A quartet of poems

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Abstract

Purpose – These texts form part of a quartet, the purpose of this paper is to draw attention to the destruction of our planet by presenting the elements as deities of nature: in Agitation the god is earth, in Burning the boy-god is fire, and in Mater Lachrymosa the mother-goddess is air (the first poem’s persona is the goddess of water/rain. Titled Heat, it is published in Volume 29 Issue 5 of AAAJ). The inspiration for these poems was Mervyn King’s statement that “Effective integrated reporting requires careful collection and co-ordination of different types of data for analysis by multi-disciplinary teams”. (King III, 2009) and his thought-provoking advocacy of the idea that “the board should provide effective leadership based on an ethical foundation” (King III, 2009).

Design/methodology/approach – These poems are written in free verse (which mimics the nuances and cadences of spoken English).

Findings – Frequent media coverage of global warming, corporate social responsibility policies, integrated reporting and dwindling resources have become fashionable clichés. We need to empower the message. CSR and the integrated report have no value if they become tick-the-box exercises.

Originality/value – Poetry is not generally associated with accountancy, finance, environmental law or geography so these texts are unusual in their genre and approach. The underlying concept is the interconnectedness of the themes and looking at issues with new eyes.

Keywords Nous (Greek): mind, intellect, seed, core, Nucleus (Latin): seed, core, Adam: according to the Bible, the first man created by God; formed from earth and water

Paper type Editorial

1. Agitation

In the dreary heart of winter,
dee under the ground,
the Earth god is restless while he sleeps:
he moves fitfully, ever seeking heat.
He dreams of the goddess’s touch
which will bring him back his power,
the primal energy of seed:
planting
and watering …
the nucleus and nous of all life.

In this seeming-death
below ice and snow and ghostly light,
his mouth twists,
his throat closes,
his limbs brine with sweat …

In his desire and longing,
he hears whispering rustles
and
smells the first pungency
of the stream of virility, soil and moisture:

He will be the father of all that germinates in earth.

God, after all, chose
to form Adam from clay and water.
Keywords
(1) nous (Greek): mind, intellect, seed, core.
(2) nucleus (Latin): seed, core.
(3) Adam: according to the Bible, the first man created by God; formed from earth and water.

2. Burning
Here’s the young one of the group, irrepressible and irresponsible … and magnificent!

The Earth god imagines cracking this interloper’s skull and burying him alive …

The Water goddess considers slowly drowning him if the rivers rise …

The Air deity knows that she can easily suffocate him … he cannot survive without her … but he is her child.

As the dry heat increases And his heartbeat speeds up,

Fire burns everywhere; even the sand is a conflagration.

The rivers scorch to nothing; the watering holes are gouged; wasted carcasses and ghostly skeletons lie everywhere.

What will the boy-god ever learn?
Little!

He will eternally illuminate beauty and death in his orange-red glow as he kills while running amok.

But if the natural cycles survive, from the embers and ashes and death growth will come.

Ilion toppled in flames, and God, after all, burnt Sodom and Gomorrah … to create a new order.

Keywords
(1) Interloper: intruder; one who meddles in the affairs of others.
(2) amok: the word denotes frenzy and connotes lack of self control and discipline.
(3) Illion: the Homeric poetic name of Troy
(4) Sodom and Gomorrah: in the Old Testament, cities destroyed by God for turning away from the Commandments.
3. Mater Lachrymosa

The mother goddess, breathing life, has been present in every season since the days of Creation.

She has purified our water by blowing into it; She has aerated our soil by moving over the ploughed sods; she has fed our fires to give us warmth by dancing in the ancient rites.

She has protected us and sustained us according to the ancient rhythms of Nature’s drum but
now, in these days, days of sickness, floods, famine, and death, even she is losing her power, struggling to hear the music of the spheres.

Her lungs feel thick and solid; Her breathing is harsh: gases and burning surround her. As her breath diminishes, her movement is slowing: this planet is in pain and so is she.

Water, loam and fire cannot survive without her and our earth is becoming another Mars.

She must breathe so we can breathe …

After all, when Man had been sculpted from clay, the Spirit breathed into his nostrils and life began to stir,

the birth-breath of us all.

Keywords

(2) The music of the spheres refers to the belief that the universe consisted of seven spheres which, if undisturbed, created perfect harmony but, if disrupted, caused chaos.

(3) Mars: traditionally, an allusion to the merciless Roman god of war. The planet, known for extreme heat and aridity, bears his name.

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