

What else is there left to write?

What more can I add to my story, versions of which have been told for millennia?

I have been called many names, have embodied many forms: witch, bitch, freak, c\*nt, Circe.

Daughter of one who blazed so brightly his love constituted evisceration; fearsome rays through undulating rays – who could blame my mother for falling prey to his glittering promises, she who so dearly loved shiny things?

And she did love him, in her own way. Theirs was not a marriage in any traditional sense – no warm embraces did I ever observe – but she loved what he gave to her. The esteem he bestowed. The protection he afforded.

If there are eight types of love, which one encompasses awe? That is what I still don't understand.

My sister and brothers were better than I at being the children my parents desired – at courting fear and developing armies of trembling sycophants.

Crow, for my straw like black hair, beady eyes and vocal fry. Ironic –

Latterly, when they came to know what I was – what I could do – none dared crow in my presence. Even the mighty Athena was kept at bay for decades by my spells, the rites I performed monthly, year upon year, battling the winds whipping my cloak, ignoring the calluses that peppered my palms.

At first, I was alone.

I was glad to be rid of the screeching laughter, and scathing remarks, the condemnation of my essence, the disappointed glares of my father and denigration by my mother. The only person to miss would have been Aeetes, and he had abandoned me long ago. Away from my arms he changed – or maybe morphed into what he was always meant to be?

No matter – I liked my peace. Hermes was an idle distraction, a useful source of tides of happenings. It was he who brought me news of Pasiphaë's monstrosity; he who informed me of my father's rumblings – the Titan's eternal railing against the Olympians.

SHE WAS KINDER THAN I IMAGINED. SMALLER, SOFTER – YET WITH A STARK FAÇADE THAT SPOKE OF HER PROCLIVITY FOR VENGEANCE. AN ANGULAR NOSE ADORING A GAUNT VISAGE, HER SKIN POSSESSED OF A GLAZED LUMINOSITY THAT SO TO HER DIVINE ORIGINS.

SHE UNDERSTOOD WHAT IT WAS TO SIN OUT OF GOOD INTENT: TO WANT THE MOST FOR THE MAN YOU LOVED; TO WADE INTO AMORALITY FOR HIS SAKE. TO BE MET WITH DISREGARD AND DERISION IN RETURN. TO BE EXILED.

IN ONE VERSION OF THIS STORY, I TAKE MY PUNISHMENT QUIETLY. I CAKE MYSELF IN DESERT SANDS AND RESIGN MYSELF TO THE EROSION OF MY SPIRIT – THE THEFT OF MY BODY BY TWIN SONS, THE PERENNIAL STAINING OF MY HANDS.

BUT THIS IS MY VERSION. THE VERSION IN WHICH I RECOGNISE THE LOVE OF A MAN IS NOUGHT BUT EMPTY PROMISES AND HOLLOW ENTREATIES. THE VERSION IN WHICH I RELISH IN MY EXPULSION, SLIT THE THROAT OF THE IMBECILE WHO CONFIRMED IT, AND DICTATE MY OWN FATE.

I HAD HEARD OF THE REFUGE HER SHORES PROVIDED: A RESTING PLACE FOR WAYWARD NYMPHS, SHUNNED BY THE MEN WHO THOUGHT THEY KNEW MORE. THOUGH I HAD DECIDED MY PATH, ON ARRIVAL I WAS STILL UNSURE. QUICKLY, UNDER HER TUTELAGE, I LEARNT TO STEP INTO THE POWER I HAD FORESEEN AND CHASED – TO FLOURISH UNDER THE WATCHFUL EYE OF NO ONE BUT MY OWN DECISION.

IS IT POSSIBLE TO BELONG TO AN IDEA?  
WHAT IF THAT IDEA IS THE CONCEPT OF NATION?  
MY BLACK BODY IS TIED TO A LAND TO WHICH  
I'M UNCERTAIN MY SPIRIT BELONGS.

WITHIN CAPITALISM THE HOLY TRINITY IS FAME – MONEY – SEX (WITHOUT  
CONSEQUENCE).  
HEDONISM IS TEMPERED ONLY BY ECONOMIC TABOO.

UFUOMA ESSI WROTE “EVERYTHING ENDS IN THE SEA.”  
WHEN I DIE, SET ME ALIGHT AND PUSH ME TOWARDS THE HORIZON,  
SO THAT I MIGHT HAVE MY MOMENT IN THE SUN.

EVERYONE SAYS YOU'RE YOUNG, THERE'S TIME, JUST WAIT AND SEE.

