

Gratitude for Picasso

From the blues of momentum's past,
from the present underbelly
of beggars and prostitutes,
the homeless and forlorn
came his disbelief expressed
through disdain for any stifling by rules
or by etiquette for straight lines.

To assemble puzzles, to probe mysteries,
(long before digital aids
displayed impressions at a click).
he pioneered collage and cubes
into curved and chiseled features
of contorted bodies to question
the ugliness of beauty, the resilience of life.

From the irresistible seduction
in the colours of the classics
he absorbed Matisse/Cezanne,
seduced Olga into sitting,
made his son the harlequin,
played jester to the sinister
and ployed in all its forms the kiss.

To unravel enigmas in dreams,
to preserve the form of fantasies
he dug the subconscious with his brush,
disguised the portraits of his lovers
and taught that pioneering came
through promiscuity of objects
which could break the boundaries of thought.

From the shock of violence
he replaced tender beauty
with reminders of death's imminence,
with pictures of distortions in faces
destroyed by cowards' bombs
which produced his everlasting protest
against the brutality of war.

To revive faith in life's treasures,
he painted as much as he loved,
sculpted as much as his hunger
to display those crevices in women

whom convention said should be covered,
prayed for, protected as in a showcase--
until his revolution came.

So came the insatiable
artist in a hurry, craftsman
with a thousand loves
for living by celebrating
the potential of humanity
to cherish the fragility of freedom. .

These were his motives for composing
symphonies of resistance
to those confined
by a recitation of rules,
by the drugs of conformity
within the so called security of walls.

Instead on pavements, in gardens,
with comrade artists and poets
he trespassed into uncertainty
and so left the legacy
of his special license for liberty,
-granted without permission-
to find, to taste, to relish
the fruits of being free.

*After the Picasso Masterpiece Exhibition,
Art Gallery of NSW, Sydney
December 2nd 2011*

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