

LOREENA MCKENNITT
the mask and mirror



✠ INTRODUCTION ✠

I looked back and forth through the window of 16th century Spain, through the hues of Judaism, Islam and Christianity, and was drawn into a fascinating world: history, religion, cross-cultural fertilization... From the more familiar turf of the west coast of Ireland, through the troubadours of France, crossing over the Pyrenees and then to the west through Galicia, down through Andalusia and past Gibraltar to Morocco... The Crusades, the pilgrimage to Santiago, Cathars, the Knights Templar, the Sufis from Egypt, One Thousand and One Nights in Arabia, the Celtic sacred imagery of trees, the Gnostic Gospels... who was God? and what is religion, what spirituality? What was revealed and what was concealed... and what was the mask and what the mirror?

Je regarde par le vitrail de l'Espagne du XVI^e siècle, j'observe les reflets du judaïsme, de l'islam et du christianisme, et je suis attirée dans un monde fascinant: l'histoire, la religion, l'inter-fécondation des cultures... Partant du terreau plus familier de la côte ouest de l'Irlande, en passant par les troubadours de France, traversant les Pyrénées et allant vers l'ouest par la Galice, vers le sud à travers l'Andalousie, puis à Gibraltar pour arriver au Maroc... Les Croisades, le pèlerinage à Saint-Jacques-de-Compostelle, les Cathares, les Templiers, les Sufis d'Egypte, les Mille et une nuits d'Arabie, l'imagerie celtique de l'arbre sacré, les chants gnostiques... qui était Dieu? et qu'est-ce que la religion, la spiritualité? Où est la révélation, et où est le mystère? Où est le masque, et où est le miroir?



✠ THE MYSTIC'S DREAM 7:40 ✠

January 24, 1993 - Granada, Spain... evening... lights across the city embrace the body of the Alhambra; the smells of woodsmoke and food hang in the narrow streets. Rambled around the Moorish section of the city; picked up a little gold mirror, an incense burner, a tiny bottle of perfume... Reading Idries Shah's book *The Sufis*, prefaced by Robert Graves. "... a secret tradition behind all religious and philosophical systems, Sufis have significantly influenced the East and West... They believe not that theirs is a religion, but that it is religion... The 'common sufi' may be as common in the East as in the West, and may come dressed as a merchant, a lawyer, a housewife, anything... to be in the world, but not of it, free from ambition, greed, intellectual pride, blind obedience to custom, or awe of persons higher in rank..." It appears there may be an association with the Druidic order of the Celts.

24 janvier 1993 - Grenade, Espagne... le soir... les lumières de la ville embrassent le corps de l'Alhambra; les odeurs de feu de bois et de nourriture flottent dans les rues étroites. Promenade dans le quartier maure de la ville; achat d'un petit miroir doré, d'une cassolette d'encens, d'un minuscule flacon de parfum... Lecture du livre *Les Sufis* d'Idries Shah, préfacé par Robert Graves. "... tenants d'une tradition secrète au-delà de toutes les religions et des systèmes philosophiques, les Sufis ont fortement influencé l'Orient et l'Occident... Ils affirment que leur croyance n'est pas une religion, mais qu'elle est la religion... Il semblerait qu'il existe un lien avec l'ordre des Druides celtes.



A clouded dream on an earthly night
Hangs upon the crescent moon
A voiceless song in an ageless light
Sings at the coming dawn
Birds in flight are calling there
Where the heart moves the stones
It's there that my heart is longing
All for the love of you

A painting hangs on an ivy wall
Nestled in the emerald moss
The eyes declare a truce of trust
And then it draws me far away
Where deep in the desert twilight
Sand melts in pools of the sky
When darkness lays her crimson cloak
Your lamps will call me home

And so it's there my homage's due
Clutched by the still of the night
And now I feel you move
Every breath is full
So it's there my homage's due
Clutched by the still of the night
Even the distance feels so near
All for the love of you.

Music & lyric: L.M.