BUT YOUTH IS IRRELEVANT,  
AND WAITING IS BORING,  
AND MARCUS AURELIUS MEDITATED ON THE FACT THAT THE ONLY  
INDISPUTABLE CERTAINTY IS THAT  
AT ANY MOMENT, WE COULD DIE.

SOMETIMES YOU ARE GIVEN AN OPPORTUNITY –  
THE FIGMENT OF AN IDEA, IN THE CREST OF A BEAM,  
OF RECOGNITION – TO CREATE SOMETHING (SOME THING)  
THAT BEARS RELEVANCE.

THE INTERMINABLE QUESTION IS WHETHER THE OBJECT'S RELEVANCE BEARS  
WEIGHT ONLY OUTSIDE OF THE ACT OF CREATION ITSELF, I.E., IN ITS  
CONSUMPTION.

I WALK PAST A TODDLER PAUSED TO WATCH ROAD-DIGGERS AT WORK:  
LEGS AKIMBO, PERCHED ON A TRICYCLE, TOES BARELY TOUCHING THE  
GROUND. HIS FATHER CROUCHES BESIDE HIM, ONE FINGER EXTENDED  
TOWARDS THE LOCUS OF HIS SON'S FASCINATION.

IMPORTANCE IS A SLIDING SCALE THAT OSCILLATES WITH AGE. THE THINGS  
THAT CONCERNED ME TEN YEARS AGO, NOW, BOTH MEAN MORE, AND LESS.  
IN MY TEENS ALL I WANTED WAS TO BE LOVED AND BEAUTIFUL; IN MY  
TWENTIES, IT BOTH MEANS MORE, AND LESS.

DID YOU KNOW IAN CURTIS DIED AT 23?  
HIS LEGACY – THE DIVISION OF JOY.

AT THE BREAK OF THE NEW YEAR, I REALISED I HAVE 7 YEARS LEFT TO MAKE  
FORBES 30 UNDER 30. THOUGH THE LIST HAD NEVER BEEN ESPECIALLY  
PERTINENT BEFORE, THE AFOREMENTIONED THOUGHT NOW FEATURES  
ALMOST LIGHTLY IN THE ANXIOUS VISIONS THAT BAR ME FROM SLEEP.

THE STORIES I DEVOUR – OF ANTAGONISTIC WITCHES, AND DEFIANT  
GODDESSES – WILL PEOPLE SIMILARLY RECALL MY SPIRIT IN YEARS TO  
COME?

INFANTS HAVE NO TRUE UNDERSTANDING OF RELEVANCE BECAUSE THE  
NOTION RELIES ON A CONCEPT OF RELATION, THEY HAVE NOT YET HAD TIME  
TO DEVELOP. DEVOID OF A SOCIALLY CONSTRUCTED FRAME OF REFERENCE,  
THE "PREFERENCE" OF THE CHILD IN QUESTION CONSTITUTES PURE  
INTEREST.

I AM CONSTANTLY PANICKED ABOUT MY STATUS AS AN ARTIST; THAT THE  
ANGULARITY OF MY FACE DIVORCES ME FROM PRETTY; THAT THE  
MULTIPLYING MOLES ON MY BODY WILL ONE DAY SUBSUME IT.

WE TALK ABOUT THE MULTIVERSE – ISN'T THAT JUST POST DIGITAL  
EXISTENCE?

INFINITE STRANDS OF MEANING CONSTRUCTED IN THE AETHER; WOVEN  
TOGETHER TO CREATE STRATA OF IDENTIFICATION THAT ARE  
SIMULTANEOUSLY PARAMOUNT AND OBSOLETE.

IN THE AGE OF OVERSTIMULATION, AND OVERSATURATION, HOW CAN  
ANYONE BE TRULY RELEVANT?

BELL HOOKS WRITES OF THE STORY OF EVE AS THE ORIGIN OF WOMEN'S  
LEARNED DUPLICITY – THE INHERITED TENDENCY TOWARDS DISSEMBLANCE,  
IN THE SERVICE OF MALE APPEASEMENT.

IS THIS FROM WHENCE OUR FASCINATION WITH TRAGIC HEROINES CAME?  
OUR SOCIETAL MONOPOLISATION ON THE STORIES OF MAGNETIC WOMEN -  
LABELLED MAD -  
CONTEXTUALISED IN RELATION TO THEIR TURBULENT MARRIAGES.

PRINCESS DIANA  
MARILYN MONROE  
ZELDA FITZGERALD

THEIR EFFERVESCENCE IS NEVER DENIED, THEIR SANITY, CONSTANTLY.  
THE HEART-RENDING MINUTIAE OF THEIR DAILY STRUGGLES SPREAD THIN  
LIKE ASPHALT UPON THE ROAD OF CAPITALISM.

