

ECHO HOMO PROMETEUS

by Martin Burke

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ECHO HOMO PROMETEUS

Martin Burke

*Think of the dark.
Think of the deep.
Select the worst experience from that
then multiply it by the imagination.
Then multiply it again
and add a defining zero.
Now you begin to approach his desolation.*

Hear me!
Hear me!

Gods or birds or anyone who will listen

*Who can alleviate the desolations
when only the damned can hear them
and they do not respond*

But who in this desolation,
this forgotten hellhole can hear me?

*echoes and dark
echoes and dark
a hollowness
an emptiness
the place of no reply*

Bats and scavenging birds

*Birds, bats, and slithering things
the creatures of night and negation*

There is no other hell and this is it

*There never was
There never will be*

No other

*There can be no other
There never was
There never will be*

Only the silence

Only the wind

*When the wind blows
silence follows*

I am the god of fire condemned to ice

When an age begins in coldness what will be its end?

Ice
Wind
Scavenging birds

*See them
The dark creatures of the mind
In all their terrible self*

Thief they mock me my godhead they mock

When the gods are mocked then only destruction can follow

I that was fire am now carrion-stuff

*Fire into fire
Ash and charred bones*

Fodder for the pleasure of the gods

*The pleasure of the gods
All men are subject to the pleasure of the gods*

A divine amusement
My pain their pleasure

*Pain of fire
Pain of pleasure*

I am a mockery unto myself

He is mocked with indifference

Father! You have disowned me!

*Disowned
Disowned
All will be disowned*

Who will plead for me in the hidden recesses of heaven?

Who indeed?

None that I know of
None that I know

*His plea the rising plea of history
-you mean he is human in this?*

-who is not?

I the once beautiful
I the once proud

*Beautiful pride
Beautiful pride
Beautiful pride his condemnation*

I a mockery unto myself

*-his sad condition?
-there can be no other*

Ice and vicious birds

*-it is not yet December
-that does not matter
winter has come upon the world*

Cloud-dust and bitter rain

*True to its own necessity
Winter negates the Spring*

There is no other hell and this is it

*There never was
There never will be*

Night –is it night?

*-questions out of history
-what else can be asked?*

Once
long ago
there were pleasing nights
I dreamt of the rapture

Beautiful dream that says I exist

Who dreams such things now?
Who dreams in this darkness?
Who dreams?

*-more questions out of history?
-out of what other place can they be asked?
-perhaps there are states...?
-there always have been - they always will be
yet the question remains the same*

Only the dark pit of my mind into which I sink

It is a desolate place

Hear me ye rocks and birds –I repent nothing!

His crime

I a god-thief among the gods
I am the truth of every accusation

This is the accusation

I gave brightness but am now in darkness

This is the darkness for which there is no consolation

Fire from the forge of heaven to the forge of earth

*The eternal disputes of heaven
Becoming the disputes of earth*

And would do so again!
Do you hear me ye watchful gods!
I would do so again and again and again and again!

*-the watchful gods?
-the gods are always watchful*

Hear me!
Hear me!

*-I listen
-I listen*

What I have to say must be said and I am the one to say it
As sure as this crow who rips at my guts I will say what I have to say

*-even in pain...?
-yes, even in pain*

How they laugh at my condition
They place a crown of thorns on my head
They place a broken sceptre in my hands

*Time has become his enemy
Time is the enemy of every deity*

I the mocked
I the travesty of what I once was
God who is no longer a god but god-man human and helpless

*-he remembers much
-he remembers everything*

Sing sweetly to me if you can sing and be silent if you can't

*-what will we sing?
-we will sing silence*

I can't be silent but neither can I sing

*-not even the silence?
-no, not even the silence*

Darkness
Ice
I am in the desolations
I am the desolation I inhabit

*- was he always like this?
- yes, but now he is even more so
- you mean he is fully entering into his condition?
- he is entering into himself*

Into myself?
Who else should I be?
Who else can I be?

*Lost in the many folds of the self
He has become the self he always feared to be*

I know who I am
I know what I am
I am who I am who I am

*-he knows himself
-that is his pain*

Who are you?

-don't answer, don't answer!

Do you know what I know?

-no one can know what a god knows

Are you as sure of yourself as I am of myself?

-don't answer, don't answer!

Answer
Don't answer
Both answers are the same

-now he is entering the true pit of himself

Who, if I cried, would hear me from the order of angels?

A question only a poet would ask

Where in the waste is the wisdom?

-more questions, but what will the poets reply?

Wisdom?

Who knows what wisdom is?

I no longer know

The terror of unknowing breaks loose upon the land

I no longer know what I once knew yet I have forgotten nothing

*Memory or forgetfulness-
Which is the greater pain?*

See me for what I am

See me for what I have become

Become

Become

-I see, I see

Become the mockery that you now see but what do you see?

