

A golden statue of a goddess, possibly Isis, wearing a crown and holding a small winged figure (Anubis) in her hand. The background is a soft, golden glow.

Goddeſs & Other Poems

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To Sandy

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God̄d̄ess

The universe is the shape
of her face, every atom
configured to mirror
her movements whenever
she moves.

Galaxies swirl in her hips,
the base metals and elements
products of her prayers.
Words are powerful,
but only in *her* hands.

Cloud Horse

I saw it one morning
as I watched a pride of lions
prowl through a Serengeti
which had lost its luster,

looking for a gaseous zebra
to topple over and strip
to the bone. It was grazing
behind a tree, not noticing

one of the younger cubs
striking it on the hind legs
with its paw. The rest
joined in, taking apart

its ghost-like machinery
to get at the meat underneath.
I watched its bones slip
downwards, ending up

on a beach near my house.
It belonged to the earth now
and I tiptoed backwards,
afraid of its bite.

Rain Dress

Grandmother planted nails and planks,
hoping to grow a messiah, but she ended
up with a rain dress that seeped through
her skin when she put it on,

much like the memory of my Grandfather
who was still on his cross, watching us
sin and fall, slipping through the ground
he had prepared for us.

Grief

This is the beginning of December.
Snow covers apartment blocks,
churches and blinking snowmen,
trickling through to the page
where you're writing a poem
about a woman trudging through
snowstorms, her footprints
slowly disappearing in stanzas
empty on the inside.
You want to follow, but it's cold
and snow has filled in all the exits
out of your room.

Meteorite

A moon buried in coal
A mosquito trapped in amber
A lung caught in a heart
A womb stuck in a tank
A word meant to be said,
grown and released

Solder

I was 17
when I first saw ghosts in solder
being used to build a radio
that would never work properly,

the voltage leaping as they passed
through current streams,
turning the oscilloscope into a tsunami

before it passed out.
I never knew who these souls were,
their faces were featureless,

they never spoke; just left messages
on my circuits that never replayed.
The radio crackled with their static

semaphore before I threw it away,
the hairs on my body burning
with its leftover electricity, waiting
for more waves to cool it down.

The Cloud

It hangs wistfully
above the knuckle
of the canyon,
waiting to slash
open its belly
and jettison

its babies
into the dark below,
anticipating nothing
will catch them.
Not air, not eagles,
not the fist

of a thunderstorm
already growing
at the bottom.

The Calf

You'd think, looking at it
hobbling out of the dark,
that its life was destined
to be short and sweet:

a quick slit at the nape,
blood mopped up, ready
to be hung. No-one
anticipated the grunt,

a hoplite already equipped
with armor and a spear
for a tongue. And then,
when the first blow struck

its captors, it was not fear
that drove them away
but the clenched fist
of a black shadow charging.

Blind Date

I did not look at you
and you did not look
at me, therefore we
can deny what took place
in the moments after
it ended: the kiss,
the weeping, the turning
back - reflections
on an empty road.

Playground

I once lived inside my Father's body
when I was younger. I built
sandcastles out of the memories
in his head and slept under
the stuck on stars in his gut.
I used his ribs as monkey bars
and swung across his stomach
with his intestines, pretending
I was Tarzan even though I had
no Jane. They found me curled
under the treehouse in his heart,
waiting to be let in, never knowing
I didn't know *how*.

Blood

Blood retains memory
the way a piece of wood
has archived a thousand generations
of memory in its knots and whorls.

Even when it has dried up,
the memory is still there,
absorbed by oxygen atoms,
giving the air a familiar smell:

not of roses or of that pail
of water you might have carried,
but of those things kept hidden
in drawers, away from your parents

eyes: his letters, sealed not with a kiss,
but with a drop of blood concealed
in the wax-seal - memories
waiting to be breathed in by your lungs,

so you would feel it swirling inside,
a locket giving warmth even when
there was none.

Nebula

It resembled a corona
when it sat on the surface
of the wooden planter
filled with the evening's
rain, a prototype of a spider's
new type of web:

one that would never be able
to be scrunched up
or absorbed into the earth
or nest of bird or machine.
If you looked carefully
at the reflection
you could see the secret weapon
staring right back.

Mosquito Mask

She slips on her mosquito mask
before we go out, feeling every
needle sink into her skin.

I try to ignore the redness,
her pain caused by ennui, staring
at the ficus in the restaurant

or at the couples talking into
their pasta. Love has been relegated
to a couple of body movements

made secretly under the table.
And then when we get home,
she takes it off and I get to taste

its poison, drinking it slowly to feel
her still writhing in my arms.

River

A river is a sentence
I cannot say,
meandering through
vein locks in my face
to fleshy gates

refusing to let it through.
My teeth are a dam,
holding back the water
as it starts to ram and ram
and ram.

But it won't pass.
My closed lips will not speak
the words in its body,
nor will anything distract them.
(not even the thought of *you*)

Terrestrial

We stepped out of the car to look
at the bones of old houses. Dad
thought it would be a good idea
to reminisce about these ghosts
still trapped on earth. I wanted

to free their souls from the earth,
so I could watch them accomplish
something I never would. Looking
into one of the window arches,
a broken jaw filled with sculpted

teeth, I saw the earth slowly take
back the remains of one the dead.
This is how we all eventually fall,
dragged down into places seen
between yesterday and tomorrow.

Signs of the Times

The oysters didn't work,
neither did the champagne.
Both ended in an unfulfilling
gulp that clung to the back

of her mouth as she watched
his eyes chase an invisible fly
crawling on the bedroom ceiling.
What she wanted, what she *craved*

was to be buried in a lead coffin
and dumped at the bottom of an ocean,
feeling nothing but pressure
rubbing itself against her skin,

warming her quicker than an injection
of boiling mercury in her veins.

GoddeSS

& other poems

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