

VI

Anpu Embalms Osiris

Anpu

Khenty-Amentiu,
He Who Protects The Dead From 'Top His Sacred Mountain,
Black Jackal Of The Sacred Land,
Independent One Of The West,
He Of The City Of The Dogs,
Embalmer Presiding O'er The Divine Booth,
Grave Watcher,
Guardian Of The Duat-Scales,
Leash-Handler Of The Devouress Of The Dead,
Guide To The Newly Dead,
Jackal Ruler Of The Nine Bows,
Anpu,
his canine head 'pon human form,
stands tall beside the body of Osiris.

His patrol about the desert's edge –
four-pawed 'n coarse-furred
in his crepuscular policing
of the valley where the tombs make
cities of the mummified –
suspended whilst the Lord Of Silence,
He Who Sees The Throne,
Khenty-Amentiu,
The One Of Might,
Seat Of The Eye,
Osiris,
lies awaiting embalmment.

Dark shadowshade dominates,
dancing deep, infinite shapes
in three-dimensionality
caressed by wistfully wisping
flickerflame fluxflitting
from the torchfires
placed high 'n low 'n mid
against the walls;
beside the table;
'pon a pillar.

The life that's living –
furiously; fast –
in burning blasts of
coalescence chasing th'entropy
that is tsunamic time
creates the heat 'n light
that flows about
the jackal-headed man
who stands beside the body of Osiris.

Wa-ooss-yahrr...

Anpu, in gentlesoft lament,
sighs sonorous; mellifluous.
The name of god,
god-spoken,
sails the air.

Shorn of any hair by a razor
built of a bronze, five-sided blade
held by a curving, wooden handle
laced with silver wrapping 'round,
the taut, severely-sinewed
body bearing earth-hued skin
is bared but for a pleated,
gold-lined kilt;
its broad feet in leather sandals.
Tight the heel-cord tendons tense
behind each lower leg
as down he squats
to place sharp elbows
'n long forearms
on the slab that stretches out
in grandly-gilt, jewel-decorated
framework-sides that sit
about the divine body of Osiris.

Disappearing
from his shoulder blades
'n collar-bone
up into thick, night-black fur,
his neck bends;
stretches.

With his long 'n canid snout
tucking toward his chest,
he moves his head forward,
pushing – mournsome; gentlesoft –
into/against the immortal,
lifeless upper-arm
that lies prone in peacesome

inanimativity.

Held –

for an age; but for a moment –
is the head beneath its ears,
erect yet standing down
from sentry duty.

Anpu –

he sighs, inaudible.

He stands.

He turns.

He steps.

He stops.

He squats.

He reaches.

He grasps.

He takes.

He places.

He rummages.

He finds.

He gathers.

He collects.

He takes.

He stands.

He turns.

He steps.

He stops.

He places.

He readies.

On a tall 'n shaped 'n finished
woodworktop his tools are set.

Before him –

peacesome; prone –

the naked corpse:

Lord Of Silence silent,

still;

The Mighty One unmighty.

No feather-white,

bright Atef crown

(th'Hedjet 'tween ostrich feathers);

no crook nor flail

to shepherd the flock of Khemet.

The Soul Of The Lord

Of The Pillar Of Continuity,

the ram of sacred life

herding the tribes along Iteru's

valleys wide –

this force of character

awaits limboic for its house
t'be brought to resurrection
by The Western One;
t'become The Western One!
He shall continue to be perfect
now that his body is re-pieced together,
bound without crude stitching
or crude scars to show the joins!
Instead,
a purely whole form:
broad at th'shoulder;
narrow waist;
skin of a lush, deep green
hinting at black
just like a bed of floodplain soil
restless with nutrients nascently
singing of potential growth,
re-growth, re-growth again,
awaiting th'cycling sun
that inundates the inundated land
with Aten-fire ankh-rays
to bring about
the hymn of birth from death!

He Who Is Permanently Benign;
He Who Is Permanently Youthful –
thus Osiris will be
under the hand of Anpu!

Below the hairless pubic-mound
of this God Of Sprouting Grain
only his testicles remain,
his only piece unfound his penis
that his sister, queen, 'n consort
Isis, with her magic, manifested
temporarily to bring his semen into her.

Here, beyond time
where Time o'erlooks chronology
(instead She writes Her myth-events
into the already unfolding
human story),
to the west of th'river,
ascendent over Nekhen,
Abdju stages this first mummification
that the jackal 'n the ibis did devise.
She Who Knows The Secret Name Of Ra,
hunted by chaos,
brought them together to insist

they use their joint intelligence
t'create, laden with ritual,
a practice that would imitate
how Geb's hot, dehydrating sand
takes th'moisture out of viscera
'n th'water 'neath the skin
to leave a likeness left
b'yond passing the horizon.

He Whose Wife Is Wisdom-Deified
(Seshat – Goddess Of Writing!),
He Who Bears The Moon,
Scribe Of The Company Of Gods,
The One Who Counsels Ra With Ma'at Stood
Upon The Solar Vessel,
Author Of Ev'ry Work On Ev'ry Branch Of Any Knowledge,
Thoth,
Who Is One,
Who Was Primevally Self-Uttered,
used his magician's knowledge
that encompasses the whole heavenly vault
to give to Isis
the precise, undying words
to aid her spellcraft in conceiving Horus;
in th'imminent attempt at resurrection.

Over his dark head,
draping down
to settle on his shoulders broad,
Anpu pulls down a leopard's hide,
its rosettes rife with splendour.

