

# *Poetry for Today*

by *Griselda Steiner*

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*- NOTE for the READERS -*

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I would like to thank the Editors at Scene4 Magazine for this opportunity to share some of my poetry with you. Several of these poems have been published before in WOMAN AND EARTH, OF A LIKE MIND, THE AUROREAN and HOPE Newsletter, as well as presented in readings in New York City.

As a playwright, I have integrated poetry and lyrics into dramatic action and continue to develop my work towards production. My - POETRY for TODAY - expresses my personal experience and reaction to destructive events confronting us all. Being devoted to the expression of the divine feminine, I have written - POETRY for the GODDESS - dedicated to HER legacy. Also included in this collection is - LYRIC POETRY for the musical "HYPATIA" - that I wrote for my musical in which opera heroines embark on a journey to change their destiny.

I hope you enjoy!

Sincerely,  
*Griselda Steiner*

## WHITE WOLF

Deep in the arctic snows  
She waits for me  
Great White

Instinct tells me  
Tonight  
The oyster sky  
South wind  
My feet on cold streets  
Turning to four  
Sound searching silent ground

She will lead me to the pack

Eagle eyes track us cross  
Tundra forests  
Ice lakes  
Vast ridged terrain  
Run - Run - Run

Under black star magnet skies  
The moon's low light  
Arcs the tree line  
Casting shadows  
On snow drifted rivers

Our brother's howl frosts the air  
Piercing our wolf bodies  
With great knowing  
With no language

No men plotting death  
War with wasted religions  
No glittering green bombs  
Digging cities into history's sediment  
Layering poison with blood in the sand

Pulling us to new lands  
As the earth's shifting plates  
Migrate  
With sacred geometry

To the light of the Shaman's fire spitting flint  
Building the Stone Mountain

## WILDERNESS FACES

I've seen  
Vast tundras of snow  
Pine lined  
Reflected shadows  
On ice lakes  
A frozen ocean

I remember  
Sands of Israel  
Strewn with  
Rusty carcasses  
Of old tanks  
A memoriam  
Against a blue sky

I've dreamt of  
Jungle rivers  
Curved flow  
Through green breathing life  
The birdcalls  
And animal cries

I've seen  
Gray mountain stone sides  
Risen rocks  
Testifying time  
With forests  
In their deep valleys

I've seen your face  
Lined with age  
Each cavern a monument to  
Another loved one gone

Our own blue river  
Lined with steel mountains  
The tower carcasses  
Strewn against the sky  
Echo cries of human sorrow

The blue river carries  
A vast ferry of souls  
Ascending to the fiery glow  
Of our beloved's embrace

I didn't know the wilderness was war.

Dedicated to World Trade Center Victims

**“I WAS HERE BEFORE GRANDFATHER”**

*Dedicated to Lois Michal Unger in Tel Aviv, Israel*

Prophets dream in the stratosphere  
Where planes hide above the clouds  
The Eldest Daughter's voice  
Louder than the engine's roar  
Forgotten in the Holy Land  
Ever poised for war

Our ancestor's Bird Goddess wings  
Mark the seasons of the day  
Mediterranean  
Blue sunlit tides wash over  
Sunken treasure – terra cotta  
Roman ports – Jaffa

Walking streets with the centuries  
An easy human gait  
Bronze plaques commemorate  
The dead warriors fight for land  
Our pathway seeks no guide or  
Sacred talisman

Coasts of hills, green-gray olive trees  
Fresh fruits, dates, figs, apricots  
The shouk shoppers bargain  
Tasting bits of languages  
While a hierarchy of cats sleep  
Atop marble pillars

Call to prayer – Muezzin

Faded maps hint at history  
Broken pots glued by scholars  
Fragmented shards, stories  
Ground of ancient vessels  
Alphabets of sound and symbol  
Tell the truth of miracles

There's a room in the mother's house  
A buried rock chamber  
Where she sits brushing the sand  
Searching for the Eldest Daughter  
In the Promised Land.

