

Ben Porter Lewis

Serpent and the Sandman

I woke up this morning,
I wondered if I could rewrite history
I wondered how high I had to be to watch for god
the Sandman had a dream
in his dream Saint Anthony was a serpent
He told the Sandman Adam and Eve never happened
and that the first man alive roamed Africa
born free from the bones of Lucy
two thousand Anno Domini in the year of our lord
a wiseman came from inner Sahara
he rode upon a Equus dark as onyx
his majesty like Baltazaar, the black king, the Magi
this ebony man of the Diaspora draped in Moorish garments,
shielded from the sun adorned in colors
shades of black and white chiaroscuro across the sand
an Asp, a serpent invited his path
he did not think to kill the snake
something he had seen in a dream
someplace, sometime,
in a desert like this
Saint Anthony lost himself meandering in sand dunes
undressing himself
shedding his robes so that the hot sun could beat upon his
skin turning him bronze and black
nomadic and rough as Hannibal Barka
salvation can be lonely in places like this
the Sandman moved leaving the Asp to make tracks as it
had centuries before Babylon

My Archangels are the historians Herodotus and Josephus
writing down annals and words are my temple
a poet's foundation is the citadel of truth
steal my language, I'll make my Masada
pour my faith into a chalice, break bread on an altar
I will not sacrifice my sanctuary,
I won't be stoned like Medusa
I will never bow down,
don't ever forget it!
Remember that Salomon and Saladin sit together
one a Hebrew king the other a leader of Islam
they sit in wonderment of how the Tigris and Euphrates
gave them life the Pontiff in Rome pours holy water on the
annointed shedding tears for martyrs
blessing the deeds of two thousand years gone wrong
shaking the sins of the damned the world grew black as
Egypt as Pharaoh's tears swelled the Nile

Moses remembers the last words Jaweh spoke
I see reflections of you, and my salvation hangs from a
crucifix which is upside down the gravity of the situation
still runs the blood of humanity
across the ground

The Sandman woke up to the sounds of revolution
songs to set your spirit free
Nat Turner and Geronimo Pratt are not Indian
Leonard Peltier and Crazy Horse are
Maybe Columbus comes around every five hundred years
the next time will he be hanged or strung from a cross
don't make mistakes like Mussolini and Hitler or Franco or
Stalin Tyrants make Tyrannies – despots are severe,
fascists lead inquisitions and sail upon ships like the Santa
Maria we need altruism from Ho Chi Minh, Sidartha, and
Gandhi uprising from the phoenix
blessings from Mother Teresa Freedom fighters and Che
Guevara Haile Salasi – Jah Rastafar I see you in your dreams
when we awake what world will we find?
will our leaders all be assassinated like Sadat, JFK, MLK,
and Yitzak Rabin are we left to paint pictures in the great
negus in heaven of how things should be
illuminations from Salvadore Allende to Salvadore Dali do
not leave hope to be smashed on great rocks like Gibraltar
we already sank into an abyss we call the dark ages the
temptations that lead us can be swayed by a Serpent
I hold an apple in my hand
As I take a bite I blow kisses to the Serpent and the
Sandman and I wander
why I ever woke up this morning

**William McLain, in memoriam
1911-2003**

The flock has all scattered
Gone in all directions the wind cries evermore
Oh William McLain the Highlander is dead
Harken the bards and troubadours
The man has gone
Passed on to that big poetic hoedown in the sky
Blessed now to be making love with angels
Oh dirty old man
The clan of poet warriors has all united in eulogy
Cast sunshine into our hearts
Wild flower Irish rose a thistle for your thoughts
Bonny mad boys Oh bonny mad boys
May we all drink a toast of whiskey and scotch
Fine red wine the beer and frothy ale

Resting underneath the old oak tree
The raven gaze down and look upon us
And all the muses with your blessing
Our soul made pure, salvation
May all rejoice to thy good reckoning and carry on
I hold a rosary in my hand in memory of you
Out there beyond the Golden Shores of California
Beyond the Emerald Isles and the depths of Loch Ness
Past the moon and purple sage beyond the stars
Oh dirty old man to see into your eyes a lifetime
Naked our spirit reborn again we march to Calvary
In this time of world war you remember the last one
May we find harmony and deliverance
May we dare to dream a beautiful dream
Lying in the four leaf clover oh William McLain
With all the love and strength you give us
We pray for peace...