

HERMAPHRODITUS / REBIS / RUBEDO

by Ell Erecius
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An Italian replica in Carrara marble of the Borghese Hermaphroditus
Artist unknown; mattress by Gian Lorenzo Bernini 1620
Original unearthed in 17th century

HERMAPHRODITUS -- (*rendered with dark backgrounds*)

the “son,” as the classicists would have it, of Hermes and Aphrodite,

female with male genitals, or, male with breasts --

(I guess they still haven’t decided on that front.)

1 --

She appeared to me in a dream a little while back.

“I wish you wouldn’t call me that.”

2 --

Somehow, I recognized her straight away,

“What? Call you what?”

“**Son.** I’m no one’s son.”

“Ah. I’m sorry. I didn’t know.”

3 --

She got pretty quiet after that.

*We sat in silence for a little while
until I spoke up.*

4--

“**So.** Uh, is Hermaphroditus --
are you cool with that name, still, or. . .?”

“Uh -- ah, I’ve never really -- I
think you might be the first to
ask me that?

Like, **ever?**”

REBIS -- (*rendered with light backgrounds*)

A “marriage,” as the alchemists would have it, between the Red King and White Queen,

the incorruptible meets the actualized, falls in love, their bodies merge;

become the Divine Hermaphrodite (distinct, I suppose, from the rest of us:

us Value Rack Transsexuals, us Coarse Ground Transsexuals,

the kind you can side-eye, no mystic repercussion --

well, to your knowledge, at least.)

5--

Once, not too long after she moved in:

“So. I read my wikipedia page.”

“Ah, shit, babe, **I told** you--”

“--symbolizes the coming together of
men and women in sacred union--**bull shit!**”

6--

I'd read that article a million times when we first started seeing each other.

“I haven't been with a **man** since my **CULT** broke up! --

-- not that the sort you've got **these days** would even be down --”

“**Darling** --”

7--

In a weird way, it made it easier to relate to her.

“--can't believe they would say that,
but I gotta hop on the train. Call you later?”

(*mumbling*)

“... sacred fuckin' union. . .”

“...a'ight. Love-you-bye.”

CLICK

RUBEDO -- (rendered with red backgrounds)

reddening, the final stage in the alchemists' Great Work,

rumored to have taken some time to complete. Well, no shit --

all those phone calls to uninterested doctors, pruning down the family tree,

hardly looks like the alchemists' faults, now, does it?

9--

I brought it up last week. She had just returned to the apartment from a morning run.

"I don't get it."

"Uh -- hm? Get what?"

10--

I just -- it's been **years!** Where's the **actualization?**

Where's the -- y'know, the. . . **spiritual renewal**, the. . ."

11--

She was quiet for a moment before speaking.

"You know these things take a while."

12--

Cleared her throat.

"You could go back to therapy."

"**Therapy?** You're supposed to be my **divine protector** and -- "

"**Hon.** Please don't pull the **goddess** card. . .

I -- look, it's **eight AM.** Right now, I'm not your divine **anything.** I'm your **girlfriend.**"

13--

"And **anyways** -- it worked for me."