

Bourne toWrite...

creative writing
workshops

Prometheus

by Sue Hitchcock

I've been on this mountaintop for ages. Although it was torture, at least the view was a compensation to start with. The valley below was covered in trees and you could just see the river flowing here and there. Occasionally some of my creatures would come into view and there was a wonderful smell of roasting meat. They had children and as the communities grew, they felled trees to make shelters and in the clearings they grew herbs and fruit. The cooking smells became ever more delectable, but it got harder to see for the smoke. They were so prolific (PRO-LIFE-IC) they had to make tools to grow enough food and for some reason they started dragging stuff out of the earth and burning that too. The smell was and still is choking, sulphurous and the pain in my side is worse now with coughing. The sun is coming up and I see the eagle waiting on a pinnacle nearby.

You understand, this is my punishment. The trial was quite unfair. Gaia claimed I had stolen the fire to give to the humans I had created. I don't know if Zeus would have been convinced, if Hephaestus hadn't spoken for the prosecution. He always claimed it had been given to him alone and I had no right to it. Anyhow the sentence Zeus gave me, as an immortal, was to be bound to this rock and have his eagle peck out my liver every day. I can't die! My liver grows back every night. Gaia says I have ruined everything – my humans have swarmed all over her and burned everything – all the ancient sunlight stored in trees and rocks. They have eaten all the animals, polluted every river, every sea. Is there a god anywhere who can forgive me?

The sun is higher now and I can see two birds on the nearby peak. One, I know is the eagle, my torturer, but what is the other? They're opening their wings! They're coming! Close your eyes and wait for the pain! Wait...! Wait...!

Opening my eyes I see the eagle, drooling, ready, but the other has brilliant wings,

coloured by Iris with rainbow sheen – blue, green, purple scintillating in the sun.

“I am Phoenix. I bring a possibility to end this torture. I rise from the ashes after the conflagration and live again.”

“How can you help me? I neither burn nor die! My life is pain.”

“The fire you have given the humans will destroy them completely and the ice will melt and flood over all their ill deeds. Gaia will live again without them. She has no need for them. But humans can live again and rise from the ashes like me, but only if they do not have fire. Hercules waits to release you, if you agree to take back the fire to the underworld where it belongs.”