***0 GROUND***

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NATURE HAS A MEMORY AND SHAKES OFF HER PAIN  
EARTHQUAKES – HURICANES – FIRES - VOLCANOES - FLOODS  
NO MORE TREES  
BLUE RIVERS - WILD ANIMALS - FLOWERS  
NO MORE FORESTS - JUNGLES - MOUNTAINS - VALLEYS  
DESERT CLOUDS – SECRET WEAPON RADIATION  
OCEAN DEPTHS BOMBED – HIDDEN BLASTS  
NO MORE FISH - GULF STREAM - ISLANDS  
MEN THINKING – EXPERIMENT – WAR ON LIFE  
NO MORE MEN THINKING  
GREED – POWER – ENEMIES  
NO MORE LIFE  
MAN – NATION - WAR  
NO MORE WARRIORS  
LAND WHERE THEY TEST A BOMBS

***0***

LAND WHERE THEY TEST A BOMBS  
NO MORE WARRIORS  
MAN – NATION - WAR  
NO MORE LIFE  
GREED – POWER – ENEMIES  
NO MORE MEN THINKING  
MEN THINKING – EXPERIMENT – WAR ON LIFE  
NO MORE FISH - GULF STREAM - ISLANDS  
OCEAN DEPTHS BOMBED – HIDDEN BLASTS  
DESERT CLOUDS – SECRET WEAPON RADIATION  
NO MORE FORESTS - JUNGLES - MOUNTAINS - VALLEYS  
BLUE RIVERS - WILD ANIMALS - FLOWERS  
NO MORE TREES  
EARTHQUAKES – HURICANES – VOLCANOES – FLOODS  
NATURE HAS A MEMORY AND SHAKES OFF HER PAIN

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***GROUND 0***

## OSHUN

African Goddess of the River and Love

### The River

Under a crescent moon  
the river flows  
with never ceasing music.

Tall weeds thrash in the breeze,  
the waters reclining  
like a woman  
ripe with the sun.

Golden bracelets jangle  
as dancing feet of mad women  
slip through the mud  
to the cool waters.

### Charm

Oh Golden Lady,  
    virgin coquette,  
complete in yourself  
    capture a heart for me.

The new moon your mirror,  
    the sacred drum your womb,  
accept my gift of  
    flowers,  
    candles,  
    incense.

Please don't cry  
Not a harsh word



**Sleeping Goddess of Malta**  
(Small Limestone Statue Of a Woman Sleeping)

Oh, ancestors, ancestors  
who left a language in stone  
limestone temples  
stained by the sea, winds and blood.

You sleep so tenderly  
on your side.  
A plump woman in pleated skirts  
whose breasts like happy children  
rest in your arms.  
Your torso curved in sensuous sleep.

The ancestors snore.

**SARASVASTI©**  
(The Flowing One)  
Goddess Of All Knowledge & The Arts – Ancient India

Luminous Sarasvasti  
Serene  
On your lotus blossom throne  
Pearl necklaces entwine your soft breasts  
Silver and sapphire crown your black hair

Born with Brahma from a golden egg  
Your arms hold music and language.

Far from the cities, only those who  
Dream  
By the shore can see you  
As you flow down  
The blue river,

The swan at your side.

## DEMETER

Ancient Greek Goddess of the Spring

dandelions in tar  
a sudden rain storm  
our bodies embarrassed by pleasure  
will we bring our darkness out to air  
and let the current of the flooding stream  
sift our lives like the earth  
towards the river's wider flow?

or will we turn again to habits  
determined by the bend  
of a willow branch?