L.M. - voice, dumbeg, keyboards
Brian Hughes - electric guitars, oud
Rick Lazar - percussion, dumbeg
George Koller - bass, tamboura
Ravi Naimpally - tabla
Abraham Tawfik - nai, oud
Anne Bourne - cello, backing vocals
Patrick Hutchinson - uilleann pipes
and the Victoria Scholars choir; Jerzy Cichocki,
musical director

‡ THE BONNY SWANS 7:18 ‡

October, 1990 - Annaghmakerrig, Ireland... have been striving to create the pieces and shape of The Visit. Brought various books of lyrics, poetry and other influences with me: the Unicorn Tapestries, The Golden Bough. Set some traditional lyrics to music; I am drawn to the harp motif and the essence of a fable in which a girl, drowned by her jealous sister, returns first as a swan and then is transformed into a harp... The countryside of County Monaghan would make an ideal location for a visual interpretation, with its lakes, forests and rolling countryside.

Octobre 1990 - Annaghmakerrig, Irlande... j'ai travaillé à la création des oeuvres et à la mise en forme de The Visit. J'ai apporté avec moi des livres de poèmes, de chansons et d'autres sources d'inspiration: la tapisserie de la Dame à la Licorne, Le Rameau d'or. Mise en musique de chants traditionnels; je suis attirée par le motif de la harpe et l'essence de la fable où une jeune fille, noyée par une soeur jalouse, est d'abord réincarnée en cygne, puis en harpe... Le paysage du comté de Monaghan, avec ses lacs, ses forêts et ses collines arrondies, serait un cadre parfait pour une interprétation visuelle.



A farmer there lived in the north country
 a hey ho bonny o
 And he had daughters one, two, three
 The swans swim so bonny o
 These daughters they walked by the river's brim
 a hey ho bonny o
 The eldest pushed the youngest in
 The swans swim so bonny o

Oh sister, oh sister, pray lend me your hand
 with a hey ho a bonny o
 And I will give you house and land
 the swans swim so bonny o
 I'll give you neither hand nor glove
 with a hey ho a bonny o
 Unless you give me your own true love
 the swans swim so bonny o



Sometimes she sank, sometimes she swam
 with a hey ho and a bonny o
 Until she came to a miller's dam
 the swans swim so bonny o
 The miller's daughter, dressed in red
 with a hey ho and a bonny o
 She went for some water to make some bread
 the swans swim so bonny o

Oh father, oh daddy, here swims a swan
 with a hey ho and a bonny o
 It's very like a gentle woman
 the swans swim so bonny o
 They placed her on the bank to dry
 with a hey ho and a bonny o
 There came a harper passing by
 the swans swim so bonny o

He made harp pins of her fingers fair
 with a hey ho and a bonny o
 He made harp strings of her golden hair
 the swans swim so bonny o
 He made a harp of her breast bone
 with a hey ho and a bonny o
 And straight it began to play alone
 the swans swim so bonny o
 He brought it to her father's hall
 with a hey ho and a bonny o
 And there was the court, assembled all
 the swans swim so bonny o

He laid the harp upon a stone
 with a hey ho and a bonny o
 And straight it began to play alone
 the swans swim so bonny o

And there does sit my father the King
 with a hey ho and a bonny o
 And yonder sits my mother the Queen
 the swans swim so bonny o
 And there does sit my brother Hugh
 with a hey ho and a bonny o
 And by him William, sweet and true
 the swans swim so bonny o
 And there does sit my false sister, Anne
 with a hey ho and a bonny o
 Who drowned me for the sake of a man
 the swans swim so bonny o

Traditional lyric arranged and adapted by L.M.
 Music: L.M.

L.M - keyboards, vocals, accordion
 Brian Hughes - guitars, balalaika
 George Koller - bass
 Donal Lunny - bouzouki, bodhrán
 Hugh Marsh - fiddle
 Anne Bourne - cello
 Rick Lazar - percussion
 Assistant producer: Donal Lunny

‡ THE DARK NIGHT OF THE SOUL ‡
6:44

May, 1993 - Stratford...have been reading through the poetry of 16th century Spain, and I find myself drawn to one by the mystic writer and visionary St. John of the Cross; the untitled work is an exquisite, richly metaphoric love poem between himself and his god. It could pass as a love poem between any two at any time...His approach seems more akin to early Islamic or Judaic works in its more direct route of communication to his god...I have gone over three different translations of the poem, and am struck by how much a translation can alter our interpretation.

