

Bishonen

Momus

I was born in the town of Paisley in early 1960
And placed in the care of an old eternal bachelor
A strict disciplinarian, a passionate antiquarian
His collection of myths and legends was spectacular

As a younger man he'd been to see Japan
Where a master in a white kimono taught him
In a shining moment the myth of the bishonen
The youthful hero doomed to fall like blossom

And how could I forgive the ugly fugitive
Who brought me up according to a fantasy?
For when the old man stared at me
He drowned in evil beauty
Thinking of the early death in store for me

He taught me to be good with words, he bought me
ceremonial swords
And in this way came grace and expertise
The words were to cut down and to kill the muscle-bound
The swords to fell my intellectual enemies

And women should be hated but first impersonated
Charm, he said, is essential to misogyny
He taught me how to woo the girls in order to outdo the
girls
And the fun would come when I'd got them to love me

And how could I resist the old misogynist
Who brought me up according to a fantasy?
My softness and fragility
My feminine grace and delicacy
Made death himself afraid for me

And so in time I grew to be blond and beautiful
Pale and frail, with many male admirers
I was promised by my father a retainer for a partner
So loyal that nothing could divide us

Shocked by my suggestion that I'd rather have a woman
My stepfather replied I had no choice
This man would cut his entrails open protecting his
bishonen
He informed me in a solemn, trembling voice

How could I disobey that surreptitious gay
Who brought me up according to a fantasy?
For when the old man stared at me
He drowned in evil beauty
Thinking of the early death in store for me

So me and my retainer encountered many dangers
On travels through the North and through the South
We ripped open the bellies of many famous bullies
And our reputation spread by word of mouth

In the mountains of Morocco we stopped and shared a

bottle

With a blind old man with a bearded, bandaged face
And though the sun had sunk and the man was very drunk
He seemed to speak with my stepfather's voice

Saying "How could you forget the ageing martinet
Who brought you up according to a fantasy?
Your softness and fragility
Your feminine grace and delicacy
Will be the death of me"

Surprised at 28 to find myself so late
Changing from a boy into a man
I'm starting to feel guilty that nobody has killed me
Early as my stepfather had planned

I've found myself a girl and stopped roaming the world
My retainer's gone to be a mercenary
Now I work in a merchant bank, I'm well-liked by the
senior ranks
Though behind my back the juniors call me fairy

And how can I placate the ugly reprobate
Who brought me up according to a fantasy?
For when the old man stared at me
He drowned in evil beauty
Thinking of the early death in store for me

I stay awake some nights when my wife turns off the
lights
And starts breathing regularly next to me
And I think of fallen petals and bodies pierced by
metal
And how I'll never now fulfil my destiny

Father spare my shame, let me pass my name
To a boy with greater beauty and more bravery
For if I have a son I'm going to raise him to die young
And lay him in the grave that you prepared for me