**- LYRIC POETRY for the musical "HYPATIA" -**

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*These poems are lyric poems from my musical drama "Hypatia". Here is a brief synopsis that will put the work in clearer context.*

**"HYPATIA"**

*Book/Lyric - Griselda Steiner  
Composer - Aurora Northland*

**BRIEF SYNOPSIS**

**HYPATIA** is a musical drama that takes place in a fantastic realm; The Land of Mysteries. The concept is based on the premise that most great Heroines of operatic lore are steeped in 18th and 19th Century stereotypical notions of womanhood. These notions were based on men's fear of her five great powers: 1) her sexuality; 2) her intuition; 3) her spirituality; 4) her wisdom; and 5) her destructiveness. The musical begins at the turn of the century when an OLD DIVA wanders on the grand opera stage where she performed during her career. The theatre is slated to be torn down the next day. On the backdrop looms a giant spider web and when the OLD DIVA trips on a trap door, HYPATIA, Crown Priestess of Destiny, emerges from the web. She proclaims, *"Souls born from man's imagination, challenge the premise of your creation. Stop you can be free - You can change your destiny."*

Five great Heroines: CARMEN (from "Carmen" by Bizet); AZUCENA (from "Il Trovatore" by Verdi); THE QUEEN OF THE NIGHT (from "The Magic Flute" by Mozart); VIOLETTA (from "La Traviatta" by Verdi); and SALOME (from "Salome" by Strauss) take Destiny's journey set for them in a series of trials conducted by a light carousel that emanates from the spider's web. In the first trial they must have the desire to change; in the second they confront their composers; in the third they accept the consequence of their wishes coming true; and in the last they confront themselves. When the OLD DIVA awakens and remembers her vision, she sings passages she recalls from the Heroines' songs. CARMEN, VIOLETTA and the QUEEN OF THE NIGHT join her for a final bow. When the OLD DIVA closes the curtain forever, we hear the stage collapse in a demolition blast. HYPATIA emerges from the mist.

**“TIMELESS THE LAND OF MYSTERIES”**

*Sung by HYPATIA*

TIMELESS THE LAND OF MYSTERIES  
A DESERT  
WINDS WHISPER IN THE DAWN  
WHERE ANGELS SLEEP AND MUSES PUMP  
THE FURNACE WHERE DREAMS ARE BORNE

LIKE HOT GLASS  
AIR COOLS THE MOLTEN FORM  
INTO THE SHAPE OF MYTHS

WHERE STORIES ETCHED IN GOLD  
FROM LIVES ON EARTH UNFOLD  
THE TRUE WEIGHT OF THE SOUL  
MAKES THE MEASURE OF THE ROLE

HYPATIA, I CROWN PRIESTESS HERE  
A MARTYR  
OF OLD ALEXANDRIA  
BY CHRISTIANS STONED  
WITH OYSTER SHELLS THEY SCRAPED MY BONES

BURNT MY BOOKS OF GRECIAN LORE  
ASTRONOMY  
ART, SCIENCE, POETRY  
WITH THE GREAT LIBRARY

HYPATIA, A PHILOSOPHER CALLED  
HERETIC  
GREEK GODDESSES TESTIFY  
TO THE DIVINE FEMININE LIFE  
MY WISDOM BRANDED LIES

MY CRUEL FATE  
TO WEAR A CROWN OF THORNS  
MIRRORING HIM FOR WHOM I WAS STONED

FEMININE DESTINY IS MY PRIZE  
I THE GUIDE  
WHERE I CAST MY WEB  
WHERE I WEAVE MY THREAD  
I CATCH SOULS LIVING AND DEAD

