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Sacred Lucidity: Embodied Identity Through the Lens of Poetry

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Sacred Lucidity: Embodied Identity Through the Lens of Poetry

A senior project submitted to the faculty of Dominican University of California
in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Bachelor of Arts in
Humanities and Cultural Studies

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Introductory Essay Component

Sacred Lucidity: Embodied Identity Through the Lens of Poetry

Reading and writing 'confessional' poetry has concrete value as a means of exploring individual experiences of personal identity. The poet Salvatore Quasimodo stated that "Poetry...is the revelation of a feeling that the poet believes to be interior and personal which the reader recognizes as his own." This statement allows conceptual space for the writer as confessional in their work, and yet also allows for the reader to identify with specific experiences or emotions conveyed by the author. The poet may write passionately of their solitary fears or loves - but ultimately, the experience of writing and reading poetry (particularly upon personal themes) impacts the group of readers and the group of society to which to poet belongs. As poets, we have an opportunity to write about the overarching human condition from our own perspective; we also have the opportunity to describe our specifics of self in relation to group identity. As a woman, I write about my experiences of gendered violence, or microaggressions. As a fat woman, I write about my experiences of body image and body stigmas. With my mental illness diagnosis, I write about the fear and lived experience that comes along with chronic bipolar disorder. These are aspects of my identity, and areas where particulars of my social location interact (for instance, the crossover experience of fatness and womanhood).

In the poems “Mirror” by Sylvia Plath and “in salem” by Lucille Clifton, brave dissections and expressions of the truth of individual and group identity are further illuminated. The provable value of writing and reading poetry becomes apparent in close readings of these two poems. Without confessional poetry written about personal themes, neither individuals nor groups would have access to the free divulgence of truth with the same high levels of efficacy. As implied in Quasimodo’s quote, the reader finds themselves within the words of the poet, while the poet excavates and produces their personal selfhood on paper, sometimes without concern for the audience. A new avenue in contemporary poetry is the work of social media poets, such as Rupi Kaur, whose primary platform for distribution is Instagram. Kaur writes short poetry, with general themes - as opposed to the specific, detailed, and highly personal poetry of Plath or Clifton. These contrasts provide more clear evidence of the value of writing one’s truth as individually as possible.

Ultimately, the process of exploring self through the lens of poetry is a radical act. This includes the process of healing, learning and growing, and in the process of creating political change. Detailed confessional poetry is a powerful medium which provides the space and methodology to best understand personal identity, through the framework of our demographic groups or who we are as individuals. My creative component Sacred Lucidity will demonstrate the product of my personal identity exploration through poetry, and will provide the reader possibilities for identification of their own components of positionality and sense of self.

Sylvia Plath is a classically confessional poet, and demonstrates the value of detailed personal poetry. Her poem "Mirror" shows aspects of mental illness, womanhood, and aging, which are all potential points of contact for the reader. "Mirror" by Sylvia Plath is based upon an anthropomorphization of a mirror, written from the perspective of the object itself. The phrasing and imagery used in "Mirror" are vivid, relatively numerous, and fully explained. For instance, "Now I am a lake." (the first line of the second stanza of the poem) is a visual cue that readers can use to add sensations to the sight of a mirror. We are given a time marker ("Now") as a part of this complete sentence. The idea of a lake gives way to the readers own imagination as they understand commonly occurring lake activities; stagnancy of water, the act of swimming, some sense of depth, and even the fishes in a lake. These are all immediate associations that may come from Plath's clear and simple metaphor of this mirror as "a lake." There is little mention of this metaphor until we see its recurrent theme in the last phrase. The woman (the owner of the mirror, or person using this mirror) "day after day" is described in the last line of this poem as "ris[ing] like a terrible fish" and thus Plath recalls her initial metaphor of the second of two stanzas.

