

A WORD FOR THE EARTH MOTHER

I awoke, in a sweat veil 3:33 AM, the bewitching hour. Accompanied by Louisiana thunder and world boom in the wake of protest. Unsavory post edits blue line mixing. With red I prayed to you, the mother. A whisper to the sky blue, I prayed to you. Litany passing through the eye of a giant named Earth.

You watch us make mud out of blood and water. Waste oil for blessings, while children hold out their hands to drink from double-edged tongues guilty of a spit fire.

Sometimes I wonder if you have forgotten.

We are the black oil	We are the emaciated
Weeds left to be trampled	Words of degradation
Worlds away from true vines	We are the forgotten means
Waning frameworks of fright	Wandering children in lost lands
Wilting black conjurers	We have forgotten what it means

To have a mother, to live within her for our survival Rooted in the soot of burning that instance refined minerals Can become water.

This is what suffering sounds like
From the bottom of a well

The bottom of a well,

We built with broken hands.

DAY-DRUNK ON LOVE MANTRAS

...During fall, the leaves make beautiful exits. Nature and wind clarinet a color change to brown Dead muckiness to the ears of some autumn rush Of the human race.

From the tunnel frame of my bedroom veranda, The storm strolls in from the north Sun shined workers pulse about, a collective Understanding to stray from the rain.

Beauty as beautiful as brandy mocking ice in a rocks glass

It...Time for another

Its during these pauses between the frame That I always seem to find
you, the mother of my children Between sand and pond stone, filtering
Searing into afterthoughts.

Oh how wood burns, Ms. Thomas Oh how the wood burns

Slow beyond the ease, still time. And I can see it behind my eyelids

Beauty as beautiful as watching Life rotate on a spindle Just beyond
reach.

DIES ILLA

The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before
the great and the terrible day of the LORD come. Dies illa. The pen's an
exit to everything: The silent line Of a sky's red eye, barely scratching
the horizon.

I haven't moved since last night decorum The ink that bleeds, the time,
that is spilt, the reckoning. I watch the holistic rage of the infinitesimal
beginnings of silk thought to Make its way into memories, I can't forget
any longer What it means to be a forgotten hum, in a slaves hymn tune.
Dies illa I look back on it all The early mornings and uniforms Mother
fire and black yard struggles Don't scuff knees, these uniforms are
expensive.

Cloud's haven along the tops of trees.

She had her eyes on the fortune We were thinking cereal and milk,
morning dew Sunshined trees, that mist that accompanied the morn.
We lived with my grandmother, and her pink walls Painted with the
bitterness of a ghost and sin soaked whiskey Alvin, my grandfather, the
two timer with shoes that were too small for his big toes He would
shuffle them along, sparking up the electricity in the air, on stubborn
burba Causing the hair on the walls to stand on end, poised for
whatever demons He would let out, oh holy Sundays.

The frame, from the day of witnessing fights Of tooth and nail from
broken vases and the insistent charring Of the shadow from a man, I
used to look up to Engage in the fight time jig, with a woman, I used to
believe was my comfort

Dies Illa

The adult mind has a way of making wake up calls Out of reality. Jolt
firing the wing tips of child like awe, into a furnace For fading
innocence. His demons were shown through the skin
Animated motion of what it means, to live a life you are not proud of
Constant wading in a pool of Goddamns, and how can I ever...

Dies Illa

I am not sure what happened with my grandmother It was bone deep
before I could catch a glance at what the sun hid From even her.
Enslaved are a young girls thoughts. My grandmother never aged past
16. Still that little girl, torn skirt, baby on her hip, my mother And a glint
in her eye, aimed in spite, Bitterness can turn an old bone grey And
make a grandson, a ghost of a man Bitterness can make reflections of
us all.

Dancing on humid crisp And mist in the morning dew. Stanzas made
at the ready Splintering silently Scripting with melted fingers. Dies illa
At the corner of sight and tongue I can see it, a wintry motif. A
Louisiana winter Spent wondering What cost the day Would be
spent for.

