

BASILIKE PAPPÀ

How to Become a God and Fade from Sight

First day: Pin the moon on its back, binding still its spell. Cut through the skin with scissors and find out how, in deep darkness, you forget what you have known.

Second day: Make an incision to the right side of dreams. Carefully detach the memory of music. Lean at the wall in dull content, not caring what the world's deep voices meant.

Third day: Remove desire from the heart. Trace back the steps into the misty hollow and note that it is formed by the union of nothingness and longing.

Fourth day: Trace the systemic arches of the end and the beginning. Run backwards, empty of lingerings, empty of farewells.

Fifth day: Detach the wondrous blue from the ever-whispering seas. Find how a shattered miracle no more shall resume its ancient sway.

Sixth day: Remove the sun from the crystal dome of summer skies. Open the cavity widely, and make a sketch showing abundant thorns on the upper jaw.

Seventh day (Revision.): Revise the second, third and fourth days' work, paying particular attention to a beauty nevermore yours to behold.

ABOUT THE POEM & AUTHOR

“How to Become a God and Fade from Sight” was created from *His Lady of the Sonnets* by Robert W. Norwood (1915), *Sonnets and Verse* by Hilaire Belloc (1923), and *Dissection of the Platana and the Frog* by J. D. F. Gilchrist and C. von Bonde (1919). About the poem and the process of composing it, Basilike Pappa writes:

If writing a poem is a challenge, writing a found poem can be more so. There is this moment when you read somewhere a line that seems to have been waiting for you to find it and do something new with it. But even though that first line can be a perfect starting point, it doesn't guarantee an end. A found poem may remain unfinished until you come across the second line that explains your choice to you, giving your creation a clear direction.

When I divided a sheet of paper into two columns and started writing down lines from *His Lady of the Sonnets* by Robert W. Norwood and *Sonnets and Verse* by Hilaire Belloc, I had no idea my poem was going to be about how to become a detached god in seven days. As I like bringing together incompatible texts, I thought the practicalities of science might make an interesting remix with the lyricism of the sonnets. In *Dissection of the Platana and the Frog* I found a zoology class study plan that gave my poem its theme and structure. After creating a first draft, I went through Norwood and Belloc again, replacing some of the lines and words I had originally chosen, making sure there is coherence and that the poem evolves with each step. Finally I remixed a title from my source texts, and “How to Become a God and Fade from Sight” was complete.

Basilike Pappa lives in Greece. Her work has also appeared in *Surreal Poetics*, *Bones*, *11 Mag Berlin*, *Dodging the Rain*, *Timeless Tales*, and elsewhere.