Mai 1993 - Stratford...pendant la lecture de poètes espagnols du XVI^e siècle, me voilà fascinée par un poème du mystique et visionnaire Saint Jean de la Croix; l'oeuvre sans titre est un poème d'amour métaphorique, d'une beauté exquise, pour son dieu. Cela pourrait être un chant d'amour entre deux êtres de n'importe quelle époque, n'importe quel pays... Par son expression si directe envers son dieu, le poème s'apparente plus aux oeuvres de l'islam ancien ou du judaïsme...J'ai lu trois traductions différentes de l'oeuvre et je suis frappée par les grandes variétés d'interprétation.

‡



Upon a darkened night
the flame of love was burning in my breast
And by a lantern bright
I fled my house while all in quiet rest

Shrouded by the night
And by the secret stair I quickly fled
The veil concealed my eyes
while all within lay quiet as the dead

CHORUS

Oh night thou was my guide
of night more loving than the rising sun
Oh night that joined the lover
to the beloved one
transforming each of them into the other

Upon that misty night
in secrecy, beyond such mortal sight
Without a guide or light
than that which burned so deeply in my heart
That fire I was led me on
and shone more bright than of the midday sun
To where he waited still
it was a place where no one else could come

(Chorus)

Within my pounding heart
which kept itself entirely for him
He fell into his sleep
beneath the cedars all my love I gave
From o'er the fortress walls
the wind would his hair against his brow
And with its smoothest hand
caressed my every sense it would allow

(Chorus)

I lost myself to him
and laid my face upon my lover's breast
And care and grief grew dim
as in the morning's mist became the light
There they dimmed amongst the lilies fair
there they dimmed amongst the lilies fair
there they dimmed amongst the lilies fair

Lyric: St. John of the Cross, translated,
arranged and adapted by L.M.
Music: L.M.

L.M. - vocals, synthesizers
Brian Hughes - guitar, electric sitar
Hugh Marsh - fiddle
George Koller - cello, esraj

‡ MARRAKESH NIGHT MARKET 6:30 ‡

March 16, 1993 - Arrived tonight in Marrakesh and am staying on the edge of the market. It is Ramadan and there is heightened activity all around. I am struck by the hooded features of men as they pass through the lights and shadows: they look monk-like. Horses, carriages, cars, bicycles and thousands of people are embroiled in the activities of the night... a cacophony of sound. I retreat to a rooftop café to watch while sipping mint tea... many circles of twenty or so people are scattered around the market, each involved in their own drama of music, storytelling, monkeys on men's shoulders, or cobras being coaxed to "dance" on rugs; "magic" concoctions of bone, seeds, stones and spices are sold... women are veiled to a great degree... I am struck by the sense of intrigue the environment creates; as much is concealed as is revealed...

16 mars 1993 - Je suis arrivée cette nuit à Marrakech et je loge en bordure du marché. C'est le Ramadan et les rues grouillent d'activités. Je suis fascinée par les silhouettes encapuchonnées des hommes qui passent de l'ombre à la lumière: ils ressemblent à des moines. Les chevaux, les carrioles, les voitures, les vélos et les milliers de passants s'activent aux tâches de la nuit... une cacophonie. Du haut d'une terrasse de café sur un toit, j'observe tout en sirotant du thé à la menthe... de nombreux cercles d'une vingtaine de personnes sont éparpillés sur le marché, entourant un musicien, un conteur d'histoires, des singes perchés sur une épaule d'homme, ou des cobras obligés de "danser" sur des tapis; des potions "magiques" de poudre d'os, de graines, de pierres et d'épices sont vendues... les femmes sont presque entièrement dissimulées derrière leurs voiles... et je suis frappée par l'impression de mystère: il y a autant de caché que de dévoilé...

