

The miracle of a hurt undone

by Obáfémi Thanni

I

This is how miracles are known to begin—with a touch, with a word, with a step on liquid ground, with a spell, with a name, with a look to the heavens, with a breaking into abundance, with a leaving of virtue. In the shrine of an afternoon, a miracle begins with my eyes grazing the hem of your gown, purple fabric curtaining your holy, your stream of skin glowing in the sun's envy, your first words—a whisper washing over a wound, dawning like a bloom in a dark room. Your shoulders unsheathed, cutting through distance and longing to bleed desire over warmth, over *honey*, over *darling*, over *I missed I missed*, over *listen*, over tears cascading, over fingers held in tender desperation—held in the womb of a miracle. At home, I bow before the audience of a mirror, my neck shimmering with our necklace like a vow renewed.

II

We tunnel through the night as the stars eavesdrop on your laughter. We make home at the edge of a garden and the night softens into a whisper—tender as zephyr tickling through cobwebs. We pour into each other, beyond the border of skin, beyond the edge of touch. Below the dark sky, our hunger—bright as a wound thirsting for touch, for salve—waxes and wanes as skin shadows its glow like a secret. The wind, miming our desire, wrecks the garden—its howling, rustling through leaves and flowers and roots and bloom and stigma and bud and fruit and pollen. The air blossoming with nectar. The clouds swelling with the beginnings of rain. The clouds bursting with climax.

Our bodies, drunk with touch, stagger from the rain. Inside, the nectar-filled-wind sneaks through windows as the clouds rumble with ache. The sharp sweetness of cocktails trail from your lips as my fingers glisten with the shine of you. My hands a question, your gasp an answer. Our bodies, rippling in the pull of sheets, in the pool of ourselves.

III

In my thirst, I kneel above a fountain of memory, watching my neck—bare and stripped of sheen. The moonglow from a lost night remembers through the flow—gleaming like a forewarning. Moonglow in the dark sky, like a brief beauty—gleaming that the night will end. What does it say of miracles that no one outlives it? The blood quickened by a lost miracle, quiets in my veins. The wine regresses to water. The vessel empties into memory. At dinner, a crumb of bread falls through Lazarus, into the polished bowl where his face shifts, his reflection barely there. Magdalene's perfume drowning the afterscent of his death. The chill of his tomb, nestled in his marrow. The miracle waiting to be undone—what doesn't kill you, procrastinates. Everywhere a miracle touches, the word ecstasy is left behind. To know ecstasy is to know rapture—to know leaving, to know displacement, to know insanity. To know ecstasy is to know trances—the soul elsewhere, the body still. To know ecstasy is to know it ends—the body unsettled by the soul's return. A prodigal touch. The oasis regressing to desert sands filtering through fingers. The seed of hurt sprouting through its absence. Loss bleeding like a spring. Hurt blooming like a season.