Do you see a man stripped of his godhead

Or do you see a mockery of all that is divine?

-what I see I do not want to name

I am what I am

He is what he is

Nothing will change that

*Nothing will change.
Nothing will change*

Am and will be and was

Nothing can change that

Nothing will be what it not already is

Changeless in the changing face of time

*Changing time
Relentless time
Patient time*

Hear me!

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But who hears me?

Who listens to the wind?

Who comes to this desolate place?

*What can be spoken of the desolations?
Only the desolations can be spoken of in a time of desolation*

Yet once

A long time ago or is it a short time ago I was beloved by the gods

*-he remembers
-he has not forgotten*

Yes

Beloved and no plaything of their passions

Stillness before the storms of heaven

Who saw me saw brightness

Saw fire in its wildest glow

I stole the fire

I stole the fire and would do so again

*-how can such pride ever seek forgiveness?
-where is the forgiveness the equal of such pride?*

Yes

I repent nothing!

I brought the fire

I brought the flame

I brought the leaping spark!

*Enduring flame
Enduring crime*

If I die in flame will I be reborn in flame as some phoenix to myself?

The self is always phoenix to itself

I my own death

I my own life

I the many in-betweens

-now he knows a human grief

How will I know if it is night in this darkness

For such darkness there is no consolation

Long night
Endless night of ice, of wind

The fire of the mind is torrid in such winds

Repentance
Sentence
Past crime
Present pain

*-the crime will endure in the penalty he must pay
-is there no forgiveness?
-hush, do not ask what should not be asked*

Dream
I dream
Even my dreams torment me
Even my dreams

The torrid dreams of hope

I have become outlandish even to myself

No other can console him

Nothing but the ice-flames in my veins

-ah yes, the human condition

I would sing but I can only wail
Who wails with the outcast of the world?
Who will wail for me in my condition?

*-if only
-yes, if only*

Nothing

*Silence and silence
It is midnight or near it*

No one

Yet the island is full of comfortless noises

I am alone and will remain so
Nothing but pain, bitterness, ice and fire

This must be endured

Wailing instead of singing
Muttering where there should be verse
My own victim
The fire I stole now burning me
In the forge of hell my soul is being reshaped

*-he fears the logic of hell
-hell has its reasons and these cannot be questioned
-questioned or answered?
-there can be no answers when no questions are allowed*

So who if I cried would hear me from the order of angels?

-no one and no one

Nothing and no one

-he is alone

I am alone

-even the birds will despise him

Even the birds who eat my eyes despise me

-hapless and human, who would not have pity?

No terror that I have not known
No pain that I have not known
Who now believes that I am a god?

*-I believe, I believe
-what do you believe?
-I believe his pain*

Am I?
Was I?
Will I be again?

The endless question asked of the night

Hear me!
Hear me!

*-I listen
-I listen
-but he does not hear that which we listen to*

The darkness of the world is the darkness of my mind

*Chaos and void
Chaos and void*

I am abandoned
There is no father who will sooth my sores with sweet ointments and words

*-I have no such words
-I have no such ointments*

At the stroke of noon all things will die!
Why did I say that?
What foreign voice lodges in my mouth?

*This is the kingdom without a king
Lear's nightmare*

I have become everything I ever wanted to avoid
I am my own horror

Silence in the sepulchre cities of the world

The nightmare I once feared

The king crawls to his destruction

Darkness, darkness, the once glittering words are dark in my mouth

*Dark in the mouth
Dark in the mouth
All his words are dark in the mouth*

Shadows creep among shadows

Who reads the language of night?

This is nothing but my mind

Always was, always will be

I carry these shadows within me
Always have
Always will

The doors of reason are bolted shut

Darkness and shadows and creeping things
I am a mockery of what I once was

The door will not be opened

If I begged for water I would be given vinegar

No sweet waters for the soul

I am only what I am but I am no less than that
The once-god
The thief-god

Here are my gifts

The bringer of flame
The giver of fire

*Fire burning in your mind
Fire burning in your soul*

Was and have no regrets

Not even in the ice of hell

Hear me ye jealous gods!
I repent nothing!
Do you hear?
Nothing!
Even while the ice freezes my soul I will not repent!

*Coldness has invaded the world
Coldness claims its prize and its penalty*

Even the silence mocks me
Even the silence

When it claims you as its victim, its prize

The birds eat my eyes
The horrors eat my soul

This is the winter of the world

Will those who take comfort from flame bring comfort to the flame-bringer?

*-he asks an ancient question
-yes, but what will be the reply?*

What gratitude can a thief expect from the world?

