

Frida

You cannot enter this room without the knowledge of pain.
No, not book knowledge – that kind won't do.
You must have experienced the pain – like a necklace of thorns,
On which is strung the pierced roses of joy.

Listen to the pulsing of the clock in the distance,
Pounding out notes like a metronome,
Ticking off pieces of your life that fall away,
Like a withered leg, discarded at last.

Watch through the window as light and dark collide
Like some ancient gods fighting for supremacy,
One winning, the other running away in fear;
Until the cycle reverses and the other is ascendant.

Pain, pain is the constant companion of this room,
Red billowing, blood-filled arteries, pulsating
With death-in-life, running to complete the gods' sacrifice,
And I the object of that sacrifice, pierced with pain.

Paint the vision now, while the metronome keeps time,
The flowers, leaves, trees, bursting forth with obscene life,
While in my mind's eye, skulls run across the canvas
Pursued by deformed skeletons, grinning a reminder of death.

And while painting, the pulsing of the clock stops,
The pain recedes, my mind clears; time is still.
For the briefest time I am once again a young girl,
Full of hope, joy, laughter, and desire.

The colors spring to live, unbidden;
The canvas creates itself, like some vast jungle
Propagating leaves, plants, and trees,
From some great dark center of the world.

As I paint, the pain is slowly transformed
Into the colors of the canvas; the story
Unfolds in a rush of beauty that strives to run
Past the pain that will come crashing forth

When the vision ceases, and I fall back to reality:

To the bed where I lay, a cripple; whose limbs have
Failed, but whose heart beats as before;
Lusting after life and beauty with every beat.

Death, death will come at last, sweet death to end this pain,
And relinquish my soul to those brute gods who dwell in the
Jungles of my canvas, beckoning me with their small howls
Like monkeys staring from beneath the leaves.

I paint; I wait; I listen to the metronome counting out
The hours till death take me. The light fades, and slowly
Darkness envelops the room like the womb of some great brown
Mother, holding a necklace of roses, to welcome me home at last.