

The Mushroom Summer of Kipper Darling

"Two Siberian Eskimoes have come ashore at Attu, most westerly of the Aleutian Islands. They have asked for political asylum. They were out gathering mushrooms, and were lost in the fog."

News, August 6, 1965

Alleged Incident

Words have a world of their own. These agile jugglers,
Tumbling from nowhere, surprise the unwary poet
As if a child, turning the corner were to meet,
On what before had been a vacant lot,
Enraptured
The gay flags and fluttering pennants of a circus.

What astonishes—frightens sometimes—
Is not when, like our loves, they ride strong horses
Strong necked, white chested horses with manes of silk,
Or when again, thunderously, they explode
Throwing up the earth in our faces; not this

But agile weightlessness, that treads so springily on nothing,
The march with precision through eternity
Where the soul moves freely in a strange element.

And then one night — beautiful, serene, holy —
You felt permitted to worship, and came to the Temple,
Entered the Tabernacle
To broad daylight and the flat walls that are your present home
And the smell of cooking and the cold
Comfort of hope.

N. G. MAROUDAS

There is a time to remember the wise
And mythical skills
Of Kipper Darling, night-watchman
Of the Eastern Hills.

He could divine mushrooms in the darkest
Moonless night. Armed only with a torch,
On deep summer nights he would lead us out
Across the bottle-green fields of Albany—
Pitches and meadows — lying like velvet
To the touch.

Rooted in his black figure,
Shielding it, the wand of light leapt from face
To creeping face. From grove to echoing grove
Of mushrooms, that took their shape, seemed
To take their being from that bright spear.
Halfmense. Lilliputians, giving only
A damp cough as we plucked them, silent
To his histrionic orders.

When the last switch
Telescoped the light we knew the basket
Full. Whispering we returned, to feast
On mushrooms and bilious jubilee: new pagans
In the misshapen light of our midnight room.

Moonless nights. The scorpion memory
Is dying on its sting.
It was not wisdom but the torch
That made him king.

TONY VOSS

T A R I K H

Edited by Dr. J. B. Webster

Tarikh is a new journal of African history produced twice a year in November and May. New syllabuses in African history are now in use or in preparation all over Africa though much of the most recent historical research in Africa is only available in advanced and expensive texts and the minds of scholars. *Tarikh* is an attempt to present some of this material in a readable and easily understood form for School and Higher Certificate and first year university students. There are questions and lists for further reading following all articles.

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