Selected Poems: Folklore & legend: Kaundinya & Soma; The Mekong to Mundus Novus; The Tonle Sap; Touching Water; Water the Goddess

Peuladd Huy

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Selected Poems
by
Peauladd Huy

Folklore & legend: Kaundinya & Soma

When sacred wandered into the serpent’s nest
a race emerged & a nation forged—a lifetime’s bound by nectar
& poison in increments—amongst the half-blood
offspring: the half upright & half slither
inching from Khorat highlands to the lowlands of the Mekong.

No sooner than step did shadow
burn white as a midday
glinted sabers and mercenary paths.

Hundreds of years, foreign doubts divided & denied
truth merged
molding the golden peninsula
shifting water & land
Chenla villages into a stone metropolis,
visible from NASA above. Legacy & some
proven legends. Stone etched conquests & kingly
gratifications in foundation of a bygone empire.
Transcribed & more to be
completely deciphered. Enthusiasts & make-believe
playing gods and secular,
imagining hypotheses (only if we were there)
to mechanize each cold-stone character into events
could or not have taken place. Could they have
help mobilizing beyond their earthly
strength & body weight into celestial realm,

rendering this race to outdo
its greatness amongst jealous gods and opportune neighbors?
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The Mekong to Mundus Novus

How wet starts with a drip.

From snowy Tibet Plateau through the narrow runoffs          Through golden villages lived & villages
on stilts drowned                      Pushing upstream            Coming to spawn
    As winter arrives for home in the highlands above     Downstreaming through the land
of the one thousand water-mouths      Slow-wetting the flatland canals    Mobilizing the land of
gold & the rolls of exotic silk        Between Nokor Borei & the port city O’Keo    At the
emporium of Ptolemaic golden Cattigara   The far east most
    of the Greco-Roman’s ecumene    This entrepot    Banteay Meas
This place means gold                The lost sailors    The cartographer’s scribal error
    Eight and a half degrees repeated down from half earth    The misplaced voyages
    Credited with the New World


The Tonle Sap

Like an old lover skimming over the column bones.
Like a ride on the good back of a steady beast.
Like warm thighs straddling through thin fine silk.
Like an upsurge & afterwards.

Like steep crest & down the same way

make us forget: how often we step not knowing
how we’ve gotten there
& back.

Here, the continent has always reached out to the seas
& the trade cities have always migrated inwards to her womb.
Touching Water

1
Here, where the moon touches the water
& the current
rapids like malleable
flooding cervixes
of shore roots & eroded stone images
& ancient inscriptions proclaiming royal deeds & offspring
pushing from shadow & harems
onto the open vista. Image the sky after bondage
opens up for the disinherited siblings.

2
Here, where once through the old fig, the sun penetrated
deep to the precious
luminance at the bottom of clear Kulen falls.
Deflected & projected angle: in shallow creek
water, dotting shadows & honored locus
erected from hips of god & creation. Imagine standing
images on the horizontal plane.

3
Here, where once Khmer ancients stationed
awaiting dragon stars & sunset
glow languished over heavy canopy
has since upturned foundation
stones & kingdom reshuffling
between the permanent & illegitimated
usurps of half-blood kings.

4
Here, where the water is like a mirror
opening up to new air & light is gradual
where residual settles after each entry.

5
Here, you can still see at the bottom of the falls
where all the waters pool
& the pool is a holding mirror
where the others see through dull light &
in the light the original tribes
wheel the sun to harvest
hour then capture the old king
of rains to feed the million rice fields.
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Water the Goddess

If you are from here, you know. Each year
From June to October, the Mekong rises & the Tonle Sap
Buckles like a goddess teased. Warm. Accepting.
Ocean-cradled. South China Sea.

About the Author

Peauladd Huy was born in Phnom Penh. Her latest work, published by Connotation Press—An Online Artifact—was nominated for the Sundress "Best of the Net," the Dzanc "Best of the Net," and the Pushcart Prize. And with deep gratitude to Connotation Press she'll have a book, forthcoming sometime in April.
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