

Waking from a Dream

Like a bird sheltering  
under the thin hollow of a leaf  
one must take whatever comfort one can  
falling down into the plumes  
and feathers of sleep to seek  
a lost world, a doorway remembered  
a past love bathed in yellow light  
his name a murmur of green sea waves  
the sound wound up into the air  
the wheel of sensation  
a feeling of living merged  
an indescribable air of expectation.

An ancient song, a fountain of radiance  
green and flowery, bubbled up  
from a mouth in the earth; the moment  
seemed to stand up, thick with time,  
a kind of understanding made of a fire  
as burns only once in a lifetime  
twisted into the marrow of her bones,  
the power to evolve a wilder life  
to extract every ounce of pleasure  
within touch. She could not help laughing,  
stars in her eyes and veils in her hair—  
a conspiracy of moonlight and want.

## ABOUT THE POEM

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“Waking from a Dream” was created from Virginia Woolf’s *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925) and *To the Lighthouse* (1927). About the poem and the process of composing it, Karen George writes:

My cento poem was created from words and phrases found on three series of 12 pages: 7-18 of *To the Lighthouse*, and 60-72 and 84-96 of *Mrs. Dalloway*. I browsed through those pages, writing on a separate sheet of paper words which interested me because either I liked their sound or they suggested some image or meaning. I wound up with six pages of phrases, and I read through them until I found what sounded like either a title or an intriguing beginning line of a poem. With that initial phrase in mind, I paged through the list of chosen phrases to find the next phrase that made sense following the one I’d chosen. Eventually, images connected and a narrative of sorts emerged. In the process, I changed the order of the lines of the poem I was creating and at some point decided to make the poem two stanzas of 12 lines each.



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