Overall, one theme of "Mirror" is an emotional tribute to honesty (the mirrors consistently 'accurate' observance with the passing of time in the woman's life). A second theme presents itself, though less overtly, in the mention of womanhood, or the initial visions of "a young girl" (in the second to last line of the poem). There is also an ambiance of sadness or melancholy running through the language ("flickers" in line eight, and "darkness" in line nine,) the concepts ("she rewards me with tears" from line

14,) and the resulting tone overall. I am discussing "Mirror" by Sylvia Plath for the sake of Plath's professed themes, and possible tones of mental illness. Above all, Plath's exploration of her own identity, through the mirror's experience of its female owner (as she ages and "search[es] [...] for what she really is" in line 11) provides a framework for poetry as an act of empowerment via self-reflection. Though we are not, as readers, explicitly informed if Plath is the woman subject of "Mirror," Plath is certainly not entirely removed from the poem's personalization of the woman's experiential trajectory, as described by her mirror. The examination of the intimate meaning of literally viewing oneself (and its emotional impact) provided in "Mirror" alludes to the intrinsically healing process of emotional self identity discovery which is accessible through 'confessional poetry.' Plath's works are often labeled as such, though academic feminist ethics discussion - in relation to female identified poets labeled as 'confessional' - argue that men's works of the same poetic content would be seen (and categorized!) quite differently, providing a more general or neutral accessibility. "Mirror" by Plath speaks to the power of poetry and poetic self-discussion of personal identity - much like the poem "in salem" by Lucille Clifton, which uses a similar style of depth, allowing space for magical realism... yet, Clifton draws directly into a political space, unlike Plath's "Mirror." The political implications of "in salem" may be linked to the ongoing politicization of the black female experience in the U.S. (where both poets wrote,) in contrast with the privilege of Plath's poem's more narrow and individual scope, as per Plath's whiteness. The difference in thematic reach, however, may be nothing more than a difference in their respectively intended styles of writing - or Clifton's poetic ability to broaden her

impacts juxtaposed against Plath's fixation upon self alone. Both poems are, nevertheless, critical and relatable examinations of selfhood.

"in salem" by Lucille Clifton is a gorgeous poetic foray into the idea and feeling of magic and witches. This poem directly confronts the realities of the spiritual threat of racism, along with the menacing physical threat of racism to a black woman's bodily safety. When Clifton writes "the terror is in [...] the plain face of the white woman watching us" (line 8-11,) we feel the emotional and spiritual intensity of racially charged fear and the written simplicity of an eerie tone in Clifton's image of the "plain face of the white woman." Clifton begins in a stunning and satisfying, almost musical style of writing about the power of black female witchcraft and (an implied) sense of black femininity. Clifton's use of end rhyme is subtle and not overwhelming in its frequency, yet allows the reader into a potentially 'magical' space of language, in parallel with definitive themes of the supernatural or metaphysical. This poem, like "Mirror" by Plath, is an exploration of identity, yet Clifton adds a new elevation of power and impact through language about a group of women, and her use of "weird sister" (line 1) as a call to certain readers of this poem. Clifton explores identity yet also writes to group identity, fears of the dangers of racialized judgement, and perhaps even to racial trauma ("the terror" repeated in line 3, 5, and 8). Clifton expertly weaves truth, personal identity, and the power of political honesty into her brief poetic masterpiece of "in salem." The last line describes the white woman's object of action (her bread that she is presumably about to bake) as "ordinary" thus striking a strong contrast between the black witch's magic and the normal, perhaps even boring realities of the white woman's dullness -

this may also link to the veil of mundanity surrounding the hidden or latent racial prejudices of white women. The witches in this poem are truly entrancing; with “the moon / choreographing the dance of wereladies” (line 3 and 4). Clifton paints a vivid picture of the “weird sisters” and their witchcraft as almost celebratory or joyous; “the terror is not in the broom / swinging around to the hum of cat music” (line 5 and 6). All in all, Clifton creates further evidence of the beautifully radical and transformative power of poetry for healing, truth-seeking, and exploring of social identity. This provides further evidence of the concrete value of writing and reading poetry towards intrinsically critical aspects of self and life. Yet, not all poetry carries the same level of impact in relation to the specific identity of the author and reader - we see far more general content in the case of Rupi Kaur.

Rupi Kaur, a particularly well-known Instagram poet, had sold 2.5 million copies worldwide of her debut collection, milk and honey by 2017. This large quantity of sales is a rarity in the world of poetry. Kaur has talent, and she is wonderful at creating accessible and well-liked poetic art. Yet, it could be argued that poetry created for social media platforms is often vapid and written with the intention of easy mass relatability and post-sharing by popular consumption. The more personal forms of poetry add an element which is inaccessible to Instagram poets such as Rupi Kaur; although she has clear skill, specific to her aims, she does not take on the arduous and profoundly important task of deep personal dissection of the specifics of self. The intrinsic nature of seeking viral poetry takes away the intimacy found in describing emotions or occurrences available in longer or medium length poems. Kaur has so much to offer;

