

The House in Santa Fe

I have problems sleeping
In a room with lime green walls
And Shiva's kohl-lined eyes
Watching down on me.
I can't relax
In a living room splashed with orange walls
My coffee is acidic, my yogurt sour
In a breakfast room
With purple and apple green walls

There are no blank spaces here
And I resist
This cluttered house which I have traded
For three weeks

Is this Santa Fe?
My dreams are of quiet sandstone
Pueblo tones and textures
Vista views of the Sangre de Cristos

Instead, I see goddesses and Buddhas
Languid looks draped in gold, orange
47 wildly patterned throw pillows
A large, jeweled butterfly
Hanging from a lamp
Bulbless, inert

Doorways are hung with wrought iron and bells
Windows covered in printed Indian fabrics
No two alike and tacked shut to keep out
Light and, I guess, the neighbors.

In the living room, a purple canopy
Swings above an airbed, swathed
In rich silver and deep blue metallic
It is art, not to be sat on, clearly.
Even the lamps are darkened,
Void of bulbs, beaded, fringed,
Are they merely decorative?

I sit gingerly on the sofa,
Afraid to disturb the silk patterns
Of fuschia and orange throws
That have been tucked around
The sedate beige of the original.

I look for a place to rest my eyes
And discover that they must be closed
To the sensate assault that disturbs me.

Even the shower, my usual retreat and respite
Shines with turquoise and a dark blue light overhead
That fades to green, then red, then gold
It casts an eerie glow and makes my skin
Look glum and gray as I lather and rinse.
The walls in here are bright aqua
The window covered in sculpted linen
A beaded clip holds it in place
But crashes to the floor one morning
When I open the window to let
Fresh Santa Fe breezes blow into the room.
The beads scatter, one even drops into the toilet.
I dutifully fish it out in a decorous rescue.

I decide this house must be for dancing,
Not sitting, reading, watching TV, talking on the phone.
I resist and resist, stay away, avoid, dread
The confused, bright darkness that greets me
When I return each day from Santa Fe sojourns.

The “portal” is a front porch shambles of junk,
The “yard” furnished in aging redwood bark
And white rocks, two rusting café chairs tipped over
A shredded yard umbrella on the ground
Blue plastic recycle bins rest against the classic coyote fence.

I pity the three wilted rosebushes, planted in dry sand.
The hose has no faucet available.
I rescue the cracked watering can,
Begin a hopeful process of resurrection.

The woman who lives here is a mystery
A spirit clearly in search of an identity
There are five altars but the direction is mixed...
Tapestries in Hebrew alongside Hindu goddesses
Candles burned, the dance of the feminine it appears
Swirls through the colors, textures,
Her eclectic world of culture and art and belief.

So, what am I to do?
My house has beige walls
Serene, simple order
Paintings that reflect landscapes
Done in watercolor, acrylics
An English garden of roses and lavender
Framed prints of Cezanne, Monet
A field of Colorado wildflowers

Is she uneasy in my house
With its quiet walls and open windows?
There are no peacock feathers on the hearth
That's for sure
No urge to dance, I project.

I am gathered by my resistance
My need for light, open doors
Serenity and simplicity
A flowered garden
In a word, my comfort.

One sunny afternoon I sit on the rusty chair
Amid the rocks and thinning bark,
The warm, dry air lifted by a breeze.
Above the barren yard is the sky
It only takes a moment to be aware
In the clouds, I see the reason to be here.

So, there really is only one thing to do

With all of it, the chaos of this house
That prickles my senses.
I must clear a space,
Wrap myself in silk and beads
Pick up the peacock feathers
And dance.

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