

What are we to make of this frozen woman? Is she the sleeping-beauty goddess awaiting her faery-demon lover or does the smile denote that the union has finally taken place? In Yeatsian terms, she will always be his stolen child beyond the pale of the conventional Christian community. As Moira, she moves away from Mary the Virgin, the ultimate icon of unselfish motherhood whose son was sacrificed for the *sins* of the world. Yeats shows a concern for the death-centred religion which focuses on the hanged god on the cross when Oisín argues with St. Patrick for a life felt through the senses. The exodus out of Eden leaves behind the green natural world while the spiritual quest turns to conquest and to an exploitation of lands, often in the name of Christianity.

In the context of today, Urquhart's Irish woman immigrant, who sees spirits in earth, trees, and water, raises our consciousness to the fears which we hold for the natural environment and which we are in danger of losing. In death, Moira reverts to Mary, the frozen goddess who may yet once again be transformed into a living vibrant being. The ancient Mother Goddess survives as part of the Irish consciousness for she is the other who calls from the past and the beam of light who guides us towards what we are now becoming.

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¹"Kathleen Mavourneen" is the title of a traditional Irish song used here to symbolize Irish womanhood, an Irish immigrant, or Ireland the country. *Mavourneen* is also a term of endearment like "darling or dear," so "dear Kathleen" is both "beloved Ireland," a symbol for Ireland as woman, or Kathleen as Irish immigrant.

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RENEE NORMAN

Mask

orange
 three grey tears hand-painted
 on the hardened felt
 of a small mask on the table
 like a flat oval pumpkin
 with sockets
 a skeletal shape
 beckons

she molds the mask to her face
 folds of cheek & chin
 a perimeter of disregarded flesh

to lose herself she gazes deeply
 in the ornamental mirror on the table
 looking for the character hidden
 in the rigid form

the glass absorbs the felt
 the trace of grey
 reveals another face
 but when she turns around
 only eyes return my stare

when she turns away
 peels the mask from skin and bone
 the tears transform
 orange too

for once i felt beautiful
 she says
 in another face
 imagining it anew

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