

THE THREE BOGEYMEN

Oil and textiles on canvas

The energetic, jagged forms of 'The Three Dancers' by Picasso are thought to be imbued with the artist's personal recollections of a triangular affair, which resulted in the suicide of his friend Carlos Casegemas. Love, sex and death are linked in an ecstatic dance resulting in a loss of self.

The left-handed dancer in particular seems possessed by uncontrolled, Dionysian frenzy. Her face relates to a mask from New Guinea, owned by the artist, and points to Picasso's association of 'primitive' forms with expressiveness and sexuality.

As an artist I often draw strength from the Surrealist movement, harnessing its energies to produce work of an extraordinary intensity. 'The Three Bogeymen' is one such work. Hybrid figures, part-human, part-animal and part-ghost begin to appear as described by my four year old son in his bedroom at bedtime, and also by Picasso in his depiction.

This work is an interpretative study of Picasso's, and his three dancers have now been substituted by the three bogeymen.

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Funny how trouble comes in threes
Love and sex and death
Each begins as a necessary dance
That ends in frenzy

Funny how these three performances
Begin as a sideshow
Then fill the stage
With their endless encores

The first of these is love
Finely balanced on slender toes
Building a prison wall
For the solitude to follow

The second is sex
The grim addiction
That sends love spinning
In stiletto orbits

The third is death

When you have waltzed with the first
And jitterbugged through the second
The third will sweep you off your feet
So these three bogeymen
Hide in the wardrobe
Part human part creature
Part imagined ghost

And let them not link hands
Let them not dance together
The show is too terrible
The dance too wild

Let them not invite you
With their Dionysiac arms
To partner and embrace you
With their empty charms

Stop the music, stop the dancing,
Close the curtain, clear the floor -
I have seen them dance together –
I can watch no more

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