Removing
from his forearms
impurity,
he cleanses,
retracing, in his mind's eye,
how Thoth 'n he outlined
the sapien anatomy –
the abdominal cavity;
the heart-protecting chest.
Anointing Lord Osiris
with unearthly oils far-fragrant,
he speaks
unto the silence of the mournsome air,
suffusing the room with th'scents released:

Khenty-Amentiu...

You shall be now the Foremost Of Westerners.

No pre-embalming needed
for this Lord Of Black; Of Green!
His decomposing-recomposing self
perpetual!
The organs
of the human form
imitated in him –
of these Anpu's concerned.

Taking up,
in this Place Of Most Beautiful Purification,
a rod of nearly nine inches
made of a strong 'n grassy stem,
he places this on linen cloth
beside the neck.
Now, next, he takes
a short 'n slight 'n solid
rod of metal –
placing th'point
(narrowed, though blunt)
just where the nose becomes the eye-socket,
he hits
with controlled force
the end
with his presented palm
to pierce the ethmoid's spongy construction.
Scraping 'way its debris,
he swaps to th'rod organic.
Directing it beside the eyeball
'n the roof of th'nose,
the jackal surgeon pushes on
into the tissue of the brain.
Through the matter grey 'n white;
through the foldly, layered lobes –
he starts to turn the stem
to whisk the neuron-silent mass about.
He retrieves the instrument.
He pulls it efficiently, with care,
collecting crude 'n scrambled gloop
upon it
as it withdraws out.
Between the eyeball 'n the nose,
this liquified leakage spills out,
trailing 'cross the cheek of Lord Osiris.

From a bowl of fired-clay
he takes a mixture with his fingers.
This viscous drug-mix
moves amongst the brain
as Anpu pours,
with deft accuracy,
it from his fingers
into the small hole
to work its chemicalic magic
within the skull.

Embalmer,
Grave-Watcher –
he softly lifts his god
into a halfway-upright pose
'n pushes on th'back of his head
to pour the brain out of the nostrils
into a basin stood table-beside.

Washwiped clean
'n laid back down,
The One Of Might, skull filled
with fragrant-resin funnelled in,
waits – peaceful; passive – for the next stage
of th'ritual.

Anpu takes into his grip a blade
of hand-worked Ethiopian stone
made sharp as the silent freeze
of the dead of night,
when Ra shall be in this one's hall!
He slices through the lumbar flank;
he puts aside his stone.
A plasmic inundation breaks
in deep crimson; in lightsome red!
Soaked linen piled aside.
Heru-Ur, The Elder Horus,
sends his sons
with th'protection of a goddess each
by way of amulets inscribed,
worn bared upon their chests.

The baboon Hapy
seats himself to the north,
behind the god's still head,
the magic of great Nephthys
bristling 'bout him.

Duam-Utef the jackal
sits at the east,
by the god's left arm,
the magic of great Neith
bristling about him.

The falcon Qebah-Senuet
sits west,
by the god's right arm,
the magic of great Serket
bristling 'bout him.

Imsety the human
stands south,
by the god's still feet,
the magic of great Isis
bristling about him.

The Black Jackal Of The Sacred Land
takes out the sodden stomach.
Passing it to Duam-Utef,
he bows respectfully.

The Guide To The Newly Dead
removes the mass that is the slimy liver.
Passing it to Imsety,
he bows respectfully.

He Of The City Of The Dogs
bundles up the length of the intestines.
Passing them to Qebah-Senuet,
he bows respectfully.

The Guardian Of The Duat-Scales
pulls through the pair of lungs.
Passing these to Hapy,
he bows respectfully.

The Four Sons Of Heru-Ur
bathe then these organs in white salt,
b'coming, at last,
four lidded-jars,
painted with glorious spell-language.

Seat Of The Soul;
Cradle Of The Mind –
the heart of Osiris stays, rib-bound,
as Anpu clears all else within.

The aroma
of plants 'n spices
now inserted
fills the air,
suffusing,
from the cavity now sealed,
the prepared corpse.

Clenched in his left fistgrip,
he brings natron –
up; forward –
that he then lets fall,
slowly,
onto the deflated abdomen.
All in a moment:
forty days of dehydration pass!
A wash of wine;
oils applied;
covered with golden resin –
the body of Osiris,
head to foot,
lies now ready for wrapping.

Mooney-Crowned,
the Scribe appears –
ibis-headed human
wearing glittering pectoral jewels;
bicep- 'n wrist-bands matching.
His pleated kilt
on fat-lined hips
(Rolling prosperity!);
his feet bare to the cold, dim ground;
his both hands holding th'sacred –
one the incense; one the scroll.

Into a wide-mouthed bowl
brimming with tallow-sticky resin
giving out its aroma of cypress, beeswax, 'n juniper,
Anpu submerges th'first
strip of fine linen;
dripping now,
he brings it to e'er-bind
the body of Osiris.

Layers laid as the spells are spoken.
Incense burns as amulets are placed
amongst the wrappings.
A scarab of th'most precious stone,
inscribed upon its base
with a text unknowable,
sits above the pure 'n beat-less heart.
Gold-leaf laced through th'fingers; toes.
Gemstones 'pon the limbs.
All hidden now:
the wrapping is complete.

Either side of the mummified,
they stand – Anpu; Thoth.
They each bring up an arm of his,
whose head only remains unwrapped,
to bring them to cross over
where the scarab seals the heart.
Into these crossing hands:
the crook; the flail.
Unto his head,
the ibis now secures the crown.

The jackal kneels,
hands in solemn clasp upon Osiris,
as Thoth touches two fingers
to the great god's mouth.

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