



There Was, There Will Be . . . Some- Day?

Hollys Heins

“THE cliffs just north of the point are like green velvet thrones in October.” What am I saying? Am I mad? I’ve never been here in my life. Why did I say that about the cliffs? My companion is saying something, but the wind whispers softly: don’t listen, you don’t need to . . . you know what he says . . . you’ve always known . . . he will say it again . . . sometime . . . somewhere . . . And the wind vanishes as we step behind a boulder on the path over and through the cliffs. My companion is breathing heavily but I feel no strain . . . no fast heart-beat . . . no gasping. We look down, down the miles of rocks and ledges behind. But did I come that way? It all seems familiar, but dreamlike.

We sit down to rest. My companion (the stranger who just happened to be starting up here this morning) speaks through the mist. But is there a mist? There can’t be. The sun is bright and it is past noon. There is no mist, yet I can hardly see him stretched on the rocks a few feet away. The ocean is thundering on the beach a few hundred yards away, yet there is no sound, just emptiness . . . void.

“We’d better hurry if we’re going to get back in time for lunch.” His words startle me into action. With a sense of relief I step into the wind. My thoughts cling to me with dying fingers. But the wind sweeps my mind free. There is no thought . . . only sensation.

The cool, clean wind sings of the ocean beyond. It tosses a gull high above us, tempting us on. Only a few yards more and we will turn the corner, and before us and far below will be the promontory. But how do I know? Why should it be? I've never been here before . . . but the promontory . . . the sharp curve of the narrow beach . . . every detail . . . is in my mind. Quickly I step forward to disprove this nightmare. It must be just imagination.

Near the end of the path two huge boulders frame the seascape. As I step between them I stop. Again the wind vanishes. I look only upward and outward at the sky. My thoughts tumble madly, incoherently as I see again the mind picture . . . clearly this time. The sky is the same . . . cold and gray and empty. Below will be the promontory . . . brown boulders, then black rocks, then yellow sand, and far beyond will be three greenish boulders. I dare look only at the sky. Beyond and down will be a scene from the past . . . not this life, maybe another . . . back in infinity . . . on through eternity . . . I have seen it before and I will see it again. But it just isn't natural. I'm only human. Somewhere must be a clew to prove this only fantasy. Carefully I search my mental scene. There!! It can't be right, for there is a little girl on the narrow beach, close to the cliffs. It is impossible. The whole thing is imagination . . . little girls don't go wandering alone under the cliffs. Like a bird set free my heart rises, my mind clears. I step closer to the edge of the cliff . . . into the wind again. The utter impossibility of one detail of my memory shatters the whole scene. But even actuality seems unreal, impossible. The gray sky blends vaguely with the darker water where there are no waves . . . just massive swells. Closer to shore the waves begin . . . rising and falling . . . pushing and dodging. And out there between the waves are three boulders. Gray-green!! They shouldn't be there, but the waves break against them, and they are real . . . just as I saw them before . . . a million years before.

There is the space of wild water, then the promontory . . . the yellow sand, the black rock, and the brown boulders. Then it is true. I have been here before. But my partner . . . he must have been with me . . . every word he says is familiar, every sentence, every expression . . . even my thoughts are the same. Hysterically my mind races over the scene. The little girl . . . where is she? The wind nudges me softly, insistently, as I lean

far over . . . Looking for the little girl. There is no little girl
 . . . only bleak emptiness.

The wind charges up the moss green cliffs, shouting at me . . .
 before . . . before life . . . before death . . . beforrrre . . .
 beforrrre

"We'll be late for lunch if we don't hurry." My partner's words
 come to me clearly now. How can he think such a thing at a
 time like this. Lunch! But I am not surprised. He would say
 just that. We turn our backs to the ocean, start down the path
 that cuts through the cliffs. Only a light breeze reaches us now
 . . . a cool, freeing breeze.

We leave behind us the ocean wind, rushing up the moss green
 cliffs . . . the velvet green thrones. We start back to town, to
 the lodge, to lunch. Someday I will come back here . . . to the
 cliffs north of the point . . . and there will be a little girl on
 the beach . . . someday . . .



Landscape

(Still Life With an Echo)

Carl Leiden

DAYBREAK. . . . The moon lies watching under my win-
 dow for intruders, in the sticky silence of the dawn that
 steals its fingers beneath my sill and gropes in the darkness for
 my body.

In the far corner it finds me, envelops me in cool quietness
 of ether . . . my mind, throbbing with dissonance, turns again
 to sleep, and the moon flees. The vanguard of morning comes in
 the pensive moments before dawn, and leaves a heavy imprint
 of sleep upon the grass, and nightmares in the corners of my eyes.

The milky laugh of the dawn . . . what tricks he plays on
 lovers, caught in love-sleep that blends so well with night . . .
 the half-whisper of a cricket in the room beyond, the sensual stir
 of the wind in October leaves, and I lie waking, wondering where
 the moon has gone. . . .