



The Legend of Death: Two Poetic Sequences

John Milbank

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Description: The Earth's thin crust of organic matter and the still thinner crust of the spirit is the most concentrated, the most suggestive part of the cosmos. It in every way exceeds itself by pointing above its horizontal surface towards vertical transcendence. However, it can never leave itself behind and always carries itself with itself in every ascent. Poetry attends to the resultant human diagonal. --from the preface to the first sequence, "On the Diagonal: Metaphysical Landscapes" Endorsements: "That John Milbank is an original and powerful theologian is well known. That he is a poet of lyrical and epic sensitivities will now become well known. Here we find piercing lyrics such as 'Ode to Night,' 'Winter Interior,' and 'Cosmos.' Here we find American and British landscapes, alive with history and nature: squirrels in 'sculpted motion' and a day 'brushed with lemon.' And here too we find the ambitious long sequence, 'The Legend of Death,' which, with its concatenation of story, creed, and place, is itself a theological work, one that could only be written as a poem." --Kevin Hart, University of Virginia "This is a poetry of narrative intensity and lyric delicacy. Its sheer range and depth calls to mind 'The Anathemata' of David Jones." --Michael Symmons Roberts, award-winning British poet "John Milbank's new book of poetry offers us a greatly extended and ambitious structure, concerned with humanity's largest concepts across history and ideology as witnessed at their particular localities, as it were their homes in the landscape. I'm particularly glad that he has in this new venture maintained his sense of poetry as the proper vehicle of such vision, without letting it inflate. The poetry's theses are discovered constantly anew with registers of surprise and wonder which amount to an interlocked modesty. So the discoveries are transmitted to us as an authentically poetical account which never deserts the particular, personal, and questing experience, the eyes on the landscape, the words held in their places by the rhythmic tension of constant realisation and renewal. It is a work of genuine illumination." --Peter Riley, author of numerous works of poetry, including *Alstonefield: a poem* (2003)

About the Contributor(s): John Milbank is Research Professor of Religion, Politics, and Ethics at the University of Nottingham. In addition to many works of theology, he is the author of a previous collection of poetry, *The Mercurial Wood*.

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