

# Reparation

I remember the golden sunlight  
Beaming through the window  
Of the chapel.

I remember being alone.

I remember how the sunlight danced  
On the windowpane,  
Illicitly prismatic,  
As it splayed across the pews.

Now, I watch it glitter  
On contortions in the water,  
Inviting, and more comfort  
Than the wind

As it brushes my skin-  
Bare-boned; chilled and waiting.  
A vast expanse of torture  
Looming behind me;

Dark halls and quiet screams.  
Ghosts still hanging  
By the nooses  
They caught on-

The quiet, holy capture,  
Carding wantonly  
Through darkened combs-  
Constricted souls

Hanged on the chains  
Of their crosses.

In the river,  
Waves reach out,

Inviting, like arms  
Of faded souls  
Lost before us.

Returned

To guide my graceful,  
Aching bones  
Through the undergrowth;  
Grappling onto me,

Desperate to stop it-  
Sympathetic,  
But free of the burden  
Rooting its sinners

To the rood cross  
Like capital punishment.

But here is Limbo  
Disguised as Purgatory  
Where we are trapped,  
Snapped and broken

Until we succumb to your truth-  
Lies seeped under the holding gates,  
Reviving burned scapulars  
From wilted shoulders,

Instilling deep regret.  
Beyond this residence-  
Which prematurely abandoned,  
Poses forest-fires and deep inferno

Of burned incendiary trees,  
Gaslighted; shock treated  
To ignition.

Here, by the riverbank  
Where blessed lilies grow  
Among white, bloodied roses,  
I feel the sweet fragrance of Spring.

Mourned winter,  
Dead under the fallen leaves,  
Marks its presence in frigid water;  
A stream to an ocean of stars.

As I plunge into bracing refuge,  
Which contradicts alleged fire,  
I climb the overpass  
To the open gates of ether.

And there I linger by the balcony-  
Overlooking terrene life,  
As support for all the tortured souls  
Trapped behind,

Awaiting the gates to wither,  
And excavate freedom.  
Until then, I linger here,  
Phantom; menacing,

Watching, ill at ease,  
As the passing days  
Rust the demon gates  
And hidebound guard.

And I will stay here;  
A silent spectator  
To all life's grievances,  
Like a ghost still haunting your paradise.

by Alex Stefos