

Goat Song

*Pray, do not mock me. I am
a very foolish fond old man
and fear I am not in my perfect mind
- King Lear*

1

Born in the year of the Chinese Dragon
on the cusp between Jupiter and Saturn
mutable fire and cardinal earth
wisdom and justice persistence and grit

but really just an old goat
cabron viejo il vecchio
a stock *commedia* character
the girls make fun of to his face

giggle about behind his back
but sort of pity when he smiles
that smile, poor thing,
kind of sweet and adorable

though all that is out of the question.
A life of nothing but memories
and imagination, knowing love
as well as the back of his hand.

2

Always naive and of late out of date,
losing stature more ways than one:
pants too long, belts too short
three inches less height

in what was just a few years,
not to mention public opinion,
faced with increasing evidence
of individual irrelevance

losing all sense of personal worth
in an ever-expanding universe.
Becoming despite fitness routines
neither elf nor leprechaun

as he sometimes fancied he might
but merely a gnomish little old man
under a toadstool smoking a pipe
leering at trim ankles walking by.

3

May-December always absurd,
a classic case of lost cause
maybe worth the pain of losing
what never could have been had

to see in the rearview mirror
things closer than they were, more precious
for knowing how ephemeral,
to see himself playing himself

to live love again in all
its bittersweet impertinence
feel again the sweet melting
of lovers in love, lust and trust

the sheer joy of knowing her near,
the *all's well* just the thought of her brings,
the empathy, the mutual pleasure
in being vital to one another.

4

Lunatic, lover and poet all compact
says the king of the fairies in a midsummer's dream.
So then might Dildo the Dotard, tragi-comic
in his own closet drama, parody:

Teacher mentor confessor shaman nuncle
by dint of transference all complexed.
Enter Oedipus Rex and Father Time
stage left stage right before the curtain.

Blind the one, eyes gouged out in a fit
of self-loathing, bloody sockets rinsed with tears.
The other, long-robed -tongued and -bearded,
blood-sacrifice in the whisper of his scythe.

5

Ancient by the time his son came home,
Laërtes, master of husbandry —
father, grandfather, cuckold,
leaving the kingdom of parasites

to live alone on his craggéd farm,
digging a hole with a wooden spade
to plant a seedling peach he knows
he will not live to see bear fruit.