

PREFACE

*Hail, white-armed goddess, bright Selene,
mild, bright-tressed queen! And now I will leave you and sing
the glories of men half-divine, whose deeds minstrels,
the servants of the Muses, celebrate with lovely lips.**

Hymns and alluring voices have accompanied the enchanting queen Selana since ancient times as she circles around on her glorious chariot, bedecked with sublime dresses and a silver diadem, gracing the earth, the waters and the air with dreamy and mysterious colours. The ancient Greeks reciprocated the offer with water and bread shaped after a half moon in honour of the lovely goddess that Greek mythology endowed with a multitude of names. The wonderful Orphic hymn included in the eighth story will give us a taste of the spiritual power that the goddess bestows on a Woman. Human beings believed that Selene influenced everything around her. Mnemosyne, mother of the Muses, sings to her of times past, present and future.

A micrography of the flow of everything; the apocryphal side of the universe. The Female Principle of the creation of the world. Sapho speaks of Selana, the Moonset. Selana signifies light and glow. The beginning and the end of the

* Excerpt from the Homeric Hymn to Selene. English translation by Hugh G. Evelyn-White (1914).

lunar cycle every 28 days more or less is harmoniously synchronized with a woman's cycle. The blood of the cycle confers upon the female existence an incomprehensible power as it magically, mysteriously infuses the female to symbolize both death and life.

From the most ancient word Mene derives the Greek word menas, denoting the month that lasts approximately as long as the moon's orbit around the Earth. From the Latin word luna for moon derives the word lunatic (Lat. lunaticus) to signify people with neurological disorders deteriorating with the full moon.

Moon-centered mysteries and myths have flourished across the world. An infinity of poems and songs, immeasurable prejudices and traditions have accompanied the moon from one end of the world to another: from the Sumerians and the Native Americans to the Mayas and the Buddhists. And this not random. The Primal Moon symbolizes the unseen sight of things, intuition and the non-rational. It is associated with fertility, health, birth, death, katharsis. Every dark phase of the moon is intended to unite the omega to the alpha. And this sacred circle carries on for all times. Woman and Selene are identified, they become one, harmonized with the universal melody to offer the gift of life's continuity. The wheat that dies will reenter the earth to be reborn anew.

Chloe Veriti

Any coincidence in either names or incidents is fictitious and has no relation to reality.

SELANA

just like the good old days...

Romanticism flourishes in times of sheer introversion, when the “outside”, which we call “reality” can stir nothing but escapism in a soundly thinking person, a person who wishes to preserve emotional fairness far away from the miserable “daily routine” of News Broadcasts and of politicians striving for a place in publicity and – rarely so – for a place under the Sun of Nemesis. Ancient Greek mythology, classic philology, idealistic romanticism, modernized surrealism flourish in times of Crisis. Circular in direction, historical phenomena obey the constant flow of Time. Humankind yearns to create civilization in spite of adversities and against pessimists, the right-minded, the rationalists of all sorts proposing only they can estimate what one has without reference to what one is, removed as they are from Nature, the only Analogy for “good measure”. The golden section only passes through the humanistic perception of the World, as a Theatre Stage or an Amphitheatre of Education, both essential and inescapable.

With these thoughts I pondered again and again over Chloe Veriti’s “metaphysically” romantic, postmodern endeavour, poetically titled Selana; in doing so, I marveled at the lyricism that is never once reduced to a utopia of inconsistency with the dementia of the historical time-

space that surrounds and enmeshes us in its net. I notice how the narrative voice moves from the emotionally enclaved Emo children, those that others call “indigo” (on account of their love for dark purple and not just that); how she describes “eternal” romantic loves, without succumbing to the monotony of clichés; how she manages the attrition of the body and memory without becoming melodramatic; how she is political without doing politics; how her voice is poetic without poeticizing. It is a feat. A true feat! What more can I say? The enjoyment of reading has swayed me into forgetting the afflictions of a touring backpain. And if this is not the greatest gain of delving into literature then I don’t know what is. Our grief-ending, stress relieving and pain-killing civilization can only be validated as the furthestmost end of the human intellect when it can replace the chemistry of the matter with the alchemy of the spirit. And from this point of view, *Selana* by Chloe Veriti is an optimistic specimen of the times, of those who resist, who are troubled by and care for a wealth of things, those who take delight in chasing away the thought-forms of Fear and Death in this peculiar, tyrannical financial World War that is robbing us of our lives. But there is an antidote, and it’s a panacea: “the greatest of these is Love”. This is precisely the esthetic, ideological and stylistic gain of our spiritual adventure with Chloe Veriti. In innocence I roam along the stories...

Constantinos Bouras,
theatrologist, critic, writer

PRIMAL MOON

THE UNIVERSE YAWNED, gave a firm push to the galaxies to start them working and sent a humming melody to its neighbours, the other universes, to kick off too. It caressed the little stars and they shimmered; then it set out placing one planet after the other in orbit. This last part it rather resented, but it was necessary, as it had been for centuries. Once done, it put his beloved Moon to sleep and sat up on a cloud of phosphorous. It filled its lungs with life, then tried to exhale as softly as it could. Pff! The universe was vast and it didn't always make it. And each time it didn't make it, it received complaints over cosmogonic calamities. This time it succeeded, its breath traveling softly like a cool breeze that quickly reached its destination at the centre. It wasn't so far really, just a few hundred thousand light years.

- I'll finish first! I'll get the prize!

- Dream on! I'm the strongest one!

