

Shekhinah

Your crooked world cannot contain me;
Impossible incubus,
Wild child, unschooled,
Fierce and tall,

Like the dawn horse,
I leap free
Of domesticity.

Amidst your swishing finery
I swirl and twirl
In nakedness beneath
My makeshift sheet, then

Let my gown drop to the ground,
Unfurl the hyena - leaking, laughing,
Loose at the debutante's ball.

Crossing borders, I find my consort -
My bird of prey, my co-adept,
Unholy communion of feathers and fur -
But all too soon our fortune turns,

My muse is vanquished, I tumble down,
Down into the charnel house,
Down below.

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I move south with the sun,
Make my home with cats and crones,
Carousing cups of mirth around my cauldron,
I feast on female flesh;

Beware, beware,
I'll steal your hair
And serve it on toast, or in a roast.

In landscapes labyrinthine,
Filled with familiars, a parallel world,
Perches the mystic alchemical egg,
My sacred source;

High priestess with the flaming mane,
Conjurer of the canvas – canny and sage -
I confer my life, complete.

Shekbinah is an appreciative response to the life and work of Leonora Carrington.

Leonora Carrington (1917 - 2011) was a prolific surrealist artist who painted and wrote. She refused the privileged life she was born into, rebelled against the establishment and, at the age of 19, joined the emerging surrealism movement in Paris. When her partner of the time, Max Ernst, was arrested by the Nazis in 1939, she experienced a harrowing depression and was subjected to electric shock treatment.

She moved in 1942 to Mexico where she lived with her cats until her death at the age of 94. She was deeply interested in myth, kabbala, tarot, alchemy and esoteric symbolism. She saw animals as equals and often represented herself as a horse. She was a feminist and included Lee Miller, Leonor Fini and Remedios Varo amongst her friends.

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