

## **Firebird Quantum:**

When you imagine a Firebird Becoming, what does it look like?

I imagine the rising of a figure from ash. Wingtips coming first, ash forming a sooty skeleton structure which hardens, calcifies to bone which peels itself like an onion to grows its feathers.

Firebirds are terrifying and gorgeous beasts. They ask only that they be left alone and they offer the power of transformation.

Dima was the Golden Apple they wrote about in Russian children's stories - the apple the Firebird had tried to steal. He was circular, made of muscled fat held together with chained sunshine: the golden robes of a minister wore him well. He conducted sermons in cursive Cyrillic, penmanship inscribed in the decades of twitching muscle memory his forebears had passed on to him. During early morning services the sun refracted through rock-pocked windows and hugged his golden stomach full on. Here he was truly radiant and glowing, photosynthesizing, growing, and waiting for the Firebird to find him.

At once physicist, judge, and lawyer of the definite and the indefinite quantum universe, he would light a candle, a pinprick of burning sun caught between his fingertips.

Each time, he raised it close to his lips and extended an offering to the flame whose heat turned gaze to three Icons inset in heavy oak frames; Icons of alabaster skin and dark eyes heavysset with burdensome wisdom.

The candle awakened the Icons: unfroze their stiff alabaster digits and softened dark eyes. It scattered a circular ripple through the threads of flame that stitched their cloaks, activating a scintillating gold web. A quantum universe of radio whispers and morse code messages from believers glissando'd like a heavy, wet, breath as the candle absorbed Dima's soft prayer.

The Icons took the golden thread of prayer and twisted it into a hank. It was the stuff of quantum space-time, of secrets, facts, planetary organisms, and stars, all which slid up and down on the vast golden plane of candle thread. It weaved itself into the linings of their already patched cloaks, dispersing itself among the 3 of them: bits of facts in the shoulders, opinions inlaid into the hem, in the aglets of their laces. The stuff of dark matter embroidered itself, in a heavy hand, the jeweled inset of galaxies and universes into their cuffs.

They shook hands and collisions ensued. They parted ways and the golden plane of Infinity grew between them. They walked until the golden, burning insides tore through the rough canvas exterior, shaking loose ash as warm letters of fire sheathed them. They spread their arms and flew, leaving behind a golden cloak which bore quantum whispers of burning matches, theories

of revolution, caustics of a pool bottom, the sound of tearing paper, a head shave.  
white-yellowed linoleum that peels up like a blooming rosette in a kitchen on a summer's, the  
lick of the wind and the way it kisses you, passing on "I Love you."

Firebirds are birthed from ash each time a candle is lit. Dima, the Golden Apple that he is,  
forbidden Eden, walks with the brothers he has created. He does not interject, he listens but  
leads, and at the end of each one's journey, he shakes hands with them before delivering parting  
grace.

He holds the Firebird's feather in his fingers.  
His words taper and the plume of pressed light grows dull.  
He opens his eyes.

He blows out the flame.