AROUND THE COSMOS EDGE TO EDGE  
ALL MATTER SPINS ON MY SPIDER'S THREAD

## “SALOME'S LAMENT

JOHN THE BAPTIST'S HEAD  
MY GIFT FROM HEROD  
HIS LIPS STILL  
HIS EYES SEALED  
PRISONER, BEHEADED, DEAD

RED THE SILVER WHERE HE BLED  
NO MORE SERMONS  
NO MORE CRIES  
OH MY FOOL - IOKANAAN DIES

I DANCE I DANCE DANCE  
I DANCE I DANCE DANCE  
MY SKIN SHINES  
THE DRUMS BEAT  
GOLD STAR BEADS CHAIN MY TWISTING FEET

LOOK MY MOTHER'S GLARE  
PIERCES BLUE SMOKED MYRRH  
MY BACK ARCHED  
MY ARMS CURVE  
CIRCLING MEN'S YEARNING STARES

ONE BY ONE OFF MY VEILS  
HEROD'S HEART WAILS  
HIS EYES LIT WITH FIRE  
HIS SECRET HELL, DESIRE

I DANCE I DANCE DANCE  
I DANCE I DANCE DANCE  
MY SKIN SHINES  
THE DRUMS BEAT  
GOLD STAR BEADS CHAIN MY TWISTING FEET

MOTHER FEARED JOHN'S CRIES  
DENYING TRUTH FOR LIES  
JOHN'S TEMPTING  
BARED MY SOUL  
HE NAMED ME SINNER - SO FOUL

I WANT JUST ONE CHANCE  
MY JOHN SEE ME DANCE  
YOU'D TOUCH ME  
YOU'D TAKE MY BODY AND LOVE ME

I KISS HIS LIPS A BITTER KISS

I DANCE I DANCE DANCE  
I DANCE I DANCE DANCE  
MY SKIN SHINES  
THE DRUM BEATS  
GOLD STAR BEADS CHAIN MY TWISTING FEET

## THE QUEEN OF THE NIGHT'S LAMENT

THEY MADE ME THE QUEEN OF THE NIGHT  
GIVE ME BACK MY LIGHT

I AM THE ONE SOURCE OF LIFE  
DEEP IN THE SEA BEGUN  
MINE BECAME THE NIGHT HOURS  
WHEN MEN STOLE MY BELOVED SUN

THEY THREW ME IN DARKNESS  
THEY COVERED ME WITH LIES  
BUT I WAS ONCE THE RULER  
OF THE HEAVEN AND THE SKIES

WITH IRON SWORDS AND WEAPONS  
THE DREAD WARRIORS CAME  
THEY MADE GODDESSES DEMONS  
AND GAVE US EVIL NAMES

BY SO MANY NAMES  
I LOST MY FAME  
ISIS – GAIA - IXCHEL  
CERRIEWEN - INANNA  
HATHOR - DORGA

GONE ARE HALF MY POWERS  
MINE ARE THE DARK HOURS

CALLING THE ONE PRINCIPAL TWO  
CREATED DUALITY  
GOOD AND EVIL GLORIFIED  
GOD AND SATAN SOLIDIFIED

I AM THE QUEEN OF THE NIGHT  
GIVE ME BACK THE LIGHT

WHEN ONE BROTHER KILLED ANOTHER  
THEY DEFIED THE MOTHER  
FROM THE CREATION OF EVE  
AROSE MEN'S BLASPHEMIES

FROM HIS IGNORANCE AND GREED  
LUSTING POWER AND SEED  
MEN CLAIMED MY SPIRITUAL REALM  
NOW THEY'RE OVERWHELMED  
BY THE DUNG OF THEIR DECEITS

