

minstrel crase chanted:
[...] the life
of love is embracing
it's perpetual
unattainable selves.

why can i only do so
with the people that challenge
my sense of empathy?
why is it that,
in the moment,
my most generous concession
of enjoying said moment
is a facade of apathy,
masking a disinterested
anthropological irony,
a detached gaze of
self-defensive ataraxy?

i wonder how i can
fill my mouth with words
of being
a person of the people
when i *cannot*
suffer my own kind.

when washing dishes,
is it a ritual
or an action
that you're actually playing?

does the performance in our head
match what the encrustings of charred food
ask our fingers to scratch?

does the rhythm of
our scrubbing
and rinsing
follow what's needed to get things done?
or the ways of time you learned once
your parents left you alone to clean?

how much are we tide?
and how much are we storm?

both ways we end up drying and drowning
and drying up land, either
with bursts of violence
or by rule of inertia.

eventually, we are but traces that fade
once the shoreline returns to its place.

my lips wrinkle with the
first colds, and they
itch and my teeth
want to massage this
itch away til it blossoms
crimson flowers.

i walk around wearing
blood lipstick spots.

flesh healing, skin
lightens, my lips
dry, scale and
start flaking, like a
python under mute

did you know
pythons
under mute
lose their hunger?

it'd hurt to kiss in winter.

Prayer for the Extispicy of a Pomegranate

if I were like a pomegranate
under this sun-burnt thick skin
would be: a white dry
flesh, a stiff sponge,
there to cushion, not
stand nor act, blood not
flowing through my body
but tightly sacked in red
drops, bursting into vital
pops when bitten, and then,
those truths to be spelled out
punching back with a hard core,

my story one of packing up my blood,
every stream meticulously recorded,
each spurt stored away, neatly, in its cell,
my body an ever growing, static archive
til plump it falls and crumbles
(all archives must at some point)
at any kind fingers
moving past my skin, past my flesh,
to remedy the unjustness
of these stolen life-flows.

til *that* day comes,
you'd read me through
only if you'd cut me up,
along the lines of the sacred cuts,
there, at the altar set for sacrifices,
under the light of a temple fire,
chanting the spells that were prescribed,
systematically extract
one seed after the other,
squeeze each one,
inspect its oozing
between your thumb and index:

what would you read?

*if the blood flows in the direction of the fire,
if the blood disperses both left and right,
if the blood flows in the direction of your heart,
if the blood forms 3 bubbles of the same size,
if the blood forms 3 bubbles of the same size plus a smaller central one,
if the blood had clotted long ago, dry (I'll tell you: this is my greatest fear),
if the blood stands still, thick drops resting on the tip of your fingers,*

*if one drop clings to your thumb and two to your index,
if two drops to your thumb and one to your index,*

what could you read?

what if my autopsy was best done by myself?
oh Goddess of the Torch, I wonder if I'd be good enough
to carry it through, to carve across
this sun-burnt thick skin an opening,
and use my hands, my dumb hands,
to ravage down my guts for some truth.

oh Goddess of the Fire, I'm scared,
this can't be the way.
just call the beasts, let them tear me apart,
harvest off my sponge flesh all those truths
I cannot spell, let them crush my seeds,
unbothered by the squirts of blood,
crunch those hard cores
as the feeble stories that they are,
let the blood flow, be swallowed by the earth,
this is not blood no more, it is your wine,
oh Goddess of the Sun, she who sits below the ground,
let the earth bring it to your lips,
let my blood be a wine you can only taste.

oh Goddess of the Fire, *please please please*,
I cannot handle such a duty, let my
flesh be the feed of someone's reading,
but not my own, I'm done, I've read this story already,
I wrote it, I stored it away, I should know by now
what it wants me to know.

oh Goddess of the Torch, she who makes
sprouts dawn up from the wet soil,
she who tamed the warm winds and the storms,
when will you call
for the season of ripeness?
your servant begs to know the season
when fruits fall to the ground,
the season the thickest of skins,
hardened under harsh summer suns,
will open even to the kindest of fingers.

when spells are not needed,
when silence is chanted,
all torches exhausted
but your sun, risen to the sky,

oh Goddess of the Sun, bless
the sacrifice that calls no killing, bless
the ritual without prescription, bless
the victim that spills no blood.

what if temple lions
are just a parody of perching cats?
what if temple chants
mimic the litanies of market vendors?
what if this temple altar
was once a table
set for a peasant's family?

have you ever thought that
the sacred scriptures
record the babbling of a street prophet
cast out of the liturgical canon of decency?

have you ever thought of
these intimate ties between cult and blasphemy?

prayers are more elegant ways for worshippers
to swear petty rage to gods.

whatever dogmatic prescription was once
a fool's assumption that
a movement of the hand
could change the course of stars.

there must have been a certain dose of self-irony
in the first converts
to an early faith.