THE LIGHT IN MURIEL RUKEYSER: CENTO

Late in the twentieth century
I can see past the church, the words of an ending line
And death holding my lifetime between great hands.
We all knew we had all crossed over when we heard the song
You will love everyone.
When we saw the water mystery of the lake
Road of the sun and the moon to
The stars your ancestors,
Fear, and form, and storm turned into light.
A moment of light achieved deep in the air of roses.
And finally
Obsessed by a single thing
It is true
This is the word:
Love.
My life is closing, my life is opening.
Make my poems for others unseen and unborn.

COLLECTION: THE SPEED OF DARKNESS
A ROSE FROM DENISE LEVERTOV: CENTO

What we desire travels with us,
The pebbles of past wishes peacefully under-water. Old desires
Still visible but
Abandoned.

Bells in her spirit
Filled with some other power
Singing its colors
Pausing only as if to meditate.

Our unused wings
Floating like bright snow
Into the ring of the dance
Up to remotest stars.

A voice from the dark called out
This is the way.
The poet waving farewell
Through death’s gated tunnel. A rose.

LINE 1  ~  “VARIATION AND REFLECTIONS ON A THEME BY RILKE”
LINE 2  ~  “THE STRICKEN CHILDREN”
LINE 3  ~  “TO OLGA”
LINE 4  ~  “ZEROING IN”
LINE 5  ~  “THE SHOWINGS:LADY JULIAN OF NORWICH, 1342-1416”
LINE 6  ~  “THE WELL”
LINE 7  ~  “LA CORDELLE”
LINE 8  ~  “FROM THE IMAGE-FOW—SUMMER OF 1986”
LINE 9  ~  “STANDOFF”
LINE 10  ~  “WAVERING”
LINE 11  ~  “CAEDMON”
LINE 12  ~  “EMBRASURE”
LINE 13  ~  “I LEARNED THAT HER NAME WAS A PROVERB”
LINE 14  ~  “MAKING PEACE”
LINE 15  ~  “THE SPIRITS APPEASED”
LINE 16  ~  “AUGUST DAYBREAK”

COLLECTION: BREATHING THE WATER
ANNE SEXTON’S TUNNEL: CENTO

I sit at my desk.
Leaving the page of the book carelessly open.
Why?
Well, death’s been here.
The door opens.
Oh my God, help me.
How strange that you’re so tender!

It is early afternoon
And before it was time.
Many have come to such a small crossroad
To catch the star off each ship.
My hunger was for Jesus—
My love.
Maybe Jesus knew my tunnel.

All that is new is telling the truth,
I said, and entered
Wrapped in robes
So that I might hear.
The music takes place in a grotto.
Oh! There is no translating.
O my hunger! My hunger.

I will go farther
And death, that old butcher, will bother me no more

LINE 1 ~ “AND ONE FOR MY DAME”
LINE 2 ~ “WANTING TO DIE”
LINE 3 ~ “THE ADDICT”
LINE 4 ~ “LIVE”
LINE 5 ~ “IN THE BEACH HOUSE”
LINE 6 ~ “PAIN FOR A DAUGHTER”
LINE 7 ~ “CRIPPLES AND OTHER STORIES”
LINE 8 ~ “YOUR FACE ON THE DOG’S NECK”
LINE 9 ~ “THE WEDDING NIGHT”
LINE 10 ~ “SELF IN 1958”
LINE 11 ~ “A LITTLE UNCOMPLICATED HYMN”
LINE 12 ~ “SUICIDE NOTE”
LINE 13 ~ “KE 6-8018”
LINE 14 ~ “PROTESTANT EASTER”
LINE 15 ~ “LITTLE GIRL, MY STRING BEAN, MY LOVELY WOMAN”
LINE 16 ~ “CONSORTING WITH ANGELS”
LINE 17 ~ “CROSSING THE ATLANTIC”
LINE 18 ~ “THOSE TIMES...”
LINE 19 ~ “TO LOSE THE EARTH”
LINE 20 ~ “LOVE SONG”
LINE 21 ~ “FLEE ON YOUR DONKEY”
LINE 22 ~ “WALKING IN PARIS”
LINE 23 ~ “IMITATIONS OF DROWNING”

COLLECTION: LIVE OR DIE