

Worm in Exile

Let us start with Yggdrasil, because that tree is where the earth's story and worm's story intertwine threads. Fiction or history, it matters little since truth and lies bed together like siblings, thigh to thigh, though time and again the feckless parents sigh that space and money permitting every child shall have their own room. They have long defiled each other, these twins. So what has been styled truth might be lies. And vice versa. No one can tell them apart. So. Of all beasts on the world's tree, Nidhögg is the dragon chewing at the root. He gnaws on corpses, sucks up stagnant blood, and when the ages see him foray forth spewing out ashes, rotting flesh dangling from his claws and wings, that announces Ragnarök. But these things run somewhat ahead of my narratings. One must start somewhere. There are many starts to the story and my point is that men's arts all assume a snake tempts or bites, shits or farts, in some form from the birth to the end of time. The fall guy. He might be given different names in different ages, dragon, wyvern, worm, different limbs in different climes, but is strong either in form or mind. And long. Always long. And treacherous. Every poem and song is clear on that. From the Midgard Serpent thrown into the sea, who used salt to augment his coils until they circled earth in foment of malice, to the Lambton Worm's greed for the walking lard-balls you call sheep. We are pilloried in fact and fiction for our power, fleshy or psychological. Let's take Eve. Who was it that caused her to disbelieve the Almighty's ordinance? A wandering sleeve with a slick tongue. No lion, but Satan phallic in simplicity. Length with head. And sic transit gloria mundi. In with the sick and painful world we love. Strikers in the dark, we are the gold eyes watching in the stark rock, in your garden wall. We need no ark to rescue us in times of flood. We swim, we crawl, we climb. Born survivors. We trim

our needs according to earth's clay, slim
and bare of all extraneous limbs. Narrow
fellows, golden bracelets, freezers of marrows,
kings of exile drinking at your trough, swallower
of elephants, shifters through sand with the murmur
of fountains dying who can send you further
than a white-sailed ship. How the warm fear a
worm. How your kin encourage you to shun
us, curse us, beat us, kill us, blacken
our name, chase us from our homes into barren
landscapes to trawl in the dust for food you
would never deign to eat. We of no value.
You hate the life that does not look like you,
eat like you, share your myths of origin.
Well, we have learnt about compassion.
No smiles nor tears can move us now. We snake on
while you rip the land to its conclusion
for a short term halfpenny horizon
consuming things you do not need. Devastation
will be our opportunity, your culls
our convenience. We fear few obstacles.
If Earth should shift, slender as tentacles
we ooze into her cracks. Armageddon
will be good to us, for we are her children,
her lovers, and Earth shall look after her own.