

## Shattered Glaciers

*Her eyes  
split the ether  
with their obscene radiance and  
implacabilty  
her song shattered glaciers  
and spun them adrift  
and the spirits of the weak and the hardy  
were well sifted  
in her stride.*

*Her  
kisses  
tender as they were infernal  
poured forth  
as a cup on tilt  
rinsing nightblue slate to a humid gloss  
dashing steel and concrete to blind and scrambling atoms  
subsuming quartz and coal  
in the handsoft loam  
of their provenance.  
Vast insect legions  
scurried and lept  
in her wake of shock-borne waves  
tossing them from the rippled spines  
of yawning unriled beasts.*

*Smiling brightly and without guile  
she showered the saline scum from our throats  
thrust her spattered claws through the sieves of  
our ribs  
struck to mangle rushes of sinew in midswim  
siezed without pity and held us fast to her breast  
played sovereign to all who surrendered  
forgave nothing and no-one—  
forgave innocence least of all—  
and left her brand immutable  
on the taught leathern hides of the milliard dead  
left mute—white scaffoldings of bone  
to bleach  
and to be set ablaze  
in the cruelest hour  
of the sun's  
endless arc.*

*The world  
we think  
we know  
is ever  
ending,  
damned to pant  
and to lurch  
after the lights  
of some lukewarm  
safe  
and certain  
rejoinder.*

*The world  
we cannot know  
is  
most  
eternal—  
resplendant  
in the magnanimity  
of its many charms— exotic and homely  
and its many unbridled terrors.*

*It is a cipher  
that bids us to unravel,  
transliterate,  
transpose  
a lone and saluary pitch  
splayed,  
arched,  
then curling  
as it lodges itself  
in the hub  
of some innermost ear.*

*Once sprung, it is inextricable  
and resounds with bells acquiring  
as it stretches  
our souls  
against the heavens.*

**Kenneth Staples**

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