her religious faith is wonderfully incorporated into her work and many of her writings are beautiful. Nevertheless, the youth's embracing of 'quick' poetry has potentially detracted from contemporary interest in highly sensory and detailed poetic exploration. On page 124 of milk and honey, Kaur leaves the reader an entire poem in these four lines: "your voice / alone / drives me / to tears" and on page 150, she writes a poem of three lines "you must enter a relationship / with yourself / before anyone else" which reads more as a motivational quote than a full personal poem. It must be conceded that not all poetry has the same goals, or serves the same purpose. Many brilliant writers, like Kaur, have leaned into aphoristic styles throughout history. Nonetheless, within the context of "Mirror" by Sylvia Plath, and "in salem" by Lucille Clifton, this counterexample of short and somewhat depersonalized poetry displays a clear contrast in possible benefits of different styles of work. Ultimately, many contemporary social media poets are successful in circumnavigating the gatekeepers, which is a powerful component of self-promotion and accessible publishing platforms. Yet, poetry which dives deeper into individual experiences of identity has so many positive aspects and ways to contribute; perhaps the identification of the reader is not as frequent, but it may be more meaningful or emotionally moving nonetheless. Are a larger quantity of reblogs worth the sacrifice of specialized and rare forms of reader's identification?

Without poetic exploration of our place in the world, we are left wandering through an artistic blank space regarding who we are as individual human beings and the groups to which we belong. I have learned a great deal about who I am through the process of creating Sacred Lucidity, and I have found categories of my sense of self and

my behavior which are both changed by my role in society and in which I can make change, myself. Now, I want to assist the process of a re-popularization of the craft of poetry. If our educational system and our cultural paradigms continue to dismiss the value of the humanities, the use of poetry, and the beauty in writing about oneself in a confessional style - then we will lose the depth of knowledge that confessional poetry can provide to our understanding of self in relation to group. We must remember that this is not just the work of poets; anyone can write about their experience of social location through confessional poetry styles, and anyone can experience the healing and political intensity that this act creates.

When we see ourselves reflected back through the selected harmony of a poets work, we are confronted by beautiful and sometimes saddening truths. It is our work, as human beings, to find methods and means to become our best selves. This is the work of the group and of the individual. If we want to heal the society within which we exist, we must create art that confronts the issues in that society. If we want to feel safe, happy, and healthy - we should create art that reflects our pains and joys alike. In order to feel and understand who we are, reading the works of other people who have walked similar or disparate paths from our own can cultivate a renewed sense of self and of overall heightened awareness. If we want to understand where the real problems exist, within the dynamics of group interaction, the political sphere, and the realities of marginalization or privilege, we ought to read the works (and thus hear the stories) of all people. For these reasons, the liberation of self through reading and writing confessional poetry is critically important to improving society as a whole. I hope that in

reading my thesis, you will get a sense of my own process in exploration of social location and much more. I hope you, thus, find further proof that we must not forget about the true power of poetry, especially around the details of our experiences of identity. We can make this world a better place and heal ourselves from all kinds of pain: confessional poetry holds the power to play a valuable role in this innately radical process. Write your truth, and read the truths of others. Few tasks are more important in this life than understanding our experiences, and from that understanding moving forward into most brilliant iterations possible of both self and society. When we embrace the power of poetry, we embrace the betterment of our world altogether.

Works Cited

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Context

Sacred Lucidity, a 22 page poetry chapbook, is the creative component of a larger project which was written for my Dominican University of California senior thesis. The precluding analytical essay comprises the first piece of my project. The two parts of my full project synergize, comprising the creation of Sacred Lucidity: Embodied Identity Through the Lens of Poetry. This two part contribution adds to academic conversation around social location and the exploration of personal identity and positionality through the art of poetry. This chapbook represents evidence of the power of poetry to describe experiences of self and group, through intimate confessional poetry - even when the poet is not overtly present in the poem itself. Thank you for reading, and enjoy!

