

// urchin barrens

*what is surface life
to a seed fresh up?*

*if a girl grown experiences rebirth (in a compact space)
is the light of the sun
enough to alight
her skin?*

in one world Demeter sits on the coast
sipping ambrosia, the sun reflecting off of her
and glinting over the coast. Poseidon spits kelp at her feet, *deal with it,*

and Demeter smiles, like all do
when they get what they want.

Persephone finds life as a spectre
suits her, well enough at least. gliding
between the heightened platforms of the world
is interesting, at least. life as an ouroboros,
even more so. in the underworld she teethes
on her rattlesnake tail like a newborn. above ground
she sheds her skin for a lighter coat
and each season burns the old to the ground.

Demeter and Hades together bare their teeth, in approval
and denial both.

that's my girl, they whisper, and then cast
dual glares. *my girl, mine. not yours.*

en purgatorio, Kore-Persephone laughs,
a sound that resonates throughout the earth.

// blood oath

A cat has nine lives
and that dreaded daughter has two, **before** and **after**
lived out in tandem, simultaneously
the virgin and the whore.

caste system of her ancestors, godly parents
slip godly fingers around her throat and ask her
not to choke.

life one.

Demeter:
strikes her daughter from her father's hands
leaves welts on her wrists when she asks to ascend
the enumerated steps of Mount Olympus
so she may feel power, lighter than the darkness her mother fears.

Demeter:
allows one day.
one day, prior to hand off, hand over
for the seasons.
she rides the trail of Helios, excess secretions from the chariot of the sun
that shines in the brightest flashes of day.

Zeus:
her father
throws lightning for her welcome
presses a bolt into her hand, then
presses his lips to her head
says "welcome home, little one."

Zeus:
teaches her the arc of thunder, how to throw

(and catch)

such volatile thoughts as her own
like they are nothing, god-given droplets blessed by mortals.

Kore:
relinquished and cherished and meant for worship, grows full.

the playback scratches, sounds
of Iris begging, the yell of Hermes
as they launch
a full swan's leap into the clouds.

Kore:

loses her breath when she falls from Mount Olympus
hurled from good graces, welts on her wrists
scars between fingers where lightning strikes.

Demeter:

says she cannot help
her full flashes of anger
and the taste of rust on her tongue.

Demeter:

sheds another skin to leave Olympus,
the season ripe to turn
another eon to traverse.

life two.

Kore:

breaks the sound barrier, careening towards
her own breakneck speeds, product of a world she was born to control
and prisoner too, in a world otherwise bequeathed to her.

Zeus:

watches his daughter crash
vagrant form disappearing
into nothing, a splash in the clouds
the briefest burn of debilitation.
another shade of daughter
given away.

His hand reaches out. grasps
at nothing, too late.

Demeter:

tucks casting hand away
and begets all questioning, gesturing

into the void. Retrieve her,
before something awful happens.
Her form disappears.

Hermes:
dives into the clouds,
Iris besides him
And together they watch receding figure.
Too late.

Hades:
finds a young girl with fingers grasping
an eye for an eye
and proposes on the spot.
this shade and himself
both in awe
and triplication.
the burns between his fingers
where lightning burned him when he reached too high
demanding payback for the
broken scales— a quest
for a higher purpose
by way of three seeds. six seeds.
a dessicated promise,

Persephone:
buried remembrance of skin
underneath Olympus
remnants of a new form
bullish mother and wily progeny
becoming human.
she does not remember
the way her skin scorched in the fire
curling around the edges
as she ached to do.

Persephone:
does not feel the pain
each season
when lightning strikes and
down into the darkness she alights,
back broken on the crags betwixt
the sea, ruled by another uncle,

murder ascent in the breeze.
each shade combines again, girl
made anew when she reaches for
springtime. the first bloom
when Demeter awaits,
the first glimpse
of an absent father,
almighty
and all air.

// abyss of the seed

glass eye
of the basilisk
cracks.
pupil seen unseen
girl
in bloom.

on the run.

conference of brothers united
by bile, decide
and unhand the Fates.

an easy solution to soothe
cries of virgin morality, and complaints of sister-wives.
a godly choice
to form a crack in the earth.
welcoming party
for the deflowering of dread virgin.
mother cannot watch.

Chiron waits with reins in hand, coin for safe passage, and
downwards
she passes.
drifting in time-untouched expanse.

her crown falls through ghostly hands
to her feet, and she rises
consort.

time skips.
maiden
in the garden
with hands stained
red.
crushed petals stuck to scarred knees,
delved into the dirt.
blood under her nails, unbidden
byproduct of prehistoric repetition.

time skips.

// spit swear

immortal saliva stains
immortal children.

the reminder of regurgitated parents every time birth rolls around.
every child of Zeus
reeking of the faintest traces of familial betrayal.

every successful deliverance watched over by matriarchal generations in action.
Hera's white knuckles during childbirth
recurrence of all other children borne and banished.

firstborns aging with the upset of younger siblings
intended to distract.
they crunch the bones of neglect under the weight
of their slender ankles.

the weight of legitimacy shared by
the divinity of Rhea's six
enough to send Persephone underground.
enough to fill Ares with needless spite, a weight he must laud
upon Eris
and shared siblings.
Disdain for the parthenogenetic
the clash of Athena and Ares foretold in the hereditary clash
of mother and father.

Hephaestus
as he flies from Olympus
is not caught
midway.
wings at his ankles
do not spring into action, no savior.
Persephone has always
been caught.
her fatherhood assured,
and the doubt of paternal love
drains respect.
a grudge ensures
he'll craft no crown.

grudges not unfamiliar as the memory
of wife caught in mortal straits

haunts him even before revelation.

time melts
and reforms
at every recurrence
of blood.

the iron of spilled divinity
a weight on their gifted tongues.

// a beast only beautiful at night

Psyche in hiding, masks the masquerade
of a beautiful face
 (the downfall of most beautiful
 mortals—
 is attention.)

Adonis the dated lord,
and Psyche saved
by Eros unknown, sweetest
flowering
 breath
 of air
 that carries
 her away
 like the scattered fluff
 of a dandelion.

unable to comprehend their maker by the time roots grow.

Psyche lies in silence.
 Silent bed of Leda's
discarded feathers carried
 by Zephyr beneath her
the bequeathment of consumption
at the precipice of marriage and death.
 only disruption
the weight of mysterious suitor
 beside her. voice of gold.

(Downfall of the immortal — an in
sufferable truth, be it beauty
or skill.)

Not the first
 to be bested
 by her own desire.

 the gaggle
of carried sisters whisper. *discovery, you must
save yourself from the serpentina.*

--Psyche clutches the lamp light close.
In the chamber of her own undoing.
In wait.

As the door creaks, she stifles flame. She keeps the fire
on her hands.

Silent, a malignant dedication to the mortal downfall
in the face of eternal unknowing.

She faces faceless suitor in the arid dark, *hello my love,*
come to bed.

searing flash of prophecy in the sharp of an arrow
against slit fingertip, an accident as she reaches over him.
in her horror
spirit makes abject
a beautiful sliver of secrecy.

God-child Eros flees, anointed
with bitter lamp lit oils.
stinging betrayal
as he takes flight
back to
the stage of desire's crime.
the spill of arrows that turned his heart.

fat droplets drizzle porcelain cheeks,
ugliest ache of regret.
begging for time's forgiveness falls on dead ears
and so doomed lovers wander
one day fated
to return.