

TRANSCRIPTIONS

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I. Initiation

Serpentine grace
snakes through phoenix wings
and drops a beat.

She punctuates
each syncope
with embodied
knowledge –

this memory
this history
mine, not mine
in her hips.

An agelessness,
a piercing – like bullets
through the chest,
through a hole-riddled edifice
in Beirut, or an abandoned
olive grove in Keserwan
that still bears my name.

Tell me, did the chest drop
before or after
the advent of war?

A history unrecoverable,
a people lost in time

and devastation,
re-imagined
with each articulation
of her torso –

my people
in her body
re-mixed

my bullet-ridden memory
full of holes

my blood coursing
through each rotation
of her wrist – through
the drop, the bump, the slide,

the goddess in her neck.

Forgotten like Venus,
damned as Baal,

she dances my reclamation,
dances the resurrection
of temples –
and the fires
they burned in.

She floats on the ghosts
as one chosen
to pray for them
through her form.

They carry her,
and give their blessing
that she might raise them
from the spirit world,
back to the blue-green sea
back to the mist of the mountains
back to through the bleeding earth.

I see them
ripple through her –
through the beat,
the scratch, suspension
and pulse, the swirl
of unseen feet.

She dances
something I lost
before I was born.

She dances for me
she dances me
she dances

and the loss cries out
to embrace her,
to become her,
to feel that spirit
ripple through me,
to find that knowledge
in my cells – or hers –

to possess or be possessed
by what she has found.

She dances,
and some long-forgotten ember
reignites.

II. Elongation (a binding)

The serpent was a goddess once,
a sacred energy –

demonized for her power
persecuted for her desire
burned for her freedom.

She had many names:

Ashtarte
in the land of purple,
Lady of Byblos,
Ishtar, goddess of love and war,
Manasa, Aphrodite, Tannou,
Isis, Kali, Imana
Venus...

And many knew her,
like carnal knowledge,
breath and pleasure,
balancing on the precipice
of pain.

She was like that –
planetary
circular
serpentine

Her skin felt wet
even when it wasn't –
the silken illusion of scales;
the tenderness of her sides
could make one forget
her venom.

As she glided through existence,
through the fluids of the universal body,
she sang – a vibration
an abstract thought
pre-verbal
all-knowing
for millennia...

Until the One-god, with all his armies,
chased her out of orbit,
out of earth,
out of breath itself.

She slid into the body
to escape the violence,
to live in the flesh,
to coil around the human
spine, and renew life...

Even now,
she inhabits you –
slithers through you,
glissading down the slope
of your neck,
caressing your shoulders –

She wears you like a golden fleece
and glistens on your skin.

She undulates inside you
with the elegance of silk,
the fierceness of flame –

this sensuality – an ascension
lifting you to ecstasies,
that you might know yourself
to be divine –

Stellar
Brilliant

She shines in you –
a goddess incarnate.

III. Termination: Breaking Away

She says:

*Play for me, lamenting women
that the dead might rise
to inhale the incense –*

I have taken a fallen star
into my breast,
and there, she will shine for you –

for the travelers,
for the sailors,
for the weary in the valley
trying to get home.

Come home to me,
warm yourself in my fire,
in the starlight of my bosom,
in the wingspan of my phoenix arms.

Embrace me,
and I shall protect you.
I can taste your strength.
I will eat your vulnerability –

hold it on my tongue,
swallow it whole
and digest it for you –
like a rabbit in the mouth
of a snake.

For I have been to the underworld,
passed through its burning gates,
and returned.

I have banished unfaithful husbands,
loved undying women,
survived five times at least
and only grown stronger,
wiser, more beautiful.

Like a pulsar, a supernova,
I shine, and invite you
to dance!

For I am the glory and the power –
from before humans began to count time

before the formation of the earth,
before all that you know,
or have ever dreamed...

There was a light –

a fallen star –

in my breast
in my breath

I am immortal,
and never fall from grace.

My temples have been buried,
destroyed a thousand times,
yet they burn still
in human consciousness.

You see, I cannot be forgotten.
I move through you.
I am the snake in your spine,

the energy of ascension,
the fiercest love you could ever imagine.

I am the fire in your breast,
the life in your womb,
the knowing...

Embrace me,
And I shall dance for you!