

No Provenance

Joanna Newsom

Allelu, allelu:
I have died happy,
and lived to tell the tale to you.
I have slept for forty years,
and woke to find me gone.
I woke safe and warm in your arms. Not informed of the natural law,
squatting, lordly, on a stool, in a stall,
we spun gold clear out of straw.
And, when our bales of bullion
were stored,
you burned me like a barn.
I burned safe and warm in your arms. I'm afraid of the Big Return.
There's a certain conversation lost,
and that loss incurred
with nobody remaining,
to register who had passed this way,
in the night,
in the middle of the night
(negating their grace and their sight),
till only I remember, or mark,
how we had our talk: We took our ride,
so that there was no-one home,
and the lights of Rome
flickered and died.
And, what's more,
I believe that you knew it, too;
I think you saw their flares,
and kept me safely unawares,
in your arms. The grass was tall, and strung with burrs,
I essayed that high sashay which,
in my mind, was my way;
you hung behind, in yours.
Anyhow, she did not neigh.
I do not know
what drew our eyes to hers;
that little black mare did not stir,
till I lay down in your arms. Poor old dirty little dog-size horse!--
swaying and wheezing,
as a matter of course;

swaying and wheezing,
as a matter of pride.
That poor old nag, not four palms wide,
had waited a long time,
coated in salt,
buckled like a ship run foul of the fence.
In the middle of the night,
she'd sprung up,
no provenance,
bearing the whites of her eyes. And you, with your
'arrangement' with Fate,
nodded sadly at her lame assault
on that steady old gate,
her faultlessly etiolated fishbelly-face;
the muzzle of a ghost. And, pretty Johnny Appleseed,
via satellite feed,
tell us, who was it
that you then loved the most?
Pretty Johnny Appleseed,
leave a trail that leads
straight back down to the farm.
Lay me down
safe and warm in your arms.

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