

Sleeping Beauty (more like Ugo Betti than Walt Disney)

In the forest a prince weeps
because his beauty will not awake.
He found her, it was a long search,
naked in a bed of dark violets and sorrel.
Forest canopy whispers overhead
lulling her deeper into dreams
of all the admirers who will come for her.

Her ladies, two by two, demurely
bring her candies earrings games,
they tug at her feet but she feels only the passion
of lovers born from the night sky. Her chest and belly
dance as a dream hero makes her limbs tremble.

Nothing else catches her attention, not chocolates
candies or card tricks. Voices unite in a chorus,
caroling: "Why do you sleep, lazy bones?"
Their music cannot undo the spell of trees in the wind.
Nor can the chatter of gawking tourists compete
with the impassioned tongue of a secret lover.

In the next tableau, chiming bells announce
a King come to call on her, his Queen as well;
a bishop prays over her with long Latin cadences,
the sun bathes her in explosions of light and heat.
A mass is sung, curious crowds grow larger,
eager to see a princess overpowered by love
so pure, her world and its fancies faded into shadow,
into graffiti scribbled hastily on a wall once upon a time.

But suns set, fog fills the scene,

along with arabesques of nightingale song,
a hind and her fauns wander across the stage,
and rising from the orchestra pit, the moon,
whose silvery light isolates solitary lovers . . .

She who sleeps, he who despairs,
whispering, whispering the forest black.