



SCENT OF WILD MARJORAM



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a PILGRIM DRAWN TO ANCIENT SITES
wanders with his wife
ABOUT A DANCING GROUND
where GODS were worshipped
AT FULL MOON

They EXAMINE SCRATCHED COMMENTS
MADE UPON fallen STONES
BY LONG-DEAD CITIZENS
AND WONDER AT THEIR FRANKNESS

THE MAN'S EYES BRIEFLY CLOSE —

he SEES
THOSE GATHERED FOR THIS HOLY RITE
STAND SILENTLY
Like STATUES IN ARRAY

A DRUM BEGINS TO THROB
THE SOUND OF PAN-PIPES
WEAVES ABOUT ITS PULSING BEAT

A PRIEST IN GARMENTS RICH
SPEAKS FROM BEHIND A GOLDEN MASK
AND AS HIS CHANTING DIES
DRILLED RANKS OF NAKED BOYS APPEAR

COLD LUNAR LIGHT
JOINS THE TORCHES' DANCING FLAME
TO MAKE THEIR OILED
AND PERFUMED FLESH
GLOW AND GLISTEN BRIGHT

SLOWLY AND WITH WONDROUS GRACE
THE BOYS IN DANCE
DELINEATE THE MOVES
OF WRESTLING FLOOR AND LOVERS' COUCH
AND EACH WITH CHOSEN MATE
CLASPS IN SINGLE COMBAT

A CHANGE OF TEMPO
ALTERS THESE FORMATIONS
AND COLUMNS SERPENT-LIKE

WIND OR COIL
ACCORDING TO THE SACRED PATTERNS

FRAGRANT HERBS
TRAMPLED BY STAMPING FEET
RELEASE THEIR PUNGENT SCENT
THESE ODOURS JOIN
WITH THOSE OF PINE AND SEA
AND STRAINING LIMBS . . .
AROUSAL MOUNTS

ECSTATIC MUSICIANS
BLEND FRENZIED SKEINS OF SOUND
AND EVERY BOY
IS FILLED WITH HIS OWN GOD

MADE FERAL BY THIS CHANGE DIVINE
THEY TAKE WITHIN THEMSELVES
MUCH HOMAGE
AND THUS SATISFIED
BESTOW BLESSINGS

BY OFFERING THEIR VIBRANT BODIES
TO ALL WHO LONG FOR THIS RELIGION

ONE LAD
WITH DANCING HIPS AND THRUSTING LOINS
APPROACHES HELIOPHILUS
AND GRANTS THE POET
WITHOUT A WORD
THE HOLY FAVOURS DUE A GOD

THE TRAVELLER IN TIME
RETURNS TO HIS CENTURY
AND A LADY OF INFINITE UNDERSTANDING
LEADS HIM BACK
TO AN UNLOVELY WORLD
WHERE SUCH POETRY IS DEAD

ALL HE HAS LEFT
IS THE IMAGE OF A BROWN-SKINNED BOY
WITH TAWNY HAIR
A DISTANT MEMORY AWAKENED
BY THE SMELL OF WILD MARJORAM



THIS ANONYMOUS PIECE,
INSPIRED BY THE STONES
OF THERA AND THE IMAGES
BY J MARTIN PITTS IN THE
OLD STYLE PRESS' BOOK
GYMNOΠΑEDIAE,
WAS DESIGNED AND
LASERPRINTED BY
NICOLAS MCDOWALL
IN JULY 1996

COPIES ARE MADE
AS THEY ARE REQUIRED -
UP TO A TOTAL OF 75

THIS IS NUMBER 16