

The Curse

Josh Ritter

He opens his eyes, falls in love at first sight
With the girl in the doorway
What beautiful lines, how full of life
After thousands of years what a face to wake up to

He holds back a sigh as she touches his arm
She dusts off the bed where till now he's been sleeping
Under miles of stone, the dried fig of his heart
Under scarab and bone starts back to its beating

She carries him home in a beautiful boat
He watches the sea from a porthole in stowage
He can hear all she says as she sits by his bed
Then one day his lips answer her in her own language

The days quickly pass, he loves making her laugh
The first time he moves it's her hair that he touches
She asks "Are you cursed?" He says "I think that I'm cured"
Then he talks of the Nile and the girls in bull rushes

In New York he is laid in a glass-covered case
He pretends he is dead, people crowd round to see him
But each night she comes round, and the two wander down
The halls of the tomb that she calls a museum

Often he stops to rest, but then less and less
Then it's her that looks tired, staying up asking questions
He learns how to read from the papers that she
Is writing about him and he makes corrections

It's his face on her book and more and more come to look
Families from Iowa, upper West-siders
Then one day it's too much, he decides to get up
And as chaos ensues, he walks outside to find her

She's using a cane, and her face looks too pale
But she's happy to see him, as they walk he supports her
She asks "Are you cursed?" but his answer's obscured
In a sandstorm of flashbulbs and rowdy reporters

Such reanimation, the two tour the nation
He gets out of limos, he meets other women
He speaks of her fondly, their nights in the museum
But she's just one more rag now he's dragging behind him

She stops going out, she just lies there in bed
In hotels in whatever towns they are speaking
Then her face starts to set and her hands start to fold
And one day the dry fig of her heart stops its beating

Long ago on the ship, she asked "Why pyramids?"
He said "Think of them as an immense invitation"
She asks "Are you cursed?" He says "I think that I'm cured"
Then he kissed her and hoped that she'd forget that question