

From the diary of a Noisebringer (date unknown)

“I went into the forest on an old road, without too many thoughts in my head.

Of course, I should have known that this is the way the mosses like to catch us, patiently watching, waiting for some opportunity to read us their poetry.

To hear the mosses, it's important to be thoughtless. That way there is more space for moss.

It helps to be barefooted, but it isn't always necessary. Moss poems can travel fast, but they do need water, so it's important to be a little damp (either between the ears, or on the soles of the feet).

All the ancient families, including the bryophytes, are supremely proud of their poetry.

Years of living under the appendages of 'greater' life forms – the arthropods, the snails, the hopping birds – have left them fiercely loyal to past traditions, and their unique role in the world.

Whenever they can, they write verses of remembrance, recalling the walk out of the sea, the sliming of the land, the creation of the atmosphere, the glacial eras, the decision not to branch like trees, the softening of the rock into soil.

The mosses pride themselves on sharing these with passing travellers who are suitably thoughtless, and damp enough to listen.

These are the verses which the mosses spoke:

I

To know (moss)

we must study draping

bodies over trees and
rocks

find out how to become less lofty

and

learn a touch that lingers

memory

old and wet and slow

II

Pillow-fluff familiar

very often

squatting or

having a sense of shape

heaps and heaps of

something trickling

under

a big boulder-hugger

III

What kind of

music would the

mosses understand ?

fresh

water gathered into

feather shapes

rainy shapes

and spongiforms

every footfall

softer than the other

IV

Ancient answer:

“among the first to see

the sun

we came across as

slimy little

landlubbers

green and glistening

coveting the

slate and

gravel hole and

mountain cave”

V

Dreaming is non-vascular and

miniature:

a hiding garden,

fern-paths and

glasslike honey

forest mists of

limbless creatures

fold transparencies

of skin.

VI

Absorption becomes habit

drawn out across

micro-

cosmic time

tangled

undeveloping knots of

worm

wood

slow brushes of

soil

deftly forming.

VII

Have you heard

that

bright moisture

seeping

fettered onto
cascade rockface

growling when

night walkers bring

most often

peace (moss)

peace.

VIII

Eddied, crisp

frost

polished like

whipped up foam

on timber

holding liquid secrets

billowed petticoat green

white green

IX

Since you will be dead,
 have you offered thoughts to
the muggy
cumulous formations,
 blanket over-
taking bone
for rest
for seedlings, or
 felt your feet
bruise the softened
earth ?

X

Deep dark
 deep in the
hollow years of
peat
 find no names of
 flowers
fractal gifts
instead of shovel speeches

ancestors, lie sleeping
in the ground.