I REMEMBER THAT WE BROUGHT BOTH BOOZE AND DRUGS

It's what we did in the humid Louisiana heat
Cloud casting shadows of slowness and warm winds.
Here we were welcomed, we were noticed by only the sky.
No myopic eyes frozen to see human prescription
Dispensed from the pharmacy of culture.
We are Louisiana, a home known with scents of swamp
Degradation painted bipartisan couth, gelatinous funk air
Classic cars, warm heat hoods, throughout the brown streets
Chained pits, both for eating, and guarding broke down car yards
On Sunday and everyday after.

Daisy lazing along with everything else Black on Sunday.
Monday approaching storms notice, we will still be Black
On Monday. We will still be Black.

"You want us to take you in? You lookin at me kinda funny.
You got drug charges don't-you-boy."

Black until the rains make that thin blue line a watermark for change
Black until the concrete becomes a crisp mirror reflecting and
refracting,

Light from, light from. Black until the words that came after the hiss
Before the bricks become grenades.

Black until...

I WANT MY SON TO KNOW HE WAS BORN OF RICH SOIL

We searched for neglected coffee and broken lighters;
Flash signs of guilt supplied from my insides,
For she and I. We traveled from East to West hoping
That all of this world would make sense;
Easy-line streets dressed in black mirrors
With Jameson and cheap champagne on our breaths.
We gained access to history one night.
Two officers downstairs taking bets on who started the fight
On who was going to jail that night, listening to us conceive you into the
world,

You son will understand the future, you will understand
How we welcomed the unknown (insert measurements here)
Lining our once fragile foundation. You were the cement
That filled in the cracks. You will be a strong boy
You were forged in fire and in life.
We had scraped life-lines tipped with jagged glass
Intravenous power being pumped into us from ancient gods of gold
Scents of curry brown stir-fried to our kitchen walls
She was vegan, I was a carnivore. She was the huntress
I, the gardener. Our tongued bones the color of gun-shade.
We walked the cement sun-gritted streets
Of baton rouge, she and i. On stilts
Made from something we could only conjure in a dream
Something lighter than her greased lip balmed lips.
She tasted of Sunday-clean white sheets.
I, the dirt she graveled with. Mississippi mud-made
Mayhem, your mother. Whispered to me,
At the base of burning candles, "The sky is blue because
we live in the eye of a giant named earth."
Red lines of purple satin, striped blood, and feverish
Then you came. Your heavy breathing
Antechamber of duress. Like scratching a scab

That became infected then turned into a flower
You burned and you stayed. You were baptized
At the first meeting of a meteor while canoeing
On a secluded river bend, only the cicadas
Keeping the row in time. I can't erase that-fresh
Nest-nu-newness-nestling my nostrils
"You provided me the dirt for flowers
Ms. Thomas, scented in nu newness,
fresh nestling of new life." I'd whisper to her
While she slept hoping I would be invited to the dream
A flower-scented in the hazelnut
Of her eyes son, yours.
We didn't need shelter during moments
Like those.
And neither will you.

NORTHSIDE, HOOD TOWN PROPER

Its all dark here, aside From the white spots Kids out and about
cowboys Of the wild wild west. The north Fought and won here. Fathers
lost and some done here. A name change will not stop What we try
and forget. The neighborhood projects. Unwed mothers, not enough
presence To call it anything else. Try hanging a Christmas stocking on
Constantine wire. Fence keeping you out or "them" in.

I can't tell anymore.

OUR HISTORY

Postulated and distended Bellies of ancestral children.

No blood to circulate Fingerprinted with white hands.

Forgery.

Sleep world long —Until we rise

To celebrate the names Of those in History's graveyards.

The names we carried long before our own.

THE HEAT WILL COME, THE COLD DON'T MATTER

I pass by streets that will never know my name, History frozen in the arid cool of dawn. My morning jog, my-palm-sweats; confusing the senses The fallen leaves laden lack of fluid shade The ground like dirt-diseased snow.