The starting point had been the same for centuries; the tall proud cypress at the beginning of the valley of love. The tiny boys tacked their tales, got on their marks and waited for the signal. At the other end of the valley, plump Lilliputian girls sat in line waiting for them, all dolled up. None of them knew there was only one boy and one girl in that world, and that that particular universe took them in for just a moment, for an infinitesimal fraction

of time. But above all they didn't know that what they considered an achievement was nothing but a firecracker that would swiftly hurl them to the great beyond until the stars would shatter them into pieces to unite with the whole and come back without memories to dwell in the valley for one more time.

Just one. One girl and one boy created their own universe each time. There was no other option. They didn't have to wear themselves down seeking to find their other half. There was no recognition in the crowd nor love at first sight. Their paths never crossed. They didn't have to choose one another. They never even met. They just knew each other since forever. Everything was so, so simple. The world was made for the two of them.

The signal was given and it was impatient like youth. It ran with inconceivable speed and landed deeply into their existence. The cool breeze flurried through the core of everything. The strong little boy overtook all others and, gasping for air, reached the centre of the warm cave. All the rest had given up some time ago. But he was so fast and so strong. Cheerfully it wagged its tail, took a breath and looked around. It was then he saw that graceful creature. Small and plump, she wore an intangible dress and waited for him seated on a silver mattress made of an uncanny divine substance. The other girls had not made it. They had run out of time, failed to formulate their body.

The blood surrendered unconditionally and flowed along the fresh ground. Bright red, clear, liquid but also searing, it swirled in the maelstrom of love without second thought and perished forever as it dyed the adjacent waterfall. It traveled into infinity. The beautiful, youthful naked bodies, drunk with cosmic methexis, as though hypnotized, fumbled for one another. There were

no noes, no musts, no whys. Even the “how” had no place in that warm night. Everything was so... inconceivably conceivable. Two human beings given to pure, untainted love. “I will always love you”, whispered the girl. “Me too! I will always love you”, exclaimed the boy and the echo smiled and repeated the phrase as they held one another and laughed. There was no one there; no one but the goddess Selana who had just woken up, winked at them slyly and gave the signal. It was midsummer and she was still almost invisible but her message reached them loud and clear: “Love each other”.

Music was always present; not for a single moment were they without it. It sang their song, the song of the panting, of the slurping, of his voice, her voice that merged with the tweeting of the awoken nightingale, fluttering here and there, rejoicing with their joy. It was a special music, music of their own, that they composed and sang together in primo secondo with nature as the background.

The cicadas had begun to grasp the melody and they tuned in. Basso. The waterfall nearby joined in and suddenly waves rose from the lake. The leaves rustled too from the gust of the warm, liquid air. Thick raindrops fell upon humongous green leaves in improbable rhythms of odd and secret tempos.

But the girl and the boy were no longer there. They had dived into the lake underneath the waterfall to baptize the new life they had created in water, for the waters and the seas and the oceans to carry to the edges of the world so that the new life in its turn would create another new life. And then once more... and once more... again... and again.

And when they emerged on the lakeshore they lit fires with their gaze in order to dry off. The fire purified them

and the air carried their breaths back to where they had set off. Selana was observing the scene, enjoying herself immensely. “Hey! Universe!” she chirped, “send another one of your breaths. This love has neither an ending nor a beginning!”

DARK MOON

FOR TEN YEARS NOW, every first Sunday of January she does the same thing at the exact same time, nine o'clock in the morning. On that day she makes sure she's not there for anyone. First, she lights the vigil candle. She stands there for quite some time, praying as she peruses the flame. She prays for its soul; for her own soul too.

In all her life she's only been to confession once, at a remote chapel. It was when she had felt that the explosion had to be channeled somewhere. Father Mathew only told her: "You can tell me, child, open your soul to me" and she did. She told him everything. It was the first time and the last time. She cried so hard that afternoon, cried for so long that no more tears were left for anything else in her life. Her eyes were an archipelago; a tempestuous archipelago was her soul too.

Behind the vigil candle, the icon of Our Lady Holding Infant Jesus. It is a very old icon, given to her by her mother as her mother had received it from her own mother. It is covered with a red timeworn piece of fabric her grandmother had carefully sewn to protect the icon. There's a gap at the backside. There, between the icon and the fabric, at the same time on the same day, she finds the letter. Every first Sunday of January she reads it over and over again. The confession didn't help much either, though the father had given her absolution. The

burden in her soul is enormous; it feels like a thick nail thrust deep into the heart.

Then she lets go. She never sobs. Her face is streaked with thick tears. They're not salty; they're bitter, terribly bitter, like small bitter almonds. In the first year she blamed it on him, trying desperately to share the unbearable burden; looking for excuses and pretexts. Later on, she realized that the fault was hers. Hers, no one else's. The responsibility, too. For a while she reasoned that all-conquering time would ease the pain. How wrong she had been! As the years went by, the guilt, the remorse grew bigger. The wound in her heart would not heal. It became more and more painful.

The same ritual takes place every year on the same day of January. It usually rains.

Piously she picks up the icon and carefully withdraws the pink envelope. (To this day she hasn't figured out why she had chosen a pink envelope to hold a letter like this within its bosom.) She unfolds it softly. The letter is stained from the silent tears that have dripped upon the ink in the last decade. But the words have not faded. She starts to read it aloud as though she were addressing someone. Her voice breaks at times. Her voice trembles like her soul, wounded from her own bullet. The flame from the vigil candle flickers as it does every time.

My baby,

I am writing to you on a moonless, dark and frozen night.

We will meet tomorrow at nine o'clock.

Somewhere in a different sphere, outside the earthly world.

You will be traveling to the eternal light,

I will be affixed to the darkness of the hour, to the darkness of my life from now on;

