

The Utterance of Angela Bassett

If I could only twirl with words.

I want to waltz with Angela Bassett's tongue,

the elegance of her speech,

a silver rainfall,

sentences sprouting from a golden canal,

rebirthing the potency of English.

Whatever she's made of, may it send for me.

I'll go where it tells me to go, to an outer world

or a bloody shore if I must.

Who taught you the cadence of Utopia?

Do you know when you utter, I absorb,

become the red of desire and a hint of envy.

To spin cashmere words with fine diction.

When your lips part, a giant butterfly flutters into the atmosphere.

May your grace teach me the secret to speech,

to burst with epiphanies.

Let me be a silhouette of your every statement, Angela,

whatever it takes, let the grace teach me,

soothe my gibberish tongue to sleep.

Snow White's Secret

Long before Snow White met
the seven dwarves, she met a young lad
picking blueberries behind a cottage.
When the young lad saw Snow White
he was not taken by her elegant beauty
but her energy that could warm up
a witch's heart if in her presence
long enough. The young lad told
Snow White the love she longed for was
with him, which made her grin. He then
pulled down her hair band, threw it
among a nearby pecan tree and began to
voyage her body. The bats above them
blushed and the forest raised its brow in
disappointment as Snow White's body
beamed like a second moon.

In the morning when she woke,
the young lad was nowhere in sight.
She looked for him throughout the forest
even sent a fox to sniff out his scent.
She called on nightfall for a clue
and what she discovered was not the
young lad but a growing cluster
of bumps on her mouth below. Snow White
ran down to the riverbank with a lotus leaf
to wash away what only the young lad
could have given her, but she grew weary
as it only worsened. She tore off a piece
of her dress sleeve to wipe tears, soaked

her body in the riverbank hoping the river
would have mercy on her and reverse it
then she remembered, praying
to poppies could cure ailments.

Snow White hurried through the forest
and atop a hilly field, she clasped her
hands and prayed to the poppies.
Each day she trotted over bushels,
tip-toed through the hedges and hid
from bears to pray atop the hilly field.
Moving slower from the pain below,
day after day her skin becoming the color
of smoke. Snow White waited for weeks
with no results, she even stopped looking
for the young lad who had left her skin
in a pewter color.

Feeling doomed, Snow White dragged
her body to the riverbank. She laid
her head against a small boulder as if
it was her future headstone singing
a sultry melody to a heron until it allowed
her to caress it. She plucked a feather
from it and brushed it upon her cluster
of regret. In her mind, this would be
the last chance to heal. The rest of the night
she would sing until she fell asleep
watching sunlight slip into nightfall,
and the fox chase fireflies.

Though the forest was not too fond
of Snow White for letting the young lad
graze her body, without rightfully
knowing him, let alone loving him,
it could no longer bear to see her grieve
what her desperate heart had led to.

The next morning Snow White woke up
the color of charcoal and found the fox
between her thighs. Too frail to push
it away, the fox gazed into her weary
eyes and began to sing the sultry tune
Snow White serenaded the night before.

The fox sung in the same key with
the same soothing notes that it started to
revive Snow White like a sparrow
storming out of winter into spring.

Snow White's skin reversed and she
rose as if she was a cousin of a cloud
Snow White thanked the fox
and vowed to not ever let the idea
of love take over her body
so quickly for the outcomes will
always be a mystery. The pecan tree
blew a kiss to Snow White and its gust
of wind blew her head band back on
her head, right where it belonged.

Sisqo's Scalp

A sophisticated synthesis atop his head

a platinum pasture sprouts peroxide lingers into pores
too daring for follicles to be black like death
too shiny for an R&B box

His formula for fortune & fans & platinum records

putting his mark, smearing his ink on the industry
part himself, part Michael Jackson but with dye down his neck
like splattered paint

His roots scream for refuge week after week, secure his staple

scalp spewing flames like a dragon
synthetic sediments settle into his bloodstream in the name of icon
stewing poison shocking all that swims below the skull
but not the belting voice

Compounds permeate his blood a desire not to be

a short-lived illusion but an everlasting acrobat into history
who moonwalks to the bank a passion unleashed
in a toxic industry decades later, still oxidized
to mirror his silvery spirit his head covered in frost
his refusal to rinse away his reign.

Sediments of Black Blood

I once thought I was a magenta lily

Then a parasite with no afterlife

I was fine being America's vine

Growing through its historical

Negligence with whips then cuffs

Or even its underwater forest

Stuck in a place where I was

Half living and half drowning

Then I was antlers tied in a noose

Then tiny fossils that spelt B.L.M.

When reality rushed up under me

And snatched me off my branch

to offer my tongue to a world that counted me out,

to a family who tackled me,

to the solid man I could have become

but sprinted from me

when I was black and silent.

May the hammer never come down on their tongues.

May they never be curled up, closed.

I give glory to the lens they live through,

glory to their winning spirit,

I give glory to these boys for being the beginning of me.