
in the concrete of cultural learning.

A wave of acceptance streams
through me, welcoming me back,
like a child looking outside for freedom
only to find it at home. Within

Vision Quest

Voices veil
my inner eye.

Visions mute
my beating heart.

I startle
from this incoherence,
needled mercilessly
by stabs of hunger
from days of unnourished
walkabout.

Cold air,
painful to the touch,
tears tears
from my skin.

Three moons
I am exposed
to Her changing moods,
Her biting lessons,
Her ultimate wisdom.

Brittle feet
coax a path
beyond sight,
beyond imagination,
over ridges frozen
to a shine
and across sand valleys
breathing heavily
the sun's weight.

At the "Pass of Men,"
She allows me comfort
against a pine
overlooking a journey
one arm in distance.

I dream,
waking a man.

Roused
by Her messenger,
a brave
man stands
to be judged
by teeth gorging
on childhood fears
chased from the darkness
with thunderous roars
into claws lashing
out lightning strikes
to expose hidden radiance
behind a nighted
atmosphere.

I surrender
to a chilling rain
of tears.

I wake,
dreaming a man.

She whispers
a silent gesture
as a final gust
blows over the pass,
leaving me alone,
resting comfortably,
against a pine,
overlooking the journey
of a boy to a man.

Healing Dance

I stand motionless, an idol
of manhood, waiting, resolved
to traverse my afflictive boundary
by going deep, deep within
to an awaiting freedom
and strength.

A lone clap sounds
and the murmurs begin
as benign incantations are breathed
effortlessly to a waiting tempest
hungry for encouragement
and strength.

We move, my brothers
and I, in rhythmic unison:
a dozen pair of bare feet
shuffling unconsciously,
yet always in line,
across hard-packed dust.

Shrieks of encouragement
lash out from the inner circle.
I am resolved
and stomp frantically
the hard pack, boiling up
dust and heat.

Sweat rains down
to quench my inner fire
while the momentum surges round
as thoughts, in the fury, surrender,
stamped to rest deep in the earth
around the fire.

Rooted in my pit,
the num¹ boils red and flows,
coursing swiftly up my spine
as the women clap louder,
pouring forth their souls in song
to make possible the escape.

The trees, the fire,
the earth, the sky, all fuse
to a blurred oneness
before eyes colored
by energy activated
in expanded awareness.

My heart pounds feverishly;
my head tilts back;
and my jaw drops open
as I desperately gulp
mouthfuls of air
to sustain the fury.

We clap, my brothers
and I, in rhythmic unison,
praying for stamina and spirit
to focus the stored energy
from subconscious beckoning
into awaiting receptors.

My eyes open
to see a woman collapsed,
her body writhes with energy
as I kneel to release
my red, healing hands,
to her needs.

¹"num" means spiritual and healing energy in the patois of various African tribes.

Around the fire
the fury blazes.
Men dance and women sing
as the cyclone peaks
to render some helpless
and others empowered.

Kneeling without thought,
I look from the spectacle
to watch my hands,
those radiant red hands,
guide themselves
over her body.

Her spasms subside
as I feel the healing
drawn out from within,
to penetrate her body
and surface in a glowing
veil of protection.

Responding to her smile,
I sing out in triumph
and put my hands together
to support and encourage
the potential for every spark
to become a fire.

Metamorphoses

Above, two butterflies engage,
each mirrored objects of the other.

I never needed to look
to him, for I was he.

The grimace on his face
1. reflects our mutual distaste
of all things green.

Shaken from sleep,
2. I feel adolescence awaken
in the bed next to me.

My laboring pains
3. streak a river of worry
across both faces.

Outside, two butterflies pass,
each aware of the other.

Yet all things change
when glass comes between us.

Our shoulders nearly touch
1. on the final, overcast walk
down decaying corridors.

Seated in silence,
2. his smile grips a heart
swimming in grief.

Through reflective eyes,
3. I look down from above
to a motionless form.

Below, one butterfly progresses,
never to be with the other.

Across bodies grounded in time,
I see me in his eyes.

Seventh Ray Dawning

I

Olive leaves decay
to a painting of grey
plastering a room
with one chair.

This is your making!

II

Bronze shadows
cast in concrete
unstable in foundation
shatter when shaken.

And this is your making!

III

Isolation is comforting
to the estranged.

