



Origami Poem Project

OMITTED TALES

by Doug Norris

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THE GRASSHOPPER'S VERSION

It was cold and I was hungry.
The ants were drying their grain.
So I asked for some.
They said: "Why did you not
Treasure up food during the summer?"
I said: "I had not leisure enough.
I passed the days in singing."
They said: "If you were foolish enough
To sing all summer, you must dance
Supperless to bed in winter."
Just then an ant eater shuffled by.
It ate the ants. I took the grain.
Moral: Work or shirk today,
Tomorrow there are no guarantees.

DEATH AND THE GOOSE BOY

A boy approached a pond when he noticed
Something streaking up the hill toward him.
"Who are you," the boy asked.
"Where do you come from?"
The shadow faced the boy and spoke.
"I am Death. I came from the water."
"I am Johannes," the boy responded.
"The village goose boy."
"Where are you geese," Death asked.
"Dnking," the boy replied.
"Uh-oh," said Death.
"What's wrong," asked the boy.
Death hesitated, awkwardly
Searching for a way to explain it.
"Never mind," Death shrugged.
"It doesn't matter."

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MANHATTAN DREAM

A half-shadow sprays the sidewalk
In front of an Italian restaurant
With a water hose. It is dusk.
The skyline is sepi, like a 1940s tinype.
In twilight, Manhattan is even more
Crowded with ghosts and lost souls,
Exited from past lives, taking shape
In wreaths of steam above city grates.
Some of the ghosts frown as the living
Saunter through them without apology
Or awareness.
A flower girl peddles ghost orchids.
A fruit vendor tosses pale banana peels.
A phantom taxi circles Times Square
Endlessly, searching for a fare.

SUNDAY IN PROVIDENCE

Stragglers ignoring
The raggedly stranger
Hogging the street corner,
Smelling like hamburger,
Hawking his newspaper,
Basking the socialists,
Begging for change.
They go next door
To Johnny Rookers –
Neon blinking,
Burgers sizzling,
Speakers blaring,
"A-whim-away,
A-whim-away,
The lion sleeps tonight."

FOUND CHARM (NEW ORLEANS)

The Frog Charm:
Kill a frog. Dry him
Thoroughly in the sun
(Or put him in an ant's bed)
Until the flesh is removed from the bones.
Among the bones you will find
One that looks like a fishhook,
Another like a fish scale.
To win the desired person,
Hook the bone looking like a fishhook
Discreetly in her garments.
If her devotion proves too irksome,
Flip the bone looking like a fish scale
At her as she walks away.
Her love for you will immediately disappear.