*None is expected
None will be given*

Only hell will reward me

*Embrace it
Embrace it*

The life that I once led mocks the life that I now lead

The mockery of three black-dressed women

I remember
I remember

*Nothing forgotten
Nothing forgotten
All things remembered in pain*

All the gifts and prerogative were mine

*No more
No more*

I was sky-born and royal, still am, but the sky is no longer my home

The sky has turned to ash

Now I am chained to the muck of this sordid world
Yet it is heaven which must tremble at my condition

There will be trembling when a god dies

Yes, tremble and shudder for when a god weeps all creation weeps with him

Darkness invade the bright places of the world

If I weep so will they
If I weep so will you

The weeping begins

Weep with me and perhaps you will save yourselves

As if there was no redemption

When you weep for a god you weep for the lost part of yourself

The weeping begins

Lost part

Part that I am in this darkness

Found again in darkness

-this is a terrible knowledge

Darkness of some endless night
Or some dawn that knows only darkness?

*This is the dawn
This is the dawn*

Dark edge of the world

Here on the borderline

Dark edge of my mind in this blackness

*Borderline
Borderline
All things move on the borderline*

Dark edge of a disowned god

What can be reclaimed from the dark?

So
Are you weeping?

-I weep, I weep

If not you soon will be forerunner that I am of your condition
Yet I am nothing if I am not myself
What I am is not what I have been

*Change, change again
This is the time of changing*

Have been
Has been
Once was but not now
Godless in my godhood
Now are you weeping?

-I weep, I weep

Are the desolations nearing and nearing?

-I fear the nearing

Do you fear the words I use?

*The meanings of night
The meanings of darkness*

You fear

Fear

Fire nears

Fear of the raging of the flame

Nothing but the desolations in your soul

Into what landscape do we now go?

Do not deny to me what you deny to yourselves

*In the landscape of illusion
Who can speak with truthfulness?*

I know what you deny
I know what you embrace

*Embrace the denials
Deny the embrace*

Embrace, embrace the desolations

-I fear the precedent of his mind

Give them your face and name
You have no choice

-I do not want a choice

Slithering things move near me

*Snakes of the mind
Snakes entwined in the heart*

They are the friends of the desolations

The desolations bring their emptiness

The wanton flame begets these wanton beasts
The beasts circle the relentless flame
The beasts circle my flesh

-I am fodder for their feeding

Into what darkness will I fall from this darkness now that I have fallen?

*Fall
Fall again*

Down and down
Down deeper then deeper again
The endless fall

Endless and unending

Adam before Adam was
I also exiled from the garden of god
No woman for consolation
While memory tortures me with its embrace

Heart's blood dripping slowly into the night

Even so
Even so

It is even so

No repentance
None
No pleading words to fall on deaf ears

There will be no words

None
No petitions to the heaven I once occupied
None

There will be no words

Deep, deep
Deeper, deeper

It is a long falling

Then deeper again
Always downwards
Fire and ice

The allies armed against me

Cold burning flames of the hell that awaits
Hell's emptiness
Its abundance of fire

-I fear the logic of these contradictions

Down and down then deeper down
No end to this falling

*Falling
Falling*

No end to all falling yet where I go others will follow forerunner that I am

*-into what dark?
-do not ask, do not ask*

The psalms I utter are those of the damned

*Psalms of the damned
Psalms of the damned
What can be sung but psalms of the damned?*

I sing no other song
I do not sing but I wail
The wailing of the lost is the choir of night

The beasts of unreason prowl outside their compounds

In the cup of what memory will I be remembered?

What can be remembered in the dark?

Night

It is night or something like it

-how will we know the difference?

Double darkness of blackness and blackness

No guidance

Silence the ally of darkness

Alone

Alone

Abide

Abide

All things abide in their aloneness

-I abide

-I abide

One beautiful moment

-oh let there be such moments

All my life leading to that moment

Beautiful flame

Desire and revelation

A moment in which there was clarity

-let that moment be mine

-let that moment be mine also

I stole what was mine to steal

Thief of hearts

Thief of hearts

I the thief

I the giver

I the bringer of hope

-bring us that hope

But now my past mocks me

Mutterings and mumblings when once I spoke the poetry of the gods

The jealous gods

The unforgiving gods

Those who were my brothers now exposed as enemies

-my brother, my brother

-you are my brother in pain

I in my aloneness

I the target
One beautiful moment and then this living death in which I must abide
Abide
Abide
All things abide in their aloneness

-I abide
-I abide

Will only the damned hear me?

-I hear
-I hear

Will there be no redemption of fire from fire?
One beautiful moment and then the desolation

Terror before beauty
Terror after beauty

Fire that burns the mind burns the flesh

Desire, desire, burning and burning

No comfort

Who will plead my innocence when I delight in my guilty crime?

