

Lares / Manes

Also by Billy Mills

Genesis and Home

Triple Helix

Letters from Barcelona

Five Easy Pieces

The Properties of Stone

Tiny Pieces

A Small Book of Songs

What is a Mountain?

Logical Fallacies

BILLY MILLS

Lares / Manes
Collected Poems

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In memory of my mother, Dee Mills, 1932–2008

GENESIS AND HOME
(1979–1985)

“ . . . thou didst not enquire their meaning nor their cause. Hadst thou done so, the King would have been restored to his health and his dominion in peace. Whereas from henceforth he will have to endure battles and conflicts and his knights will perish, and wives will be widowed, and maidens will be left portionless, and all this because of thee.”

from the *Peredur Ap Ewrawc*

Genesis One

1. it is no easy task to measure the distance
in twin parts which were to procreate,
the two effects compensate exactly
2. the egg of the world:
sowing by night and cultivating by day,
before gestation was complete
3. the building of the second sanctuary:
a little shaky when you get up towards
the speed of light
4. that the universe is uniform
is a sign of the coming of water
5. who measured the spectra of galaxies;
who was androgynous
6. the argument is mildly mathematical,
our universe is so transparent
7. imagine a large cube of rubber,
a universe in motion
8. “a dark cold place full of bright objects”
9. local knowledge of the past

Follow the Makers' Instructions

1. open
 carefully
(the well oiled surface
facilitating entry)

avoid
stretching and straining,
unnecessary damage.

this, you may find,
prolongs the sensation

2. unroll a little
 leave empty spaces

it doesn't have to be
an interruption

the handlers identity
is unimportant

3. do not scratch!

 this
 guarantees protection

4. beware
 of parthenogenesis

use only once;
a single seed
can cause fertility

Genesis Two

1. their great riches for offerings:
the mountains and the seas
- 2, for the performance of rites:
the uncertainty in the observational determination
3. distance is roughly linear
observed in visible light
4. physically conceivable structures—
the reed and forest for the work of building
5. a variation of more than a hundred
regular patches of light
6. a certain magic density

Genesis Three

1. the spectrum of sunlight,
before the beginning of the earth
2. in an evolving universe
3. the mountain had been shaped,
to the sea its limit—
the great distances implied
4. we look in their direction and it is dark

Garlic

because
of its virtue/
this pungency's
your perfume

a poor mans treacle
 its oil
is sulphurous/volatile
 but delicate
when gently simmered

I crush a clove
 into what soon will be
today's shared meal

Genesis Four

1. details of the process were quite unknown,
a natural consequence of the high temperatures
2. in slightly different form;
variable light is unknown,
subject to laws
3. has power over all things,
composed as a sure foundation
4. candidates for association
in a rich soil
5. “often in error, never in doubt”

To Make Elderberry Wine

in September gather
the bunches of purplish-
black berries

strip from the stalks
with a fork
(this will stain
your fingers)

crush and add boiling
water (a gallon
to 3 pounds of fruit)
cool

and add yeast:
after 3 days strain
onto sugar

ferment in a dark jar