

A MYSTERY OF REBIRTH

We are in the presence of a tripartite mystery: the eternal activity of the artist's soul. It is heralded for us by a secretive annunciation, as otherworldly bees murmur of a reality beyond rational comprehension. How well the poet Rilke understood the kinship of the bee and the artist's psyche. And he clarifies for us the source of the creative task:

We are continually overflowing toward those who preceded us, toward our origin, and toward those who seemingly come after us... We are the bees of the invisible.

Bees instinctively know the source of life, and point to its sweet and transformative nature, as we make our way on our destined path. And what is that inevitable path? For the artist especially, but for all of us, we must descend, as it is the law of Life that we must seek out our ancestral source, in order to be reborn into the imperishable form of Art. We must obey the summons and go down that crepuscular stairs, as the poet T.S.Eliot tells us:

*Descend lower, descend only
Into the world of perpetual solitude,
World not world, but that which is not world,
Internal darkness, deprivation
And destitution of all property...*

The stairs, the spiral downwards, is the second image, the second process on which the soul of the artist is engaged as she creates.

But what is our destination, to what must we assent? In the third image, as a counterpoint to the buzzing of the bees, we have the everlasting sound of water. This is not earthly water, but the primal flow of creative life. This is the primordial ancestral life of which the artist is not only the source in the here and now, but with which she has to join and become one. It is only by merging with that subterranean stream of life, that she can produce the works that transform and transcend time. In the words of Rilke:

Transitoriness is everywhere plunging into a profound Being...The earth has no other refuge except to become invisible: in us, who, through one part of our nature, have a share in the Invisible.

In her rebirth from the Source, the artist is reborn in her Art, and she brings the whole of humanity along with her.

Jim Fitzgerald