POISONING PLANTS, ANIMALS, AIR AND SEA  
THEY WILL COME BECKONING ME

THEY MADE ME THE QUEEN OF THE NIGHT  
GIVE ME BACK MY LIGHT

WHEN MY DOMINION IS RECLAIMED  
IT WILL BE A DAY OF MIRACLES

**SACRIFICIAL LAMB** Sung by Carmen

NO SACRIFICIAL LAMB WILL I BE  
ON THE TABLE OF MAN'S PROFANITY

I WILL NOT SACRIFICE MY PLEASURE  
TO ENTERTAIN MAN AT HIS LEISURE

I CAN SAY YES AND I CAN SAY NO

I, THE DARK SORCERESS - NAGINI MY NAME  
LET THEM WHO DEFILE ME BURN IN THE FLAME

OF ALL THE MYTHS WOMEN HAVE FULFILLED  
TO SCREW, SCREAM AND BE KILLED IS MAN'S DESIRE

IF A MAN REJECTS LOVE AND HAS SELF HATE  
A BATTERED PROSTITUTE WILL BE HIS MATE

I CAN SAY YES AND I CAN SAY NO  
WOMEN - LOOK AT STARLETS IN HISTORY  
TO PAST PRESENT AND FUTURE AND BEWARE  
YOU WILL BE WELL PAID AND BE JEWELLED  
BUT EARLY DEATH TO YOU - YOU FOOL

IN MY NEW DESTINY - THE LAMB IS MAN  
I WILL TAKE MY PLEASURE AND RETURN THEM  
FROM WHENCE THEY CAME - TO THE GREAT MOTHER

WOMEN HEAR MY WORDS AND YOU CAN CHOOSE  
TO BE THE LAMB AND BE SLAUGHTERED OR  
TO LOOK AT YOUR DEATH IN MEN'S MYTHS  
AND BURN IT WITH THIS WISH

STOP I WANT TO FREE - I WANT TO CHANGE MY DESTINY



**“MY DAUGHTERS”**

*Sung by The Queen of the Night*

1-

MY DAUGHTERS  
NAKED ANGELS  
LED TO SLAUGHTER

MY SWEET GIRLS  
FLOWERING  
IN A CRUEL CRUEL WORLD

OH COME TO ME  
YOU STARVING SOULS  
I KISS YOUR FACE  
YOUR EYES SO OLD

WHO HOLDS YOUR HAND  
UNTIL YOU WEAR  
A WEDDING BAND

IN THE DESERTS  
I SEE YOU TOIL

IN THE JUNGLES  
YOUR SMALL HANDS BLEED

IN THE MOUNTAINS  
BURDENS SHAPE YOUR BACK

IN THE RIVERS  
YOUR FEET ARE SOILED

MY DAUGHTERS  
NAKED ANGELS  
LED TO SLAUGHTER

MY SWEET GIRLS  
FLOWERING  
IN A CRUEL CRUEL WORLD

WHEN YOU BEGIN TO BLEED  
THEY WILL COVER YOUR FACE - DISGRACE  
WHILE YOUR FAMILY SLEEPS  
WOMAN - ALONE YOU WEEP

THEY WILL CUT THE PLEASURE FROM YOUR LOINS  
THE CORD - YOU WON'T INHERIT THE WORLD

WHILE YOUR BROTHER  
GROWS TO RULE  
YOUR POOR STRICT WORLD  
YOUR LIFE BEQUEATHS THE DUST

2-

WHEN YOU MARRY  
WILL YOU BE HIS  
ONLY WIFE  
A LONELY WIFE

YOUR CHILDREN  
WILL YOU HOLD THEM  
SAFELY IN YOUR ARMS

I WILL HOLD YOUR HANDS  
TEAR OFF THE WEDDING BAND

I GIVE YOU MY VOICE AND  
THE WIND TO DRY YOUR TEARS  
WILL YOU NOW FOLLOW

THE BURNT OUT GODS IN THE RAIN

OR MY LOVE ON A  
RAINBOW TO THE SUN

I WILL HOLD YOUR HANDS  
TEAR OFF THE WEDDING BAND

**WINGS**

*Sung by Azucena and her Mother as a Duet*

IF YOU HAVE WINGS YOU CAN WALK ON WATER  
IF YOU HAVE WINGS YOU CAN FLY THROUGH THE TREES  
IF YOU HAVE WINGS YOU CAN RUN OVER MOUNTAINS  
IF YOU HAVE WINGS YOU CAN GLIDE THROUGH THE SEA

OUR BODIES  
TWO HANDS  
THE WINGS OF A PRAYER  
TOGETHER ONE LIFE  
WE FLY THROUGH THE AIR