

Potsdam

My echoed step
that fills the space between these columns
also rings through time,
and while now the static marble
wears robes of rain-made velvet,
skin of mismatched dis-colors,
and so black with once-fire their crowny tops
hold the bending weight of six-odd-seven centuries,
there once stood a man upon the stones between them.

His echoed feet are mine the same
across tile, one gold, one silver,
his eyes see the coruscations of
something young, pristine, and his.
He hesitates not to lay a touch,
no oiled finger-stains have before
had their sweet, textured pleasure
upon these carved pillars high,
but he too, hears his footsteps in all a-wonder,
of what wiles time has brought upon these grounds.

Perhaps, far back, there rings another sure-foot dancer,
whose people—wild—love these lands
before ever there were borders.
Her own mind is rapt with thoughts of time,
here, before, and now, thereafter.
She treads barefoot, surely, where once
there were no columns
only footsteps muffled
by the bends and blades of grass.
And perhaps, she saw upon this hill
a great king standing among the fruits of many labors
and a poet dwelling among some lost man's ruins
wondering
how time escapes us.

Credo

So many minds have gone looking for God,
something to call "father" or "mother" or "master".
My young mind was tempted
by meditation silent,
prayer,
and the many gods
whose movements
brought forth scripture
like Adam brought forth Eve.
Religion spoke through images
of thick jungle and gold
and monks a thousand years unspoken
on mountain tops
lost in Earth's imagination.
But as I learned, I saw:
Simon says, "My body kills me,
so I kill it back." And
the Jainists starved themselves,
brushed the sand before stepping
tender feet. And
Nirvana, Heaven, Pure Land, Brahman
are entered by the soul,
the body left behind.
And I
was no longer enchanted.
My body did not yearn
for the practices that modernity
told me belongs to the ancients.
So, I dreamed that true religion
was in the past,
and its only windows are books
and words
and education.
I no longer looked for God,
and when someone asked,
I told them nothing.
Religion has turned
into a word that means
belief:
the mind is capable,
and the body is left behind.

But when I sit still enough,
I can feel my heart beat.
I am reminded
of a horizon line

far from where I am,
where the whole world is divided
into blue and bluer still.
And in the middle,
the only thing between sea and sky
is green suspended.

It is summer here, always.
This island is crested thick where life takes root
and kisses every inch of the land with green.
My heartbeat is a drum that rhymes with birdsong,
it sings the smooth rhythm of sweat
that settles into my flesh,
into that gap just between skin and muscle.
It begs me to unclothe myself
in that practice long made taboo,
and let saltwater trickle over my every cell.
I press my skin as close to the earth
as a baby to her mother
and slick myself, my soul, my mind with mud.
I taste the iron in the dirt.
As I run, I pay no mind to where I lay my feet.
I roughen my fingertips with palm bark,
chasing its bounty of palm fruit.
As I eat, I pay no mind to which fingers I lick,
and I let the leaves lick me.
Juice and sweat and humidity clings
so that I can feel every inch of my human body.
Perhaps something silent stalks me,
but I am so utterly grounded to the earth
that not even death could pry me away.
Nested between these leaves--
this is where life and death embrace
in a cycle that caused so many societies
to look to the sky and say,
"God."
But here,
I can take my body with me.

Water Entry

There is no delicacy
to my dive,
so water cool enough
to pull from me a gasp
in warm Caribbean air
sets about the shimmering of a thousand faceted faces,
diamonds soaring, remolding into one, great body
deeper than the breadth of any human soul.

And upon this surface I am warmed again
to the marrow of my fortress

and off,
already in the current's growing distance,
swings the sleek vessel gleaming
in stark blue waters
that had so steadily carried me

this great distance
here.

And below

How I wish to shed my skin and bone,
leave them floating on that great surface,
so that I might sink to deep my self
and lay in twisted coral archways
the aching of my soul.

Take me away, swift waters
keep my lungs filled with that caerulean
break me down to a fistful
of faceted faces and throw me to the air.
I wish nothing but to fly and then remold
to descend to your inner folds
and lay among the sand-lined creatures of the deep.