The gravity of winter.

My lungs refuse to expel The splintering sound of air escaping A tapered hose. Just yesterday a friend Told me, his mother will die, from the black grip On her lungs. I took another deep breath, just to be sure The street whites of life travel by bus routes And traffic jams during the Monday rush Transporting neglected children to school. Children that don't belong, children damaged Under the weight of a fretful sun. Jaywalking day-dreamers trapped on tiny islands, Studying to become doctors, lawyers, mother, and junkies But the bus stops are always full.

Children will grow, the heat will rise, and shadow Sunflowers in the middle of May. The hydrants will spray and tell the city to cool,

Until the police kill, stateside executioners Numbing over pensions.

Until children kill, trading in future and promise For a blood veil of something real.

Until the pigeons race underneath

The overpass

Of colored folk

Tracing street corners With chalk stolen from forensics.

Until even the sun gives up,

And death cast a shadow over the city.

THE LESSONS DON'T STOP HERE

Summer heat, down time burn.
I'm facing it all.

All that in,
All that rain.

My daughter smiles her way
Into keeping the minutes
Of the day.

Pleasing all to herself.

My memory has become
The metronome of life spark
And frantic waterfalling sideways.
I admit to the morning sun
As it swings on a cosmic flying trapeze
Star flame, the burn

the burn isn't over the eyes.

Its over the residue of living between the seams
Unearthed fractures of binded light
True vines made a plenty
Generational grafted scarring
From one posthumous to the next.

Within her eyes, I see her
Staring at the nothing in everything,
A waltz wait in the thundering of lives
I have crossed, walked along, behind
And in front of.

Its no wonder so many have come and gone.
Cemented still frames to corner points
Of direct eyeline and sunset...

Then my daughters eyes.
And I remember the temple of devotion.
What it means to laugh at a bump in the road
To always strive to carve my name in everything beautiful
In case she ever forgets her way home.
If she ever needs reminding that silk
Looks the best when it is let free
To the heartbeat of the wind,
As it glances and dances
Under the watchful eye
Of a circused sun.
In case she needs reminding:

That plants root in the dirt

Love roots in the fragile heart
The sun and water—still food.

THIS IS HOW IT WAS...THE 90'S

At an early age, I knew freedom
Was not that much different from Hell.
Only a bit cooler. Inside books
Read aloud from white hands across black skies
Ancestral stars of symphonic scarred lightness,
Reopen with every stammer over BLACK, or NEGRO.
Scream-striped in white font on the face of a 9 year old kid
Who couldn't understand why no one was melting at the seams?
Pinless grenades held between the teeth of societal plain-sameness.
Anger, often the accomplice of youth
We had to carry our own bones in someone else's way.
So I kept my hands tied
You are so articulate. I like the way you talk.
Louisiana hands wrapped inside A caged dog
Scarred from learning of burning crosses
That underneath every white glove, are rope burns
From hoisting the weight of 40 acres and a mule
Noose used to hoist the American Flag Blood dripping from the
pelican's heart
Blood soaked into the roots of an oak.
Oak used for crosses.

In Louisiana streets

White folks spent a century sewing stories

Of the happy slave, in our skin's memories but

You can't sweep blood under the rug.

Ancestry laid to rest with pain

That will last long after we get the history right.

Our very own

American Dream.

UNDER SWEAT SHEETS

The morning rise
Has become
An afternoon storm
Of ghost cloud
Greys and whites,
Smothering light dancing.

Somewhere else
Poetry has become you,
My milk and sugar;

Coffee made mornings.

Mist-shaping raindrops
Into grey moons
Over creation.

There's love kind
And then there's you.
A time towards
Seven moments

Of history made
Simple.

It's what love can do to fools

And what fools will do to love.

The cascaded
Pink and blues,
Across the piles of earth sky iris;
Dance of cloud speckle
And rising light towards
The wandering mind.

The color of science that blends our hues

The way hues do when casting light on the soul.