I HAD FORGOTTEN ABOUT HER – THIS POINT OF DEPARTURE THAT INFORMED  
SO MUCH OF MY A LEVEL ART PROJECT –

WANGECHI MUTU.

MASCULINE ENERGY = DOING = STRAIGHT LINES.

FEMININE ENERGY = BEING = UNDULATIONS.

TO REIMAGINE ONE'S BODY ONE MUST BEAR WITNESS TO THE STRUCTURES  
SURROUNDING ONE, WITH A CRITICAL EYE – TO BE WILLING TO PARTICIPATE  
IN THEIR DEVASTATION.

I AM FASCINATED BY OBJECTS WITH THE CAPACITY TO TESTIFY – THE YORE  
WRITTEN UPON THE LINES OF LANGUID HANDS.

WHOSE STORY IS THIS?

WHEN I REACHED THE LITERATURE SECTION OF THE LIBRARY, I KNELT IN FRONT OF KEROUAC - BENT IN GENUFLECTION WITH AMIS TO MY RIGHT, AND VONNEGUT TO MY LEFT. I FOUND MYSELF RELUCTANT TO MOVE, THOUGH I HAD ALREADY LOCATED THE ONLY PAIR OF TITLES SUITED TO MY PURPOSE.

I LIKED THE IDEA OF MAKING MY HOME AMONGST THESE APOTHEOSIZED MEN, AS IF, IF I REMAINED IMMOBILE, I MIGHT BE SUBSUMED INTO THE ORBIT OF CANONICAL REVERENCE.

ONE OF THE TOMES CHECKED OUT WAS A HANDBOOK OF DISAPPOINTED FATE

IRONIC -

FOR, ALAS, I AM TOO UNKNOWN, TOO BROWN, AND TOO FEMALE, TO GAIN MEMBERSHIP TO THE CLUB OF BEATNIK LEGEND.

WHAT IS THE POINT OF THIS EXERCISE?

THIS DABBING IN MYTHOPOESIS; IN HISTORIOGRAPHIC REVISION. TO BE AWARE OF THE ANTHOLOGIES AND COLLECTIONS HAVE COME BEFORE ME - TO FALL IN LOVE WITH THE WOVEN EMENDATIONS OF ONE-SIDED, OR EXCLUSIONARY YARNS - IS TO RECOGNISE, INCREASINGLY, THEIR SPARSE EFFICACY.

PERHAPS IT IS THE DAY, OR MY MOOD.

THE DULL GREY HAZE DIVORCING ME FROM SUNLIGHT; THE INVISIBLE PRESENCE OF THE NEW MOON.

SOMETIMES SUCH WORKS MAKE ME JUBILANT: AT THESE TIMES, I AM EMPOWERED BY SOLNIT, INSPIRED BY DUFF, TICKLED, AND HORRIFIED BY CARTER IN EQUAL MEASURE.

TODAY, THESE FEELINGS EVADE ME.

TO TAKE COMFORT IN THE WORDS OF SUCH WISE WOMEN, DOES NOT NEGATE OUR SOCIETAL PERPETUATION OF SYSTEMIC PATRIARCHY AND MARGINALISATION.

WE ARE WRITING THE PERSPECTIVES OF THE OCCLUDED BACK INTO HISTORY, AS WE STRIP THE BODIES OF THE PRESENT AND FUTURE OF THEIR RIGHTS. THE SCOPE OF OUR EXISTENCE IS STILL SUBJECT TO THE IMAGINATION OF A CISGENDER, HETEROSEXUAL MALE MINORITY; WE MAY BE PRESENT AT THE TABLE, YES, BUT HOW HIGH IS THE CHAIR UPON WHICH WE SIT?

A SHAME -

IT IS ALMOST SPRING, YET I STILL FEEL A CHILL IN MY BONES.



WHEN I FIRST READ CIRCE, THE DEMISE OF MY "RELATIONSHIP" WAS PRECIPITATE.

WHILST STILL RESIDING IN HER FATHER'S GLISTENING WALLS, THE DEMI-GODDESS FINDS SOLACE IN A VISITING SAILOR – A MORTAL OF THE NAME GLAUCON. ENRAPTURED, SHE EXERCISES HER DIVINE POWER. ADMINISTERING A POULTICE OF CRUSHED WHITE PETALS, SHE FACILITATES HIS TRANSFORMATION INTO HIS TRUE FORM. ON HIS APOTHEOSIS, HE SHUNS CIRCE, DIMINISHING THE RELATION OF HER SIGNIFICANCE TO HIM, IN A MOVE THE MODERN READER MIGHT RECOGNISE AS GASLIGHTING.