Thank you to the Tuxedo Arts Journal for publication,
in the Spring 2019 Issue, of three poems from my thesis:

“You Are Ready Now”

“Be Present Forever”

and “The Cure for Shame and Emptiness” [title upon date of publication]

Sacred Lucidity

by APL

for my mother

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I. Sand

a detailed decision

I will subvert my own flesh
when I write
nothing is off limits
not even the hand of death
I will describe my nightmares of malignant martians
who screeched in my face with his arm raised
above my crumpling body

I will expose the honesty of my spirit guide - blessed, extraterrestrial mother
who set herself together with me, eye to eye

I'll create fresh documents upon
the likely toxicity of whiteness
and acrid prejudice steaming through interactions
observable even in the speech of my childhood friends

I will explore my stuck sexuality
phobia of my aspects of gayness and
contrary obsession of seeking male energy

I'll type up
my alcoholic tendencies
tabs of LSD, all of the drugs on the kitchen table
I shall scrawl in notebooks
the hypersexuality of my manias
orgasming alone on the front-room couch
of the mental health care holding facility

I will write these achey triumphs
running through five dimensions
and forbidden lessons
sex is gross. I am ashamed. I am the enemy.
I am a survivor
I am healing
radical honesty is a curse
and the most lovely form of personal witchcraft

I will profess my universal philosophies and put forth my meaning of life
deleting absence of coveted wisdoms
forgetting the terror of showing rotten items
this is to be
of use
of service

I will provide my information

one human woman
and her tip-of-the-iceberg soul
dissolving
sugar water
dripping down my fingers

it's a girl!

reminding me of what
fresh air
tastes like

must've been a
d
r
i
z
z
l
e in the sky
last night

our mother planet is getting hot and the fires won't stop and my
sense of feminine self becomes consumed
with worry of the end.

feminist ethics of care about Earth, please. foresight should be
trendy. *community isn't a myth.*

Mindful Suffering

Oh cruel creation of mine→ A Temple of Insanity + dust

(I contorted form, feet point pain
for the dancers,

for my competition of other fine young girls using their bodies too,
as instruments of classical dance.

I starved you, my drained flesh
I sickened you, my limbs
organs screaming for reinforcements
as I puked out prunes
in the shared bathrooms
of my first college dorm.)

I am a body-vigilante
I am the woodworker of self
carving into my own tissues with battle cries and panic

Tied down to the realm of the physical, while my head is lagging in space
I wanted to become a practitioner of astral projection
so I could forget my dear body in another dimension,
upon the physical plane
of my well-neglected twin bed

I dreamed of detaching my body from my soul, returning to the spirit world-
until my mind took charge and did these things for me.

She-brain turned on she-body and made she-body ever sicker

I had a short shelf life
after expiration, I exploded into thousands of unseen stars
I became my own worst fear, that of pure isolation,
because I disavowed my vessel
my fragile spaceship of olive skin
and took it upon myself to wound the very most precious object of them all...

(in preparation for worship)

I was a lunar mirage in those days
sickly and skinny and tamping down tears *(temple priestess bathes in her fluid)*

Be Present Forever

Just so much to touch, like cobwebs and a spider's freshest home
each spun thread in contact with another
the online abundance of ideas, like a woven net
high fidelity truth unearthed in each moment
because this is infinity
and you are its steward
its observer
its guest.

Waiting for the OB GYN

There is nothing living
in this room, except me.
No plants, no pets, no bugs
Maybe microorganisms which we have
yet to define
A big watercolor shows me a forest, and
greens-
all kinds of greens! All of the
mint, and forest, and bright,
and yellowish possible from the paints.
A big matte black phone on the wall
with its faintly glowing screen.
Me, with a small protrusion
a growth of some kind (living)
on my left nipple
and my intense curiosity about smell
about health
about me, and all of my living.

Waiting for the OB GYN, Pt. 2

my craving for paper and ink is
quenched by this cell phone here
Google Docs app rescues me from
writing these poems, over and over
silently out-loud in my brain
Biohazard is orange
will my cellular biodata go in there?
Red metal

filled with red blood, or tissue, or
disposable medical tools
long sticks with swabs
she is taking her long-wait-time
while I comfort my brain
like it is a child
pregnant women have sat on this table,
heard all of the types of news
from the lips of the doctors
click of metal, crumpling of paper
wrinkling of the soundscape just beyond
my barrier from the rest of the office
blue paper fabrics cover
my torso and lower body
myself to be examined in all
the female places
news to be found, news to be told- or,
no news at all. She will inform me that
all is well-
but when something has changed
already, that [...]

