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15 Stories and One Question

Enigma

The month of May, with hair of yellow roses and ruddy cheeks- and December, with silver eyebrows and high goatskin boots, one evening put to sea with a small boat and a little red wine in a green bottle.

A little dizzy with the wine, they drifted off to where the dawn found them still dreaming, and on walking up decided to be off together for good- having grown tired of forever serving the year. And then, while shaking hands to seal their pact, a flock of swallows took flight from the beard of December and from the hair of May sprung bunches of ice.

-“Come back”, cried the year as he saw what they had done.

-“Find another”, they yelled together and were off for good.

Who knows where they went...or where they dropped their anchor, those two brave months? With May in the whitest fur and December in the sheerest silk.

Silver Sponges and Golden Sovereigns

Early evening and the sun sets on a blue boat- a boat full of sponges- its bow lit by the sun and its stern by the moon so that half the sponges were golden and the other half silver.

Mindless of the beauty of this image, the boatman only wailed- “if only they were all sovereigns!”- Then the sun got mad and the moon too.

And then the night turned everything into charcoal.

The Pine

A cloud approached
and softly sat upon
a pine.

-“Can I rest on your branch awhile?
I’ve been on the move all day”.

-“Oh, surely” said the pine,
gently pricking the cloud.

“No joy without pain”
whispered
the falling rain.

Resurrection

Oh, where did it go- the body of Jesus?

To the icons?

To the sky?

To the talisman

Or to the tomb?

“It turned into an ear of wheat

And you ate it,” said the earth

“On Easter Sunday”

Helen and the Way Back

Wishing to know the sea. Helen one day quit her mountain home- leaving behind her a trail of seeds to help her return.

But Oh Helen! What now...that the birds are eating all your seeds?

-“Never mind”, she said, “let them eat their fill and enjoy it”.

So Helen never made it back to her mountain home- and lived the rest of her days on the prairie.

Many, many years later, someone working in the fields discovered a clay bust of a young woman. On her shoulders were perched two pigeons.

Eve and the Apples

When Eve uttered the sound “I” for the first time it wandered around all restless and in need of company and went to sit in apple tree and turned to fruit.

Eve, full of surprise, uttered the word “love”, and again these four letters turned to fruit.

And then, while picking the Fruit, she met Adam, and offering him one of them said “I love...”

“You” said the man, biting into the apple.

And so came happiness into the world.

The Icon

George the old fisherman had a habit- each full moon he would go down to the shore and douse himself in the salty sea.

When, one day, George died,
he became an icon- all of silver.

The Black Sheep

Long ago, and deep in the early centuries, the Sheep were never shorn, and wandered over the tracks of the world in their woolen coats.

Then, when the big scissors were born, -eager to shear those fine wooly coats, one of the Sheep escaped- one who lives alone in his thick Fleece. They call him the black sheep. And it's for him that the handcuffs and the laws and the prisons were born.

So far, no-one has ever caught him. They say that he is hidden in every sheep.

The Diamond

In ancient times, when very few people wore jewels, there lived a very powerful queen- a woman of fabulous wealth, who alone could wear a diamond on her hand. All her fame and glory were due to this precious stone -and thanks to its power she conquered all the surrounding kingdoms in battle. Many powerful noblemen had tried to take the stone from her, but most of them lost their lives. It was said that the stone was empowered with magical Forces, and that those who coveted it often met with “accident”.

Time went by and the queen grew old. Knowing that her end was near she ordered that the diamond be buried beside her-And so it came to pass.

Centuries rolled by and the queen and all her Empires were forgotten until, one evening, a farmer digging in his field chanced upon her grave. As his hoe struck upon the precious stone it shattered-sending tiny shards scattering all around.

“But these are the stars of the underworld that flash!” said the farmer, bowing to the earth in awe.

The Plant and the Comet

“ At last!-off to the sky”
said the husk of an autumn harvest
burning in a field of smoke.

At that same moment, a comet
was on its way from far in the heavens
and dreaming of being buried in the
soil of the earth.

The Plant

A tiny plant was still deep in the ground and surrounded by objects of more or less its own small size- gravel stones, ants and drops of dew.