BUT ISN'T THAT THE SORRY TALE ALL YOUNG WOMEN ARE TOLD? THAT THE POWER OF THE LOVE OF ONE WHO IS WORTHY, MAY TRANSFORM EVEN THE MOST WITLESS MAN. IN THIS NARRATIVE WE WITNESS THE NASCENCE OF FUTURE HEARTBREAK - THE INEVITABLE DISAPPOINTMENT WHEN A MAN DOES NOT CHANGE, OR, VERY RARELY SO, DOES - AND DISAPPEARS.

THE HUMILIATION IS SO LOUD AS TO BE ALL CONSUMING: THE CLAMOURING ECHO OF "YOU ARE NOT ENOUGH."  
NOT ENOUGH TO MAKE HIM WANT TO BE DIFFERENT.  
NOT ENOUGH TO MAKE HIM WANT TO STAY.

BUT WHY DO WE TEACH OUR DAUGHTERS THIS? WHY DO WE PUT THE ONUS OF TERTIARY EDUCATION IN THE HANDS OF (PROSPECTIVE OR ACTUAL) GIRLFRIENDS AND WIVES?

DEAR SISTER, HEAR ME WHEN I SAY –  
IT IS NOT YOUR JOB TO CHANGE HIM.  
THOSE WHO DON'T DESIRE AID, RELEGATE THEMSELVES TO THE ETERNALLY HELPLESS.  
DO NOT TO BE EMBITTERED BY HIS EMOTIONAL LACK, BUT RELISH IN THE EXPANSIVE GENEROSITY OF YOUR WILL TO TRY.

LATER, CIRCE TAKES HERMES AS A BEDFELLOW - SHE FEELS NO LOVE, BUT BASKS IN THE GLOW OF HIS ATTENTION, AND THE INFORMATION OF BEYOND HE CONVEYS.  
WE SHOULD NOT TEACH GIRLS TO ACCEPT FLEETING SCRAPS OF AFFECTION; TO BE CONTENT AS SOUNDING BOARDS FOR PRE-PRACTICED MONOLOGUES.

ODYSSEUS THEN CAPTURES CIRCE'S HEART, BUT SHE IS AWARE OF HIS AFFECTION'S CONDITION: THE SPECTRE OF PENELOPE HAUNTS HER, UNTIL THE VERY WIDOW HERSELF ARRIVES UPON HER SHORES.

IS IT POSSIBLE TO LOVE TWO AT ONCE?  
PERHAPS, BUT NOT FULLY.  
THE ACT OF NOT CHOOSING IS, IN ITSELF, A CHOICE.  
AND SHE KNEW –  
SHE KNEW, THAT HE WOULD LEAVE -

THE POINT OF LIBERATION IS ONLY IN HER SEPARATION FROM THESE  
INFATUATIONS.  
WHEN THE DE FACTO AND DE JURE WIVES OF ODYSSEUS COMMIT  
THEMSELVES TO THE MUTUAL CARE OF HIS OFFSPRING.  
WHAT GREATER PEACE IS TO BE FOUND THAN IN THE SUPPORTIVE  
ARMS OF A FELLOW FEMALE?

I FEAR THIS MAY BE READ AS BITTER; AS SLIPPING INTO THE REALM OF  
THE ANTI-MASCULINE.  
I BESEECH YOU, MISTAKE ME NOT.

THERE ARE MANY NOBLE MEN OUT THERE DESERVING OF YOUR LOVE,  
WHO WILL RETURN YOUR CARE IN EQUAL MEASURE, AND SERVE TO  
THE SPIRITUAL ENRICHMENT OF YOUR DAYS.  
TAKE THIS NOT AS A DEROGATION OF THE ENTIRE MALE SEX, BUT AN  
ENTREATY TO PROCEED WITH CAUTION, AND DISCERNMENT.  
SEEK OUT THE ONE WHO MAKES YOU FEEL AS SAFE AS THE WARM  
HAND OF YOUR SISTER'S UPON YOUR PALM, AS THE SOFT WAVES  
TICKLE YOUR EXTREMITIES AND THE BLAZING SUN'S SETTLE TO PINK  
DANCES ACROSS YOUR EYELIDS.

her story was borne to me on the waves; i whose jurisdiction supersedes the tyrhennian sea.

to be just is not always to be gentle; to be fair is not necessarily to be soft. balance, that is my wisdom – to enact retribution on those who deserve it -

pigs –

bulging entrails under taut leathery skins; wiry tendrils adorning flesh as pink as the virgin's tongue.

the transition – the righteous engorgement.

skin is rent with a whip-like tear;

full throated yells blending, morphing into grating squeals; oozing weals upon their backs.

i admired her methods.