

After The Rain

Who blessed the terrain
with flowers from the lovers' dreams?
Who invented the kiss
from the drums to the mist?
Who sang to the wanderers
as they built their altars?

You gave me the sound,
the pulsating ground.
You built the landscape
of our mysteries.
A sip of coffee.
A sprig of banyan tree
and the mountains speak to me
and the earth opens for me
and these broken wings
witness the dance
and take off
from the rooftop.

After the rain
the cycle recalibrates,
the sun smiles to animals,
the moon spins our dreams,
to the carvings on the altar.

How did the sky understand our vision?
How did the rain read our trepidation?
How did the spark find its completion?
Inside our eyes gazing,
somehow prevailing
over armies invading.

Mysteries
we may never unravel
as space opens
for our souls to travel.
Third world planets
whisper for us to witness,
invoking the Gods
we saw in our secrets.

I'll take the hand
that reaches out
from the stars

as cities merge
and angels swallow
the scars.

Our fantasies wired
by the river's choir.
And if you show me
how to read the music
I know the rhythm
will carry us
through the rain,
open a portal
to unknown terrain.

Unchartered altars
call us to wander
through spirits who
inhabit their visions
after the rain
for us to embrace
with abandon.

Glances of Jade

Inspired by the Nanluogu Xiang in Beijing

Tonight
the city walls
speak through memories.
The colors of the sky
stop the clocks.
And as you pour my wine
you etch my name in ink,
ink that dances,
ink that undulates,
ink that glances
and turns into jade.

I wear this jade
as my talisman.
Ghosts will recognize its cadence.
Gods will encompass its guardian.
I see jade
reflected
in the eyes of the city,
glances of a gem
that sees no caste system
and is always grateful
for its equanimity,
for its intimacy.

I can touch it in my memory.
No angels watching over me,
just faces,
just voices,
then freedom
from the shackles of fear.

Tonight
my feet could swallow the crowds
and my eyes could turn jade.
The true angels have wallets,
not wings,
headlights instead of halos.

My vision is my energy.
My life is my offering.
The confines of caste
could never control me,
never obstruct my touch,

or constrict my smile.

Gongs will emanate
and my memory will reach you.
Glances of jade,
transmission of passion,
teacher to student,
in the eyes of the horizon
this mind has captured,
these arms have extended,
tiny hands
that leave tattoos
on my memory.

Glances of jade
and nothing
to distract my gaze
my name and yours
in the clay of recollection.

The song of songs
is the recognition of faces.

Diyarbakır

Inspired by the 2010 Nowruz Festival in Diyarbakır, Turkey

Night descends on this broken bed.
The mosques lose their minarets,
but the cemeteries take prisoners.
Children play in them with no alternatives.
Strangers lose their way here a
nd I'm a stranger tonight.

Won't somebody
come into this room
to tell me it's all okay?
Won't somebody
cross this border
to save my soul tonight?

The city is barren.
Nothing grows in these streets.
Yesterday's trash becomes today's road.
The bones of the dead
decay under my feet
and the stars bleed onto my face.
I wear the blood of the horizon.
Won't somebody
pour earth on these scars?
Won't somebody
assuage these rising waves?
Won't somebody lift me into the sky?

Then the bonfires ignite
and day begins.
The cries of joy infuse the vestiges.
Through the cracks in the wall of poverty,
the sound of laughter shines.
The flags undulate in the wind
and new voices call to strangers.

Won't you join in our circle?
Won't you rise to the occasion?
Won't you hold our children?
Won't you rejoice our journey?
Won't you celebrate humanity?
We have come with aching bones,
bleeding tongues,
tear-stained eyes,
and debilitating debris.

Still,
our wreckage will be our victory

when you join in our family.
So extend your hand.
Share your story in our dance.
Adorn your forehead with the colors of creation
and smile
with a new path to embrace.

Equanimity

I ain't no soldier.
I ain't made of armor.
I am just a baby Buddha
looking for lotuses
in the bedsheets.
But then I discover
the mud has turned
to lava
and our bed a volcano.

You pull me closer,
kiss the scars on my torso,
the scratches on my thighs.
If you say my tears
are the waves
crashing on your naked body
then you're my full moon.
Even as these waves burn like suns,
my planets are spinning
around the headlines:

Genitals are mutilated in tents and hospitals.
(The very instruments we play tonight.)
Mothers in the Bronx fall asleep to the sound of gunfire.
Others in Guatemala fall asleep without body parts.
A child in Gaza draws bombs and white phosphorous
with crayons.
Another in Vietnam steps on a landmine and loses a leg.
The Amazon is razed so we can eat happy meals.
A Filipino farmer screams for rice for his family
while we eat it in complacency.
Gold and diamonds are engraved with the blood of Congo tribes.
A union rep disappears in Colombia
courtesy Coca-Cola.

This mind knows all this,
but will never comprehend it.
No words can assuage
these voices,
yet one touch
from your tongue
deafens diatribes.

This touch.
This feeling.

This vibration.
I know
it ain't free.
It comes with a mission,
a responsibility
to the Gods who gave it to us
and the children and mothers
too oppressed to feel it
too lost to understand it.
I have my wounds,
my lacerations,
my shrapnel,
which is why
I can't turn away
from the faces on the internet
flashing across the ceiling now,
refusing to be overlooked.
Our climax
will tell their stories tonight.

And even if the stock market crashes,
even if the condom breaks,
even if the building collapses,
even if the air kills brain cells,
even if the thaw of our two bodies
can't surpass global warming,
our equanimity
will remain intact
behind the closed door.
Tomorrow the city,
the peeps,
the masses,
the men in Jamaica lynched for loving each other,
the men in Texas awaiting the electric chair,
the Gypsy women in Slovakia raped and sterilized,
the Muslims in Gujarat cowering in basements,
the Kurds in Syria forbidden to speak their language,
the Tibetans, the Tutsis, the Cherokees, the Aboriginies
the razor-happy teenagers.

Our love is for them, boo.
Man to man.
Touch to touch.
There's a revolution downstairs.
No more hiding.
Time to turn the lights on.

Calling From Space

The voices of fish markets
drown out the moon.
The cat calls of prostitutes
creep out the tourists.

I used to hear the ghosts
whispering secrets to hitchhikers.
I used to hear the djinn
rhyming from tattoo corners.
Now
the skyscrapers shrink me
and the sun is silent.
Who's left to understand me?

I pray for new voices
to emerge,
new ghosts to surge,
new planets
in the street puddles.
New cities for stories
that struggle for shelter.
Calling from space,
welfare for aliens,
shelter for storytellers,
houses for ghosts
running from guns,
traveling without numbers,
because statistics suffocate,
news channels desecrate,
tell us we ain't ready,
tell us we ain't worthy.

So it's either the graveyard
or the ghost shrine,
a lonely road
to a family
beyond our crimes.
They tell us it's a fantasy,
our hair is too kinky,
our eyes are too slanted,
our words are too urban,
our tongues are too candid,
our minds are too curious,
our bodies are too intact.

But calling from space,
a new dance vibrates,
and foreshadows new knowledge
with no GPS device,
no fears of broken lights.

Just look to the sky
as the ghosts embrace us
and look in their eyes,
affection creates us.

Return
to our people:
the dissidents, the oracles.
Mysteries
unfold
for those who love them.
And planets can hold
only those who feed them.

Watch the eclipse,
feel the levitation
and expose the truth within
like a skeleton
on the horizon.

Forbidden imaginings
conjure new destinies.