Believe in the innocence of his guilt

Delight in fire?
Yes, I delight in fire and fire

- delight in the flame
- the flame delights me

No messenger will come

No

None

No one and no one

I in my aloneness

-alone, alone
-all things abide in their aloneness

A god who is less than the god I once was

Falling by degree
Always falling

Vinegar instead of water is what they will give me

And the wine of redemption?

This crown of thorns

Enduring pain that is its blessing

The gods are at play in the fields of men
The fields of men are charred ash
Only the burning, burning, burning

-desire, desire, I burn, I burn

Of the mind
Of the soul
Of the sacred flesh

*The bitterness
The sweetness
The commingling*

Everything was given me in one beautiful moment

Flame embracing flame

I saw fire
I saw history
I united the two into one

*The bitterness
The sweetness
The commingling*

That which you are you owe to me but I do not ask for your allegiance

-speak as you would have us speak

Embrace the flame
Embrace the flame

Embrace, embrace

Let all expire in flame

*Let all expire
Let all expire*

To be less than what I was is now my fate

This flame

This burning

The burning flame in which all expires

This charred ash of sacred flesh

*Nothing more holy
Nothing more sacred*

Only out of damnation can salvation come

*Out of the pit a prayer
A broken prayer of hope*

Saviour
Saviour
Save me!

-to who does he sing?

Mine is the fire
Mine is the fire
Mine is the fire

-he sings to the weeping flame

One enduring moment
And then?

And then?

Oh then the clarity of fire

Into your hands

Your hands and no others

Into your hands the gift of fire
Into your hands

Into your hands, your hands, your hands

Oh my saving One

Speak the name

Who now burns the perfumed smoke that once was so pleasing to me?

*Smoke of prayer
Smoke of destruction*

I have entered history who once resided outside it

Enter the flame of time

I have entered the dark flame of time
I am cast out of heaven and all its glory

And after this our exile....

Blood and thorns mock me with their crown upon my head

*I the mocked
I the once was*

What might I have been if I were not who I am?

The past cannot be altered

I the giver

Giving and giving

I the thief

Thief of hearts in a time of fire

I burning in fire

The burning fire of the sacred flame

History will forgive me

-forgive him, forgive him

History will forget me

-do not forget, do not forget

Yet I will outlast all forgiveness and forgetfulness

*Abide
Abide
Let all abide all be it in flame*

Your fate and your faith

Joy and death commingling

Your faith is your fate

No joy without death

I in the deep places of your mind

*-he is in my mind
-he is in every mind*

I burrow in

Let there be a redemption

An undefiled thought

Even in the burning

A memory stirring other memories of what will yet happen

I the future in all its terrible condition

What you are we will be

The bells of hell are ringing – who then will sing?

*-we hear the ringing
-we hear no singing*

I saw a face that contained no mercy
I saw a future waiting to happen

The witches stir the cauldron

Thief that I am I would steal all again

That which you are you are

Fire for the limbs and mind

*-I burn in fire
-I burn in ice*

Cleansing flame

The sweetness

Saving flame

The burning

Bestowing flame

For this the yearning

Enduring flame

*Only in flame
Only in flame*

Yet in what form or name will I endure?

-will there be an enduring?

I in fire

-only in fire

I in the pain of fire and ice

All opposites conspire

This is hell and there is no other

-then from where the songs of salvation?

Night- is it night?

Darkness answers darkness with darkness

I cannot say in this darkness

-if he will not speak then who will speak?

Darkness of noon
Darkness of midnight or near it
Darkness

Terror but not yet the beauty

What are the anthems that might be sung in this moment?

Sing? Who will sing?

I do not sing but that I wail

He has caused this wailing of the world

Wailing in darkness but not in repentance
I do not, will not, do not, never

Will not

Am what I am and no more than that but also not less than that

Though all conspires against him

Then hear me ye gods and birds

Hear him

See me unrepentant

*Nothing forgotten
Nothing denied*

Silence and silence –
Is that the answer of gods and birds?

-I would answer him but I have no words

If so let it be so
Let there be no silence which does not contain this silence

All words contained in the cauldron of silence

I have entered history

Now he is human to the last degree

The future carries my face even though I will be forgotten

*Nothing forgotten
Nothing denied*

Yet under the darkness of time I will be the guiding hand

Do not forget me

*Nothing forgotten
Nothing denied*

Do not forget
Do not

-I do not

Do

and I will

Sing hail to the god of fire

Let the goodly fire burn

I am that god and will so remain

*Abide abiding one
-we will abide
-we will abide*

Even as the slithering things draw near
To eat the flame of my heart