Exam's over. Everything's fine.
A lovely older woman waits in the lobby.
A man is curled into sleep on the waiting
room bench. I walk out, walk back into
life. All of my changes were normal.
Effects from the passing of time

Layers of Resist:

Patterns fill my life in dope rhythms
sweeping gesture of opulent proportions
waving seas and hands that seeth
pulsation of the nights of the outliers
Knight-time strikes the clock
tick tock
internet videos, sensational lyricism
lipsync your parallel universe themes

Oh how I trust the palm extended
ready to die for the newest cause
effect and reaction, sweetness of musical beats
alternative sugars, coconut flower

Islands and mountains and cultures filled with glory
swimming into hybrid vibration- line by line
line by line, I swing to your same dance
pendulum
right - left - arrow up
rise up
raise your fist in the act of creation
we will consummate our
future as one race
our souls as large entities
swallowed with glee and compassion by the nighttime skyline
cityscape lights and skyscrapers
become one with our smiles and miles traveled in
one instant
warp speed
I believe in time travel, and I live for this moment.
Welcome, my children, for this is the uprising. Come home.

Instructions for Use

How can I describe how much I need *you* to become *me*
I need you to want the same things
to read poetry with the same
zest
I can't wait to hear you scream my secrets
become my shell
digest the whole of it all.

I need you to lock yourself into my soul
to feel exactly what I've always felt
to understand the evolutions
the revolving psychology
of my personal mentality
become my mind in rotational waves
my psychoses
my delusions
my dreams
my dreams
are food for this
understanding

believe in something. believe in this assumption
of a character
(*me*)
that you have never known before now.
wrapping up in insides
second skin of revelation

I will provide marks on paper-
and you?
you dive deep into the page

it feels good to be felt
let me feel your entirety, now, too

II. Silt

holes

I dig into my body with the cigarettes
the bad food
the lack of physical activity
I dig in to my body
like a shovel in a hole to plant a new rosebush
like hands in sand with dusty fingernails
like construction
creating the harms
so that the harms cannot create me.

Faded Madness

medication dreams of me
Big Pharma saved my little life

my grand existence, hobbled by the ultimate safeguards
and yet
I inhabit the same lunatic, here.

cracks in the concrete became a childhood obsession
stepping for the feeling of an even footprint-
at all times-

I believe in

angels

magic

martians

time travel

I became my self when I took their pills
spilling ideas over into this bronze bowl of the now

God cannot create such a dilemma- I play between the realms

so, I straddle timelines
and sift the sands of spacetime
rupture the wormholes of the cosmos until I become dizzy

I saw a thin red-looking crack on the wall of the psychiatric ward
it become my most sincere destiny. Now, the medicines inhabit *me*.

calculated to forget

I've looked up at these same forest hills before
detailed trees blur in the morning mist, at almost 7:30am
but it is winter. the trees look like paintings of the tops of a fine set of cruciferous
As a kid, I remember pretending to be a giant eating trees when there was
broccoli for dinner.

I couldn't live in that forest on the hills beyond my apartment
I wouldn't feel okay after two days
I wouldn't survive a few weeks
animals in the forest
mountain lions maybe, foxes and bucks
with their antlers that make me afraid
the crackling bratches and lumpy detritus
beneath the paws of skunks
the birds and bugs, and microbes that I don't know
the oaks in the pitch black of an unlit night
the sounds and smells
of animals and flora interacting
drive away
stay home
in my apartment.

humans forgot how to survive our nature
an extension of god
looks like technology
is our newest home.
I sit by Lincoln Avenue
listen to Lana Del Rey
smoke a cigarette

and stare up into the hills of forest
not more than 200 feet beyond this bus stop.

when i was

Rape takes away the body
divides it into disgusting sections
to be eaten by the victor
killing off your appendages
your openings
an unfair trade of
nothing for orifice and dignity
subhuman woman
with the shame you so graciously offer her
for life
a deal that stays forever
a contract for the unwilling
forced her hand
sign away your body immediately
or you might
die.

A Welcoming

Do we look the same in the cemetery?

Do the gates greet us with the grace that the men wanted us to give?

Will we end up there okay?

Will it be painful to arrive?

Have we arrived already- the proper tones of numbness

the chimes clink together, harmonies of hive mind,

slow wind rustles nothing. your pace takes the place of all else.

your legs shimmer with misty moon- and cold, bare feet wander

as you peer around trees like a curious Ophelia,

exploring his expectations that are tough as sinew and slimy as snail.

death's truest altar sees woman. of all sorts and types, we all survive the blood.

