Creation

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Creation

DOROTHY GRAFF

Is it not beautiful, child? Is it not one of the most beautiful things you've seen? But see here, is not this beautiful also? How can it be, child, that this thing and that thing are unalike, yet both are beautiful alike? Yes, little one, you are learning. Beauty can be in all things. Now, do you not feel this beauty as well as see it? In fact, do you not feel the beauty before you are yet aware that what you see is beauty—before you see if it is melodious or harsh, of form or chaos, and so then beauteous or ugly? Is it a quickening of the heart, a catching of the breath, or perhaps the disturbance of some order, which tells you, "This is beauty," even when others say, "This is not beauty." Say this beauty for me then, child. Say this beauty that you feel rather than see.

"So soft, so still the snow—Cover me lightly. Your kisses are wet, my skin is warm, and I will lie down and sleep."

"So strong, so wild the wind—Lash out, for you cannot be lashed; chase, for you cannot be caught; caress, for you cannot be embraced. Lonely wind, be still and be cherished, for none can follow you."

"So weak, so futile the sea—That which you clutch, you can never have. That which you take, you must always leave. What you've seen is never heard, because what you speak is never 'Man'."

"So lucky, so wise, old man—You're alone but never lonely, bent but not aged, ragged but not poor. I envy you, old man, for your young heart when others are old, for finding what others cannot see and will never find."

"What magic spell, the music—You cannot leave me, for you are the tongue of my soul. Soar into glorious realms of
abandon and I am excited. Sink to the depths of sombreness and I am melancholy. Are there ears to hear my voice?"

"So warm, so vibrant, Spring—Yes, I am awake. I was never really sleeping."

You say it is beautiful? You say it is torment, yet ecstasy? You say, child, that you can not say what it is? Your head whirs with thoughts that gleam, then hide, then burn with passions you cannot explain? Tell me, child, is your heart full, is it swelling and throbbing until you think you cannot stand the glad pain that holds and moves every part of you? Then breathe, child, and write before the pain is spent, for you are blessed—you are a creator.

Yes, child, it is beautiful. Flowers are always beautiful. God has made all beautiful things. See, such lovely colors. Is not pink a beautiful color? I believe pink is the most beautiful color of all. What? Is the worm beautiful? Oh, gracious no, child, such a fat and ugly worm that is! No, don't touch it, it is dirty! Come away, now—are not these yellow flowers beautiful? And those little brown birds hopping around, are they not pretty? But child, why not? But—oh, hurry, it is raining! No, child, you can't stay out in the rain—it's nasty and wet...

"God, is it cold! One more stalled engine, and I swear I'm going to Florida! Geez, I hate to get into that cold bed!"

"Oh no, there it goes again! Hurry, boy, you'll never catch it! Now, look at my hair! No, you can't fly your kite today. Just hurry! Let's get out of this wind!"

"Don't get too close, you'll get your feet wet! What? I can't hear you! What? Let's get out of here so I can hear myself think. I can't stand all this noise!"

"All right, Pops, all right. I'll talk to you later. Geez, what a kook!—always hangin' around and yakkin' about somethin' don't make sense. I mean, 'spose the ol' bum's quite right? Man, what a pest!"

"I just can't stand this longhair stuff. Those crazy guys are all but falling off of their chairs one minute and the next minute they're playing some damn dirge and forgettin' there's anyone else around. Give me Ricky Nelson, any day. Now, there's someone I'd listen to!"

"'In Spring, a young man's fancy . . .' Man, am I sleepy! 'Oh, the birds and the bees and the cigarette trees . . .' Ho-hum, think I'll take a nap. I hate to work on a day like this!"

You say it is nothing, child? You say there is something
you've yet to see, that those things which impassion and move and quench are not about you? You're leaving, child, to search for them? Move on then, old man, and linger not even to write, for you are cursed of ever-moving, never-moving life.

A Dream of Spain

Up early, out of a dream of tall perplexing women. Warm on the Terrace, with sun staining the clumsy town. Spanish, in children's voices, and olive trees and sea fasten the day down and tell me where I am.

A cock crows my alarm. Turkeys cluck in the rubble. The children, drowsed and warm, trail to the breakfast table, to grapes and figs in season. The dream dies down, and I wonder in the sun what to make of the morning.

EDNA BAILEY