

Four After Louise Bogan

by Len Krisak (December 2017)



The Sunset Belongs to You, Jack Butler Yeats

1.

I grew the grain of all my love for tithe,
Then watched it mowed by her un-whetted scythe.

2.

The end of what it was went unforeseen,
As sanguine prescience failed (it often does).
No point in wondering what might have been;
Another man will tell you what she was.

3.

The body is the shadow's prison, night
and noon. The captive darkness waits for light,
Abiding either morning, coming soon,
Or else the moment when the spinning earth
Turns one degree into what sun has strewn
About the body everywhere—the bright
Ground shadows lengthen through, for all they're worth.

4.

The fountain water gushes till it stops,
Then falls. It is a fluent, spouting speech
That ends in stammering at its utmost reach,
Before its jets have had their say, then drops
To try again, by racing up in gouts,
Eager to entertain the briefest doubts.

The Four Bogan texts:

1. *Song* :

Years back I paid my tithe
And earned my salt in kind,
And watched the long slow scythe
Move where the grain is lined, . . .

2. *The Romantic*:

This, by your leave, is what she should have been,
Another man will tell you what she was.

3. *The Mark*:

Loosed only when, at noon and night,
The body is the shadow's prison.

4. *Roman Fountain*:

Up from the bronze, I saw
Water without a flaw
Rush to its rest in air,
Reach to its rest, and fall.

Len Krisak has published in *The London Magazine*, *The Oxonian Review*, *PN Review*, *Standpoint*, *Agni*, *The Antioch Review*, *The Sewanee Review*, *The Hudson Review*, *The Dark Horse*, *Agenda*, *The Hopkins Review*, *Commonweal*, *Literary Imagination*, *The Oxford Book of Poems on Classical Mythology*, and others. His books include *Virgil's Eclogues*, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010, *The Carmina of Catullus*, Carcanet Press, 2014, *Afterimage*, Measure Press, 2014, *Rilke: New Poems*, Boydell & Brewer, 2015 and *Ovid: The Amores and The Ars Amatoria*, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014.

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