

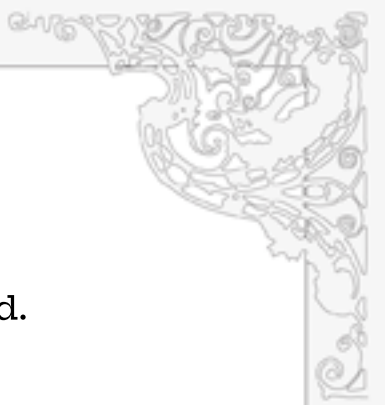


CAROLINE AND THE KNOWLEDGE  
OF THE WORLD

This princess is  
born in a Century of Lights;  
educated  
in the Order of Things;  
protected  
by Fairy Godmothers  
who give her gifts  
of algorithms ,  
syllogisms,  
scales and arpeggios  
and a mind of her own.

She was seen  
in the garden,  
walking amongst the parterres,  
dreaming  
Arcadian dreams.  
There will be  
leafy glades,  
walks of shade,  
temples to the muses,  
cooling waters,  
nature supremely fair and sovereignly good.  
And topping it all  
celestial bodies  
dancing their endless dance  
to the music of the spheres.  
Standing in her garden  
the princess  
experiences  
a moment's understanding  
of the earth spinning around the sun,  
and the moon around the earth,  
and the whole world breathing in and out  
in perfect harmony.

1.




This princess  
sets out to collect the world.  
From her Royal Chamber  
she can tame  
the wild profusion  
of existing things:  
In this cabinet  
fantastic entities  
and fabulous animals  
under lock and key.  
Next, the realms of nature:  
Animal, vegetal and mineral.  
Bezoars, fossils, corals, agate and onyx.  
Then a room of knowledge containing  
all of the books ever written,  
and a gallery of portraits  
many miles long  
tracing her royal ancestry  
through the mists of time.

This princess  
really **MUST** know the world.  
For her drawing room  
she collects  
scientists,  
theologians,  
chiefs from faraway lands,  
architects,  
poets,  
feral children,  
philosophers,  
composers.  
She's a head-hunter.  
She knows  
the order of things.  
She has glimpsed  
a perfect universe.

2.





But there is, somewhere in her palace,  
a secret cupboard,  
far from her library  
and her cabinet of curiosities.  
Hidden from the eyes  
of her distinguished heroes  
is her Cabinet d'Ignorance  
where she hides  
minute pairs of shoes  
belonging  
to her lost children;  
letters she never received  
from her first-born;  
the pleas that were never answered  
by her royal in-laws  
and other secrets of her heart  
that will not be tamed  
or reasoned with.

Mercedes Kemp 2010