

Black Agnes

1994 Extended Version

*dawn among the magic islands sleeping in the quilt of the silent sea | comes down like doves
while the seaweed town shifts in its bed | and the music starts up gently from the folds of the
rocks | and pools of silence reflect the light at the indistinct edges of the distant bay | the sun
has on a coat of rainbows | the lighthouse on the horizon fades | a seagull knocks on my
window with its beak*

at the end of the town where the hill falls
and the sudden sea catches children
the sun is a clear crystal on the grass
and morning has painted lines on all the walls

and at the town's brown gate where a wall leaps
and the green hill folds and the sea melts
the creased grass opens and the sun's door swings
as morning and a bird fly round and round and burn

*my girl is dressed in rainbows like the sun | she lives in the fields which are silent and full of
paths | she has a house of red stone twisted by the wind | she is full of changes | she is full of
the future | she is golden and silent like the fields | she sings in the language of the sea*

my girl is full of light and has no shadow
her hair is yellow and her face is gold
she walks where the sea sings and rocks dissolve
in the wordless fields she looks from her red tower's window
and when evening is here she smiles and puts aside her shoes

the houses shine with light and the sea wind breaks through them
the red walls ring and cry with chains and ships
and through a doorway runs the empty sea
and girls' soft faces slowly heave and lift

*the wind tugged us through streets which were filled with wisdom | we climbed the rock-
studded hill in the late evening as the sun's discarded coat hung over the sea | we learned the
secrets of tides and the names of the fishermen's concealed coves | we lay in the empty dunes
all afternoon | we drifted like a dream over the wide fields which extend from the cliff's brim |
between the woods and the water we followed the sand's edge to where the seagull's voice
dissolved in the wind*

and down among the streets the harbour wanders
the harbour where the sun shakes out the rocks
and walls are heaped with sand and ropes and ropes

the harbour underneath the castle's broken eye
where round boats drop like lobsters
and the ashen gannet settles in the sky

down there the water foams with music
and watch the deep cliff riding out into the sea
where far below a spring rings with water
and small fish reel among the waves
and the hard wind is weeping like a child

*and we listened as the music began creeping through from other rooms | and we made our
own songs whose words changed each time they were sung | and we watched the future
branching out before us like a maze of tunnels | and the music washed over the sea's face all
day as if it were the speech of birds | and we danced as evening walked in like a half-
forgotten friend | and we stood on the beach listening to the wind's heartbroken songs late
into the night*

there is music whirling in the tree-green water
where wind whips up the grass into a rainbow
and my girl walks laughing in the morning
and the wind weeps white tears of birds

and the crashing wind springs into the castle's green ears
where the strict gannet shouts at the laughing morning
and my girl weeps and her tears are white and turn to birds
and her hair is yellow and her eyes are ice
through the shining houses runs the empty sea
the heavy wind the ashes and the sun
through the empty castle climbs the shining sea
and my girl leaps and her hair is yellow
and the boats drop gently on the tide's green wall
and the hard wind weeping like a child comes up to dance

*that evening as we walked through the streets carrying sheaves of kisses | I saw the stars
slowly start to descend | until the houses' red roofs glowed and throbbed with their light | and
the gnarled stones in the walls by the harbour sang quietly | the stars began to drop one by
one to the ground as I took you in my arms and we spoke each others' names | there was so
much light that I could see nothing but your face | and the next morning the streets were
covered with shining specks of white as I walked towards the future | bright and impossible
and sudden as your distant smile*