‡



They're gathered in circles
the lamps light their faces
The crescent moon rocks in the sky
The poets of drumming
keep heartbeats suspended
The smoke swirls up and then it dies
Would you like my mask?
would you like my mirror?
cries the man in the shadowing hood
You can look at yourself
you can look at each other
or you can look at the face of your god
The stories are woven
and fortunes are told
The truth is measured by the weight of your
gold
The magic lies scattered
on rugs on the ground
Faith is conjured in the night market's sound
Would you like my mask?
would you like my mirror?
cries the man in the shadowing hood
You can look at yourself

you can look at each other
or you can look at the face of your god
The lessons are written
on parchments of paper
They're carried by horse from the river Nile
says the shadowy voice
In the firelight, the cobra
is casting the flame a winsome smile
Would you like my mask?
would you like my mirror?
cries the man in the shadowing hood
You can look at yourself
you can look at each other
or you can look at the face of your god

Music & lyric: L.M.
L.M. - vocals, accordion, synthesizer
Brian Hughes - guitars, balalaika, electric
guitar
Rick Lazar - dumbek, udu drum, percussion
Al Cross - drums
Hugh Marsh - fiddle
George Koller - bass

‡ FULL CIRCLE 5:57 ‡

March 23, 1993 - Morocco...Ramadan; I wake up early to catch my flight home, and at 5:30 a.m. hear men chanting in the mosque, one of the most moving and primitive sounds I have ever heard.

They are calling their God. I think, when have I heard this before?

23 mars 1993 - Maroc...le Ramadan; je me lève tôt pour prendre le vol de retour et à 5 h 30, j'entends les mélodies des hommes dans la mosquée, les sons les plus émouvants et les plus primitifs que j'aie jamais entendus. Ils appellent leur Dieu. J'y pense, quand ai-je déjà entendu cela?



Stars were falling deep in the darkness
as prayers rose softly, petals at dawn
And as I listened, your voice seemed so clear
so calmly you were calling your god

Somewhere the sun rose, o'er dunes in the desert
such was the stillness, I ne'er felt before
Was this the question, pulling, pulling, pulling you
in your heart, in your soul, did you find rest there?

Elsewhere a snowfall, the first in the winter
covered the ground as the bells filled the air
You in your robes sang, calling, calling, calling him
in your heart, in your soul, did you find peace there?

Music & lyric: L.M.
L.M. - vocals, harp, synthesizer
George Koller - bass, esraj

‡ SANTIAGO 5:58 ‡

January, 1992 - Just performed in Santiago de Compostella in the Galician area of Spain...misty and lush as we arrived from more arid areas of the country; clearly Celtic territory in the language and music, and a place I must visit again soon...We arrived a day early; band *et al* went for a wonderful Sunday lunch and then wandered over to the cathedral to observe the wonderful faces on the Portico.

Janvier 1992 - Je viens de donner un spectacle à Saint-Jacques-de-Compostelle, en Galice, dans le nord de l'Espagne...brumeux et luxuriant en comparaison des contrées plus arides du reste du pays; un territoire nettement celtique par sa langue et sa musique...Nous sommes arrivés une journée à l'avance; toute l'équipe s'est retrouvée pour un magnifique déjeuner du dimanche, puis s'est promenée jusqu'à la cathédrale pour admirer le splendide portique.



Traditional music arranged and adapted by L.M.

L.M. - vocals, accordion, synthesizer
Brian Hughes - balalaika, guitars
Rick Lazar - drums, percussion
George Koller - cello, bass
Hugh Marsh - fiddle
Nigel Eaton - hurdy-gurdy
Donal Lunny - bouzouki

‡ CÉ HÉ MISE LE ULAINGT? ‡
‡ THE TWO TREES 9:06 ‡

October 6, 1993 - Stratford...browsing through Yeats' poetry and came across "The Two Trees" with its lovely sentiment of looking into one's own self for goodness, and the struggle to avoid looking into the glass of cynicism...It strikes me, now, to have a strong Sufi connection in that way...the imagery is quintessentially Irish and reminds me, for some reason, of the ending of John Huston's film The Dead: barren countryside, leafless trees and the starlings crying.