Imagining that, sizewise at least, once above the ground all things would remain the same, the plant said to itself-“and I will be the best!” and in time was strong enough and ready to break through.

And then one morning, pushing out the soil all around , it burst from the earth and was out into the light. But..! what were all these sights that it saw?

Towering above it was the church wall, and above that the Cypress pine and then higher still, the heavens, with hundreds of hidden stars just peeping from the early evening sky.

The Shutter

For years the shutters had been closed in the old house. although made of the very same planks of wood, the two sides of the shutters saw things very differently,

The inner side of the shutter lived in a world of darkness and minute detail patiently discovered through silence- quite inured to its immobility and kept company by the dark mass of the furniture and by the dust.

The outer side of the shutter was altogether different -more weatherbeaten and ravaged and yet somehow more alive. Always watching the changing seasons, it was very happy with all that the days and nights brought to it. The movements of the world would often dazzle it and it would say to its inner side,

“What is your life without miracles?”

“And to you I say the same!” was the invariable answer.

And thus had been the conversation between them for years now.

Then, one morning someone came and opened the shutter and everything was suddenly changed.

The light that entered the house flooded the place with its own particular magic- which made the fleeing darkness soundless.

Sword of Stars

Suddenly one morning the old sword began to move—from the table to the window-sill—from where it took off to the skies.

It had finally escaped from the hands of the Villains- or so it thought.

“Nary a crime did I choose myself- but who would believe me”, said the hilt.

Time passed and the sword continued in its climb and grew bigger and bigger- became enormous with the blood of the innocent swelling and pressing its steel.

“Oh deliver me from the enemy imprisoned in this body”, cried the sword to one of the planets it was passing. “Let me spread these tragedies over your soil and find relief”.

But none of the planets would accept or take this disastrous burden onto itself.

And so the sword was forced to keep this blood within itself forever. And the blood taught it the ancient movement of the heavens- with the universe and its orbits its only companions.

The Earth in Spring

Winter came again to the woods and slowly took the Soul from the trees.

It put this spirit of the forest into the hearts of the carpenters and woodcarvers so their hands would be humble and could work and carve the steeples and ornaments of the temple. For the god wished to have a screen built between himself and his followers, and to remain unseen, as he was almost always absent, and elsewhere, and somewhere near to nature, and trying to understand, how on earth, in her holy silence, the spring would be born again to conquer his planet.

The Cockerel

In a far-off and endless sea, so vast that its voyagers often forget the shore, there lived a giant cockerel.

A marine cockerel- who walked on the waves and
Flew through the depths of the sea.

His name was Theocliminos. And each morning
He would crow, and then...

-Princesses around the world in their taffeta
Skirts and lace bodices would be off to their bus-stops
and their jobs.

-And princes would cover their heads with hats of
clear plastic and venture off on their motorbikes.

-And kings everywhere would stare up from their
basements at the skyscrapers that approached the
treasures of the dawn with a simple touch.

The local sea folk were jealous of the cockerel
and coveted his powers and often set nets to catch
him. But Theocliminos would just rear himself up
with his spread wings taking on whatever colours
the nets would happen to be.

Green or sometimes red; at times he would
be lost in orange, leaving the fishermen far behind him.

Once, one of the boatmen determined
finally to catch him. "I will make him sleep", he
thought, "I will give him special seeds to make him drowsy".

But Theocliminos lived only on seaweed-
And so feigning every interest in this new food,
he slowly approached the big boat. He came very
very close. Whence the fool captain just lost his
mind- as in the place of the cockerel he saw a
royal display of fireworks that had been shot up
from the townships on the ocean floor and star-burst
among the mysterious gaps in the sea foam.

No, no...they were not royal fireworks
but the mermaid shepherd guiding her sheep in
the forests of the sea foam.

No, no... it was not the mermaid shepherd
but a horse made all of roses who in a single
movement shed all his petals on hearing a
neighing from the shore.

No, no...it was not...
It was the carnival of the high seas, and the
boatman just didn't know it.

The Question

I am only the story-teller...

but how did they come about...

May and December

the sponges the pine tree

the body of Christ and Helen

Eve the apples

George the fisherman

the black sheep the diamond

the husk the comet

the plant the light the dark

the blood the plant earth

the cockerel

and all of us?

Well then?