This is your destiny!

IV

Ambiguous equations; dead
languages; volumes
of repetitious insights:

These point the path
to the real four walls
you construct of pen
for your isolation.

V

Yellowed veil,
not quite white,
conceals from darkness
seven rays of light.

VI

Upon the Sixth Ray
humanity floundered.

Cast adrift
in a sea of ideals,
we grasp security
by exalting ourselves
over others,
standing alone
to promote distinctiveness
and self-acclaim:

manifesting
images of aspects
of whole beings.

VII

Veiled ideals
lift to reveal
Pythagorean synthesis
engaged in a song:

satellites revolve,
systems evolve,
together ...
alone ...
for individual beauty
and universal unity,
knowing that one
without the other
is decayed,
decrepit,
passion-less,
and isolated.

Inner Fire

Ami claps
the hollow reed,
urging forth sparks
of life,
projecting up and out
twisters in the 4 directions
as though bellowed
from the root
of his unquenchable
fire.

Amber eyes
reflect the fire
inside and out.

Captured by a gaze,
I watch Ami
inspire a dance
of sister sparks
who, following a thought,
roll and spin
harmoniously, lending
words to gesture,
sounds to motion,
life to stillness.

[Ami's free hand
carves a silhouette
in the night air
as eyes trace
the vision
of the essence
he has created.]

Liberated
from Ami's gaze,
the sparks are free
to caress
his thought form.

Rejoicing
on the pedestal
of nurturing flames,
the sparks interact ...
only to isolate ...
over the surface
of a sphere
ideal in form,
perfect in intent.

The reed bellows.

Sparks
in the flaming refuge
flush from cover
to cyclone upwards
in a celestial dance
illuminating the globe
with an energy
transmuting
form to thought,
stillness to life,
darkness to LIGHT!

Inner Flight

Of gusting wings
secure in flight
and the power
of the Four Winds
with common direction,
a native attraction
is subconsciously revealed
in the pulsing cry
of the great White Eagle!

That sound,
that crying siren
of universal alarm
compels me to aspire
beyond shadows and shackles
in the modern age
to re-discover
the wisdom,
the life,
the Earth,
once mine.

I breathe
the wind's intent,
succumbing to the urgency,
and pioneer a path
beyond boundaries yet charted,
through discord and fear,
armed with wisdom
of experience
along the same path,
through lives past.

I am winged
effortlessly to a mound
of memories.

Face to the Earth
I prostrate.
Clenched,
in mournful hands,
I wring the dark soil,
freeing the spirit,
the life,
the blood,
from sacred land
nurtured with the bodies
of brothers and sisters.

Water,
dashed with flecks
of Turquoise,
leaves the body
of soil cupped
to trickle down
wailing arms
sweating tears
for memories,
for sacrifices,
for ancestors.

Sons of the Earth

A council convenes
to appraise
my motives,
my worth,
my soul.

I stand transparent,
posturing before penetrating minds
blind to peacock plumes fanning vanity and fear.

Glances gouge an abyss,
separating flesh from spirit, to liberate
truth coursing within tunneled pathways of light
to the dawning of a soul in life and love.

My imperfections lay painfully exposed
as the body of a man sacrificed by indifference and hypocrisy
stretches anonymously across a nameless plane,
experiencing past and future, to settle in a comforting emptiness.

I have been a child awed by fearless winds howling
laughter to menacing echoes in caves of darkness.

I am a man captivated by landscapes painted to life
with brush strokes in palatable light of the Son's creation.

I will be a wise man educated by reflective waters
murmuring faceless lessons from sources above and below.

At once I am all these. Stretching across time

I extend the arm of my emotions, reaching out to caress
faces endowed with Her majestic beauty and natural wisdom
featured in reservoirs collecting consciousness in pooled Turquoise
swelling with forgiveness to quench a surface thirsty
with scars and lines deep in old age and no longer taut
from years of bitterness and battle.

I will accomplish nothing they have not mastered.
I will compose nothing they have not orchestrated.

I can imagine nothing they do not love.
I can imagine nothing I will not do!

I surrender to knees humbled
by the burden of integrity and sincerity (hovering
weightlessly like a smile
across the faces of a pleased council)
as I prostrate before a native image
reflecting inner nature across a mirror
penetrating muted eyes.

Cam Martin