6 octobre 1993 - Stratford...en feuilletant un livre de poèmes de Yeats, je tombe sur "The Two Trees"...ce beau sentiment de la bonté à rechercher à l'intérieur de soi et du combat pour éviter de regarder dans le miroir du cynisme... Cela me frappe, maintenant, de ressentir un lien puissant avec la pensée soufie...l'image est de quintessence irlandaise et me rappelle, pour une raison inconnue, la fin du film "The Dead" de John Huston: un paysage désolé, des arbres sans feuilles et les oiseaux qui pleurent.



Beloved, gaze in thine own heart,
The holy tree is growing there;
From joy the holy branches start,
And all the trembling flowers they bear.
The changing colours of its fruit
Have dowered the stars with merry light;
The surety of its hidden root
Has planted quiet in the night;
The shaking of its leafy head
Has given the waves their melody,
And made my lips and music wed,
Murmuring a wizard song for thee.
There the Loves a circle go,
The flaming circle of our days,
Gyring, spiring to and fro
In those great ignorant leafy ways;
Remembering all that shaken hair
And how the winged sandals dart,

Thine eyes grow full of tender care;
Beloved, gaze in thine own heart.

Gaze no more in the bitter glass
The demons, with their subtle guile,
Lift up before us when they pass,
Or only gaze a little while;
For there a fatal image grows
That the stormy night receives,
Roots half hidden under snows,
Broken boughs and blackened leaves.
For all things turn to barrenness
In the dim glass the demons hold,
The glass of outer weariness,
Made when God slept in times of old.
There, through the broken branches, go
The ravens of unresting thought;
Flying, crying, to and fro,

Cruel claw and hungry throat,
Or else they stand and sniff the wind,
And shake their ragged wings: alas!
Thy tender eyes grow all unkind:
Gaze no more in the bitter glass.
Beloved, gaze in thine own heart,
The holy tree is growing there;
From joy the holy branches start,
And all the trembling flowers they bear.
Remembering all that shaken hair
And how the winged sandals dart,
Thine eyes grow full of tender care:
Beloved, gaze in thine own heart.

Lyric: William Butler Yeats,
arranged and adapted by L.M.

Music: L.M.

Pipe Intro: Cé Hé Mise Le Ulaingt?
(Who Am I To Bear It?), composed
and performed by Patrick Hutchinson;
tamboura: George Koller

L.M. - vocals, piano, synthesizer
Ofra Harnoy - cello
George Koller - bass
Strings: David Hetherington, David
Miller, Sharon Prater, Heinz Boshart,
Sylvia Lange, Susan Lipchak, Douglas
Perry, Kent Teeple, Adele Amin, Andy
Benac, Marie Berard, Fujico Imajishi,
Morry Kernerman, Mark Sabat
String and cello arrangement
by John Welsman

‡ PROSPERO'S SPEECH ‡
3:23

April, 1993 - Stratford...once again, I am drawn to Shakespeare for insights into the human condition...Prospero's closing speech is delivered with the sense of the actor removing his mask as an artist...the illusion has ended, and reality and god are left for us to determine for ourselves...

Avril 1993 - Stratford...une fois de plus, je vais chercher dans Shakespeare des idées pour m'éclairer sur la condition humaine... la tirade finale de Prospero, pendant laquelle l'acteur retire son masque d'artiste...l'illusion est terminée, il nous reste la réalité et Dieu pour décider par nous-mêmes...



And now my charms are all o'erthrown
And what strength I have's mine own
Which is most faint: now 't is true
I must here be released by you

But release me from my bands
With the help of your good hands
Gentle breath of yours my sails
Must fill, or else my project fails,

Which was to please. Now I want
Spirits to enforce, art to enchant
And my ending is despair,
Unless I be relieved by prayer

Which pierces so that it assaults
Mercy itself and frees all faults
As you from your crimes would pardon'd be
Let your indulgence set me free

Lyric: William Shakespeare,
Arranged and adapted by L.M. Music: L.M.
L.M. - vocals, synthesizer, organ pipes George Koller - bass

Produced by Loreena McKennitt

Co-producing assistance from Brian Hughes and Jeff Wolpert

Recorded and mixed by Jeff Wolpert (with exceptions as noted)

Digitally remastered by Jeff Wolpert and Brian Hughes at Phase One Studios, Toronto.

Digital editing and sequencing by George Seara.

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