

Dragon song

It was as if we were being told to expect wonders.
We arrived in the dead hours
And we were weary;
Two long hours on the bus,
Too long we banged and bumped and climbed, groaning,
And for what?
An empty yard, deserted buildings.

Yet there were omens:
Strange fires, still flames, in blackened circles
(We imagined the ripples),
And sound: a recording of a past prodigy.
But there was no pattern
And we had not seen the land.

Tired, we stumbled to bed.

We awakened slowly
To a leisurely breakfast,
Toast and eggs eaten drowsily in the sunshine.
We descended from our host's house...

And the land struck our sight!
Oh, the mountains!
Our host spoke, and the dragon encircled us.
A strange guardian of song and companion of singers,
It slept in the sun.

The day passed lightly.

Dark again, the time for song was upon us.
We sang; they sang,
But the dragon merely turned in its sleep,
Dreaming still the dragon dream of years,
The dream of land and sky
And of descent;
The cycle of continuity.

The boys of the dragon sang again,
And this time they sang the song of awakening,
The cry of the land's heart,

And the dragon awoke!

A roar filled the place,
An indescribable coruscation,
The long lament of life itself.
Hearts heard, wept, and were strengthened,
And the song was still.

It is quiet again;
Our brief sojourn will soon end,
But the echoes of the dragon's song
Have been scored into our souls.

How could we forget this ancient night?

Reuben Thomas

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