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**Honourable Mention** for two poems:

Dazzle Me Already AND Rose and Savage: Epic Poem of Themisticles

by Cecilia Masimo

**Dazzle me already**

Dazzle me. I said dazzle me!  
Open your mouth and sing sweet poetry to me  
murmur symphonies of creations  
With your poet lips and leave me speechless.  
Whisper to me the true reason of life  
And draw me into  
Your web of fantasy and reality  
Until the two blend  
and I can't tell the difference.  
Speak to me in the language of love;  
Mi amour, mo chara, my love...  
And whisk me off to your reality  
Where you'll make love to my ears  
And music to my soul.  
I'll touch your cool lips with honey  
And let it drizzle onto your open palm  
and watch as you give it to me  
like an offering to a goddess,  
And I'll turn to putty, I swear I will!  
Take me out for a ride, and drive me crazy  
With your warm words and sweet cadence.  
Have me at "hey" and I'll let the words  
Envelop me, drag me  
into your something-ness  
That I can't quite put my finger on.  
They'd call it love,  
but your words will surpass  
How you'll make me feel:  
With a word, with a look.  
I've already given you an opening  
So take it already and say something... anything.  
But let me warn you,  
I won't take anything with out dazzle.  
So...dazzle me already.

**Rose and savage: Epic Poem of Themisticles**

It is you, muses who hold the poem  
of Themisticles in your hearts, guided by your hands,  
and sung from your souls. I call upon thee to a place of ancient strife,  
Of a land on its last pillar of strength, to become the pen  
That wrights of their great hero Themisticles,  
And become the tongue that speaks of his many  
Heroic deeds. But, o muse, be that of the bard who speaks  
of his most gallant feat; that of Salamis & Plateau.

He who saved his land from the tyrannical hands  
Of the eastern barbarians who from chaos womb  
Conceived set there greedy eyes on our Athens,  
Dear beautiful Athens, to destroy our beloved.  
“kith and kin, the enemy outnumbers us three to one!  
though many quake at the numbers, it is good odds for any Greek!”  
a chorus of agreement answered the hero as he roused their spirits  
“Those barbarians think to destroy our culture,  
rape our women and pillage this great empire!  
We will not let them. “ours is a strong nation, a great nation.  
Where we lack in numbers, we make up for in courage!  
This day, we rescue a world from chaos and tyranny,  
and usher in a brighter future than anyone can imagine!”

With long boats and high spirits, the army prepared to take on the Persian,  
Themisticles to take on Xerxes. It was there, on the shrouded water  
That they met silence, profound in its oddity.  
The sea stopped its waves and the sky held its breath,  
as the men glimpsed the other: Themisticles stern-faced  
noticed the mad look in the eyes of Xerxes.  
The slight odour of blood-lust enveloped our hero.

“ I have heard of your greatness, King of kings.” he said indifferently  
“but you are not wanted here! Be gone, foul sight you are,  
And leave us be. One chance of surrender will we give you  
No harm will come to you or your men, We are not a violent lot as you are,  
wantonly seeking destruction” Xerxes, arrogant and rash  
laughed at him. “in mine eyes, all that I see is a weak old man  
Straining to lift his weary bones. See how his arm shakes as  
he holds the weapon, men?” He roared at his jest,  
his men joining in the mirth. but Themisticles calmly let him finish.  
“neophutos.” he muttered in disgust. “greenhorn.”  
To Xerxes he shook his head “we have given you a chance,  
But your arrogance and pride will be the death of you.”  
Xerxes with a malicious grin stared down at Themisticles  
“ people fear me not for my lash,

but my divine power. But generous god am, I  
will compromise with you *Athenians*.”  
he spat the word out eyeing Themisticles with distaste.  
“I can make you ruler of Greece.  
I can make you rich beyond belief.  
Do you crave the divine? I can make it happen.  
You will carry my name and all your  
Rivals will kneel at your feet as you will kneel at mine.”  
“you are gracious as you are wise Xerxes, but we are Greek!  
Kneeling is not something we do well. And killing all your men at Marathon  
has left a bloody cramp in our legs.  
Kneeling will not be likely, o divine one.”

Xerxes growled pointing his sword at the heart of Themisticles  
“every piece of Greek parchment will be burned.  
The eyes and tongues of your Poets and scribes will be ripped out  
And strung on our necks. We will make sure that the world  
Will forget about the Greeks! You will disappear!”  
Themisticles, with a wave of his hand  
Released the triremes, the sleek ships flew out into the sea,  
Aided with Ares power. Thunder shook the land while thousands  
upon thousands of Persian ships went down,  
unable to keep up with the Greek boats.

Like a torrent of irrepressible rapids the Greeks destroyed the lot leaving  
Just one navy boat afloat. Therein laid Xerxes, pale as the moon.  
“you are no god. Nor kings of kings. All I see it a man who reached too far  
And sought what was unattainable. I can not kill you, man.”  
Themisticles with a curt nod turned his back  
From the poor shrivelling man. He too knew what  
Losing everything to a man felt like. Therein was a mistake.  
For the traitorous Xerxes pulled out a dagger  
Thrusting it to his back. The dint of steel made  
Themisticles turn back a jaded look on his face  
as he stared at the quivering Xerxes. With a quick swish, the man known as  
king of kings, Lay dead at his feet. “a man who strikes at another’s back and  
hides away at the call of battle Is no man at all.”

He turned his face to the remaining Greek army,  
Then to the heavens where he screamed:  
Hear me o mighty gods! Let all men hear me!  
Today we have defeated the harbingers of wicked.  
We have freed the land and brought peace to the world.  
let there be a man who comes forth to deny our claim.”  
A hush settled and no sound could be heard  
Except the whimpering of the surviving Persians.

“we have done the good deed, by the gods who watch us, we have won!”  
The seas calmed, roared its approval as Poseidon smiled,  
and the heavens opened up as the men shouted their victory.  
Some would say a vision of Zeus appeared in the sky proclaiming  
The righteousness of the victory, the saving of the rose from the savage.  
But all I could see was the great Themistocles his back, to the noonday sun.  
With silent tears of woe for his enemy staining his cheeks with sadness.  
A grown man crying, is a rare sight indeed  
But that of one crying for an enemy as evil as the Persians  
Is rarer indeed.