THREE TEMPLES IN THE COSMIC DUST

Yoko Chase

A transient flow of the spring sky at dawn
streaming into silky mist
evokes threads of my religious aspiration
and a story emerges in the quiet temple of my thoughts

I remember the story of a Japanese architect, working in India
building a temple with native people
struggling between racial animosity and a burning thirst for pure water
Under the imperial sun and dry dusty heat
a slow, dull spirit engulfed them
Only his thirst for spiritual water became intensified
every succeeding moment
as the dry, dull frustration spread into eternity

One day, driven by an obscure, yet, intense desire
he partook of their muddy brown water
The water imbued with the pure native soil and spirit
emitted its brown hues into eyes gazing at the architect’s enraptured
soul,
quenched finally by the spirit of a primal harmony

The story creeps into my religious aspiration
like a silk worm
chewing the leaves of my imagination

The completed temple
the symbolic edifice of the oneness of spirit
shines in the dusty heat
embracing dry echoes of human struggle
transcending time
Here, the brown water purified by the depth and strength of spirit
gushes in the well of human experiences
I close my eyes and swim into the ocean of time
with memories of religious architecture
weaving the tapestry of my vision

Wet pavements in Vienna
lead to a cathedral
with its lofty grey steeple crowded by pigeons and the passionate eyes of tourists’ cameras
absorbing the stream of people kneeling down
to the awe and pride of history and art
The expression of Jesus Christ in his agony of love
lingering through centuries
casts pale eyes into dim space between columns
yet recognizing few spiritual eyes among joyful pilgrims
shining like pebbles on a rain-washed street

The pearly hues of redemption
gently arise from the artistic framework of imagination
The ardent eyes of religious aspiration
calmly burn in dark corners
gazing into the unwritten time-space
seeking for a well of love and resource of creativity

While numerous spiders are weaving time
in every crevice of human strife
the cathedral gathers silver webs
that gently caress scars of sins
redeeming
weaving
re-creating every dynamic moment
the visions of spiritual sensitivity
responding to the echoes of creative imagination
a temple in a Japanese village
frogs chant to the starry night
Yet ancient silence prevails
over the mossy rocks growing alive
under the peaceful slumber of a temple bell
Forces of contrasts and complements
assert their innate powers
merging and vanishing
into a gigantic spiral storm of time-space
then
re-emerge as exquisite reflections of the illusion of life
Arranged in a simple garden,
the mystery evokes a universal cry of awe
and penetrates hearts gazing into the cosmic mirror.

Heavy temple bells reverberate in my deep memory
echoing in the tunnel of my conscious search
for a passage to unity
for the wholeness of my spirit
bringing harmony in the infinitely chaotic current of life.

One solitary morning in the silky mist of spring
sitting in the small living room of a Victorian cottage
which my family is laboring to restore,
I concentrate on time through the visions of temples
gathering the vivid force of re-creation
amidst the scents of dust, the crowds, rain, pigeons, moss-covered rocks, frogs
and the resounding bells
with an earnest desire to invert time,
to drink brown water in a ritual
to return to Oneness in the cosmic dust . . .
through the labor of creation . . .
to construct a religious edifice
that embraces all spirituality
aspiring for the beauty of life.