III. Clay

Extreme Self-Love

I am the only 'character player'
I meditate upon my
singularity of existence

I am a part of a
mass which is
me

I'm the simulation

and, here I am.

the most interesting
woman in the world !

the only being in the universe

I am this

this is

only me.

sweat

my body
curves slowly
in the same tones
as a perfectly tuned
piano on a balmy evening
in the musk of summer air, bright.
My body is musky too when I feel the
softness of my curves with droplets of steam
of the sweat of my own vigor, dropping down my
small tight curve in my strong spine and I feel ready.
I hold my hand and hips and grind into the tightness
of my own moisture on the newness of the summer
wicking away any new fears with old temptations of
lustful awakenings upon heated flesh, dripping now
thickly held by fresh skin in it's own undulations the
trueness of my own preferences and my lovely
exploration of a territory of myself so wet it
feels like a sexual momentum in raw fuel
eating up my time into a new clock, way
of turning the knobs the handles into
ecstasy of many moments within yes
my own self reruns on a high channel
four five six seven and all goodness
heightened sensation on new a time
for pleasure that rubs you ready and
fulfills the desire you've been waiting

dreams of lovingness

Wear bare nails because there is magic in them. Keratin tones appear in moments of doubt to show my natural goodness. I was dipped into the mountain melted water in a merging of small streams and came out looking upwards; I felt my own angelic goodness. I walked down from a house of mountainous perch, down a big, wooden, old outdoor staircase and towards the water; my sleeves and dress train flowed gossamer upon the steps and the night was full of moon. I am divinity and I am sacred. I know, in this nightdream, that I am truly good. We discussed public health earlier, in a futuristic supermarket. I was both informative and encouraging. I described how to know if an action or decision is motivated by goodness, love, and sweetness. It was a clear test and I explained it well, including examples of loving choices. I am angelic and I am full of love.

[If only I could *remember* the litmus test for actions and decisions, to know their real goodness. Like a Kantian Categorical Imperative, before I ~~knew~~ what that meant. Advanced ^{dream} knowledge. Give it time, but seek it *now* i will **always** be an **angel**]

not-magic

i am broken-hearted and abject
we have stolen and performed an alchemy of thin shadows
the Black diaspora shaking
the white-skinned witches burning Palo Santo from not-their-land
the shamanic practice of a Scottish woman
who claims the pain of Brexit
she lights candles, lives in Virginia
upon the river and sets small paper boats to sail in
the current. she checks the time and the moon
and whispers incantations that are not Pagan
nowadays, these are the wicca, and she is white
go to the East Bay, and find an herbal apothecary
is there a young woman with light brown dreads and French ancestry
at the front counter?
She'll sign you up for the upcoming workshop
with a half Guatemalan chick
whose ancestors practiced this, she teaches of tonics and oils.
us newbies dying for a fix
to siphon and hold the power of a goddess
we are taking, again. clumsily woven into someone else's ritual.

but remember what we believed
the manifest destiny of the visiting white woman
she took it all, and made it HERS and kept the treasure for
her Swedish wooden carved chest, where the linens were
and where her mother left heirlooms
and left whiteness for her daughter
but this other magic is not written in our sequence,
our genetics are full of domination and dominion and now, of regret

If I have a white daughter,
I will tell her...
darling, you can meditate
but understand these practices
of ritualistic manifestation
as belonging to small groups of Women and Girls
within the many worlds and cultures of Asia,

of Africa,
of the Latin Americas
and among their descendants.
Colonizers do not get this chance. Their descendants do not get this chance-
for we stand in the cold trauma that our ancestors induced
we have no right to write the future of
ourselves, of anyone else
we have stolen enough, my dear
it is time to return the talisman of power
break your bond to the power of creation
create to restore
and stop trying to win
there is no game anymore
our magic is scattered to the wind
we lost our privilege to use the womanly blood
our lunar ties severed the moment they cast the first boat
we destroyed, so why should we keep stealing?
Leave the magic to the witches, my love,
and bring home just truth instead.
Press your face into my body and cry for hours on end
but do not burden these women, my child
for old sour Europe has already called these witches dead.
Our history owes a debt
that we can never pay
so throw your spells to the wind
and give your sage away
you are here for empathy,
and to help the whole world shine bright
dissolve your need for power
and let go of the broom, mid-flight.

IV. Loam

You Are Ready Now

Test yourself:

are you tantalized when you hear her work?
The powdered words, spilling forth
as she reads her own ink, flowing like blood and then
pouring from her own mouth?

if you are angry, fed by a fierce envy
of her open opportunity
then...

