

Weighing In

For R_____.

And Annubis
the Egyptian god of the dead,
 stood above me,
 reading from a scroll
to explain to me my mummification.

 First, the servants
of the Jackal head, himself,
 he said, would embalm my body,
 and the Sons of Horus,
 incoffinate separately
my lungs and my intestines.
 Then, the heart,
 he said, the Jackal head—

 The heart—
his servants would leave in me—
 my chest—
 so that when I descended
 to the kingdom of Osiris
with hired women weeping,
 Annubis himself,
could weigh it, maybe feed it to his pet.

 I'm not sure why
 the Egyptians
believed I needed a heart
 once I was dead.

If it was sin
they wanted to know about—
 surely, my sin was in the places
 where I had lived.

And if it was hunger
they worried about—
 it was Egypt—
the Nile could feed them. *My heart*
 could never turn into fish
or bread. It was a heart,
 and dead.

In fact, I had never

Two Brides

For J_____.

My mother was a young bride—
 a slender beauty, blonde—
 with long fingers, a tall neck—
 white skin,
 and a white homemade dress—
But I, her disappointing daughter,
 as I feel I must be
 in comparison to the bride that once,
 was she—
 Can never be the picture
of feminine prime—
 that in her father's arm
 enfolded,
 she once, was led—
 or in my father's arm,
was virgin, and soon after,
 put to bed.

The bride that I would be—
 and I will never be a bride—
 would be tall, indeed, beautiful—
 perhaps—
 but not as young, not as fair
 nor slenderly kept—
 the bride
 that I would be—
She has carefully considered
 the unfolding seam of your two thighs,
 the sugared whiskey in your sweat,
 the creamsicle... of your
 brown-bodied breath—
She has watched
 you measure to pour
 the grenadine,
 sip of the carbonated tonic,
 drink of both
 yours and mine—
 ask
 for another glass...

6 March '17.

Sapphires

For R_____.

Child, I pray

you not make my mistakes

when you are here—

I've been greedy

and have greatly sinned against you—

all for the trickery of sapphires...

Oval-faced,

sultrily Ceylon beads,

I wear them around my wrist

and on my right-hand

ring finger.

Their miniature, carved expressions—

like *purring cats*—I let dangle

from my earlobes, snuggle in my curls—

and my bluest gem—

its each triangular facet,

the specter

of Egypt in the desert—

I situate in the peaks

of my collarbones—

its pyramids pointed inward,

aligned with my *inner sphinx*...

But child,

even these are not enough—

for sapphires,

I've been insatiable,

more than greedy—

I was told to drink

and never be thirsty again.

But these jewels

are not wells,

are not oceans...

I've never seen your eyes

and can only imagine

what they must be...

An infinite oasis?

The most bountiful spring?

But here is my mistake—

I haven't the power to draw so much from a rock...

nor the *faith* to not have to...

5-6 Feb '10.

The Unfaithful Daughter is Called in Jeremiah 31

For J_____.

As an unfaithful, wandering daughter would,
I've run and run—

and now I ponder

this city and its gardens—
as a stranger.

All my cities— darling, have been of paper!—

letters *to uproot, to pull down,*
to tear—
couplets *to destroy, and do harm—*

this is a city
I've not lived in before.

But here,
I am gathered, called to be rebuilt,
and to rest...

Promises... new promises, have led me—
to a *well-watered garden—*

of an everlasting, loyal love...

This city is not of paper—

this city is of *Law*,
and I, its new people.

Darling— this law, if I *follow—* if I follow it
and forswear the rooms
of all former cities—

your innermost room—
may I knock? And the opening
of the door,
may I *follow* it too?

2-7 Nov '15.