



"Seahorses and other miracles..." (From "Depths and Heights")

Gerrard Chaiken, Cape Town (South Africa)

So often , you felt
As if there were a stone around your neck,
A stone in your heart,
As if your heart itself were stone,
And your broken-limbed body
A stone upon stony ground.
So often, you felt
Wracked with pain,
Hopes wrecked
Upon a heartless uncaring
World, whirling carelessly,
Indifferently, remorselessly;
And that you could not, in any way,
Stumble on, crawl on- let alone walk
Upon the unyielding ground.

But now: you wear
A tiny silver sea-horse
Crafted by some other hands
Of one, who, too, had suffered
The pain of re-birth,
The pain of feeling
Too much -or too little,
The day-to day doubts,
Unseen by an unseeing
And seemingly
Heartless world;

And once again, you wear a smile,
Tentative as a newborn infant hope,
Brazen as an all-knowing
And victorious goddess;
And fingering your filigree
Dancing sea-horse, you say:
"This is a miracle!"
And, beloved, there are so many more!

"Courting the Muse, 1." from "BeMuSingings"

The Muse of Inspiration
Is close at hand, ready to visit,
Ready to energise us;
But she wants to be welcomed:
Her infinite energy wants



Our definite intention:
Her seeming flightiness
And teasing flirtation
Demands deliberation,
Her artistry our articulation!
Intent upon our intention,
The Muse awaits faithful
Promises, not promiscuous
Or prodigal words, but
A vow of Purpose...

Sonnet of singing striving and strife...(From "BeMuSinging...")

There is a war of worlds within the worlds within,
Whilst the sun shepherds the clouds to their fold of infinite space;
The Muses clamour for my will to show its retiring face
And behold dimensions I have not yet begun to imagine.
Here, down below, sloth in subtle fugue finds subterfuge in 'sin';
As in overbearing battles each distraction desires to win-
Then in furtive but furious frenzied fight
The warring factions put my fictions to frantic flight-
But in the brazen silence, words spill and surge
And whirl pooling re awaken that ancient urge
And ditties dervish-dance from dead dirge
Then do faculties' facilities in fantasia merge-
Now, in fecund fountain flow of forms unfrozen-
Reminding me of inspiration's freedom chosen....

Holy face" (From "Depths and Heights")

There be no scars nor flaws upon the Holy Face;
For subtle ironies, and paradoxes, no place-
For inconsistencies, no room in Infinite Space;
And yet, as my relative life does crawl and race
At its intemperate, and erratic pace,
As after dreams and schemes I blindly chase,
Stumbling and lurching, clumsy, and grace-
Less, striving towards a hidden apex, from a base
Perilously unsteady, frantically trying to brace
Myself against the storms of suchness that interlace
Reason's resolutions; yet, then, as I track and trace
Truth, and see how before despairing doubt I debase
Self, the greatest irony of all, raises its teasing face:
Tis that so heedlessly I struggle, against Love's embrace.



Gerrard Chaiken was born in 1946 in Zimbabwe, from where he moved to Cape Town, the Mother city of South Africa. Studied languages art and philosophy at the University of Cape Town, Honours in English Literature, began his Masters on Virginia Woolf, but later abandoned it. Worked as a lecturer and teacher of English Literature, English as the second language, qualified as a professional librarian for he believes in the Ancient Egyptian phrase that a library is "the healing place of the soul". Poetry for him, is a realm of the True, Good, and beautiful, and is a reflection of these, as well as aspirational and inspirational, and is a force of great potency for aspects of our education and evolution.

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