You are ready.
Take your 2B graphite and forget to erase
scrawl and break the lead
your passion is productive and more real than you might imagine.

Become her

When I used to watch ballerinas
the sugar plum princess dancing her pas-de-deux
I would become red with jealousy
/ want to be on that stage- I deserve it! Oh, if only I could
work harder
become her...

When you attend a reading, remember: the gasoline is in you too
it just takes one lit match
maybe a mere ember
to ignite the whole thing
and blaze deep into your soul
and spit out real fire
into the mind of those humans
who then become jealous
and then become poets too
just like she did to you.
Become. *become her.*

you are ready.

now .

Angelic Martians

quiet opera into my bedroom of a home
plush blanket under toes - feeling slight chill and silence

I have everything I need here, on this bed
the water from my best friend's car, nicotine
ideas in my small journal
this chromebook, and the internet
wifi is invisible but its access is so fucking infinite
each moment is endless → but so microscopic

smallness
tiny noises of italian singing
and my memory of minuscule imagery in
my pitch black space behind my eyelids
looked like i had zoomed out into space
floating in absolute zero and darkness
my peace of watching our planets from too-far-away

i float with myself, here, in timespace
gloating to no one about my interstellar imagination
bring me back
i only draw alien creatures in my notebooks,
they soothe me because i know them- I didn't believe
but then... they continued to visit
to appear, eye by eye and the oblong shape of their heads

I can't ignore their calming presence anymore. i don't know
within which dimensional reality they are real. silent slow songs.
E.T. friends in my bedroom of a house.

The Cure for Emptiness

The Becoming of oneself, not another
Springboard to fantastic, bubble joy rhythms
Dive inside, drive the scenic awakening
fill the tank with petrol kindness
real wealth is buried beneath the cynic
take a breath every morning to remember your aims
take a nap on occasion, to forget your unique pains
become a butterfly, and shower under the clouds
let your hair become rope, swing from willow boughs
pour forth the bounty of your soul, I know it exists
don't hoard the truth anymore, life cannot be missed.
You are here like a shaman, sacerdotie imagination
you are present like an omen, love is your only weapon
become the burgeoning realism of all races mixing
become a supporter of the pride of the marginalized
find your pain again and understand it as revived
let god take your hand in the vibrant and unpredictable
winning streaks are brilliant and highly livable
don't fade into daffodils, keep leaning into the daisies
your potential for trust is positively amazing
become an agent of love, it is here you are needed...
the broken ones don't dance, the independent dance alone
spotlight circumnavigation builds humility, you are home
relinquish the boredom of control, your nexus of energy glows
recharge your visions, and wake up grown
Don't forget to remember your dreamweaver beginnings
we were specks in the eye of the cosmos
so create a new kinship of being friends with ourselves
rekindle the fire of this-time-around
we don't have many more chances
become the person who broadens the road
give yourself bright vigor of past error, but don't falter
You are here. *Delete, subvert, and renew.* This is Earth, and you owe a debt.

Lucid Lunacy

When you see infinity:

your eyes will soften and take in 100% more information. the visuals in normalcy will surprise you. you will feel an overwhelming exuberance
it's a Tuesday, perhaps. you're stuck in traffic. maybe you're walking the dog, or coughing because your sick. you might be visiting a friend, or at a bar, or with your kid.... when life becomes vibrational- it is a generally normal day.

When you hear infinity:

your listening will be startled by brilliant minutia becoming alive.. cars on the highway, the refrigerator running, rain: these will fill you and yet, float by your mind. you will integrate the nuance of noise.

When you feel infinity:

you might notice simultaneous desires to stretch your arms out wide and also to dissolve your physical ego. you'll touch the out of body, but become so connected at the same time...

When you taste infinity:

the molecules will meld into the fabric of existence. your tongue will perceive raindrops as tears and tea as a magic potion. your tiny taste buds reach like sea urchins, waving in the ocean of your mouth. the shores are your lips which become silent, as you are enthralled by the mild sweetness of this sacred vastness

When you smell infinity:

the most oxygenated substance of all. chugging down the scent of animal and sky, you feel vivid. each cell is quivering with the elation of the odor of true immensity. the perfume of God, herself. You are sane, this Tuesday. You have been taking your medication. But life *is* this beautiful, and you can sense the essence of it all. You learn that reality is far more stunning than psychosis could ever be.

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