

Brittany Booth
HON 430-1001
Poetry Submission

To the one who held my breath
And pointed onward
To you—you know who you are

Nullify The Baptism

The Briefing:

“Come child if you want to know the difference between an elixir and a Goddess step forward.”

“Let’s play a game of musical chairs
Put the playlist on randomize
Let the gears of the music box unwind
And rewind infantile stages
Here, we surrender our weapons
And fire the guards
Advance to the vault of origins”

What exactly are the masters proposing?
“Entertain the game, find the princess, stop the apocalypse”

Swallow—what could be my final gambit

A sip of nectar
A rip in the neck
A drift beyond cloud-nine

The departing lullaby
A song synonymous with my insomnia

Mom?
Mom...?
Where?
Why?

Maiden in mantle beneath the trapdoor
You

And not another word
She presses her finger to her lips and backs
Away into the den of the rusted Chateau

Hand reaching into the knucker’s nest
Through the shallow passage
Hand reaching but forbidden from the guardrail

Footsteps scurrying on the stairs
 Above and below
A descent into the dim cellar stairwell
Uncharted
Unknown

Unborn

Mother?
Mother?!

Unborn again

Here I am uninvited,
a trespasser inside of me

*Quantus tremor est futurus,
quando iudex est venturus,
cuncta stricte discussurus*¹

That old familiar hymn
 Where have I heard that before?
 My insomnia
Too infertile to raise a flock
That sandbox that I was raised in
 A grave for chemical waste

A stone unturned
First is broken

Enter The Bloodstone

The oak that clenches my childhood prayer
An attempt to antagonize the grain
Stemmed from a tremble of hesitation from the baptismal fountain:

“Children, from the moment you were baptized,
You were claimed. Your soul has been marked.
You are part of his flock, you belong to the Lord.”
 Why did I tremble?

“To not go to Hell, Jesus Christ needs to be accepted as your Lord and Savior”
 “Why, Sister?”

“What do you mean ‘why’, child?”
 “I thought we are already saved since we were baptized?”
“You belong to the Lord—your baptism made sure of this,

¹ Thomas of Celano “Dies Irae, Dies Illa” Lines 4-6

you are his to do as he bids... It is best just to please him...
This just needs to be accepted.”

Four steps forward
Not a single back

Out of the home and into locked smoked streets
I on the corner and in the distance my peers:
satisfied ignorance played in sooted snows
Never anything more from them
Through the tobacco smokes on Sunday’s swing set
Done with lectures and teachings
To run from it all, the shades at my backside
Not considering the great return
Or recalling a great escape

“Is that the demonic one?”
“She’s cursed, she has forsaken Him.”

That scripture I turned
That psalm I quivered
That rod and staff
That shadow of a valley

I cowered
Beware my brother beside me
Fearing the bloody stone
Aware the call of brimstone
Afraid to swim in baptism
To dip fingers into the pool
And sign the cross

Still eager to sign a dotted line
A quill, a needle, pressed to the flesh
Penetration of the vein
the torment uncrossed
unraveled
dwindled
diminished

Locked deep inside an overused flask
Evenings of noncompliance
Mornings of nonexistence
Afternoons of unchanging
To see the night again

This is the advent of myself:
Where I refused the reflective water

This advent is where I met the promised Justice:

Redemption from the rejection impossible
Always rejecting the Rapture,
Unconfirmed
I the sullen

Unanswered heaven
Redeemable Eden
 Unattainable
 Unacceptable

*Oro supplex et acclinis,
cor contritum quasi cinis:
gere curam mei finis²*

Unacceptable

Flying the Angel wings' brush
Carnal leaves hovering in the town square
Maple flutters
scents of syrup stir and spread
Cobblestone pathways dusted by Autumn's weeping
 A desperate embrace from a stranger
You the winged one
 You here
 You the nonexistent
 You the distant
 You what I never obtained

Unacceptable

All until the nun wipes away a tear,
And the Father says, "she's done"
"Amen"
 Amen? Still a chant unsaid
 God still harmonizes those strings
I am the unfinished verse

Vocal chords tattered by thorns

² Thomas of Celano, "Dies Irae, Dies Illa" Lines 46-48

Rivers of thought scattered and dammed
Beware my brother inside of me
I unveil John of Patmos
He ignites the torch within
Revealing the relay and
Uncovering the forgotten fragment:

Whoever finds the meaning of these words will not taste death³

Eyelids unretired
Angled irises of red
What the optic renders
An unnerving attraction to conscious

*That stolen soul
I need that back*

Four steps forward,
An infinity back

A stone unturned
Second is broken

Enter The Amber

Manifested night terror
Dimension distorted, unmeasurable
Blood replaced by acid
Thorns
In the eye-sockets
The optic renders a chasm
I meet Hades who nods at my torment
The thorns violate, curling under the flesh
Scorching tips and curls
past the jaw
Stitching the vocal chords
Piercing the throat's interior
Only a pathetic cry
a desperate plea
a murmur:
 "Mercy"
Again, another slow nod, and a then fatherly voice:
"Follow the Set"
 The Set?

³ Gospel of Thomas, Line 1

Shimmering Angel's wings
Soft rippling voice
Incomprehensible a higher speech
Freed from thorns
Listening to the melody
Following the melody
To where the rescue leads
Turnback, never again
Toes again grounded
Fingertips tightening the cherished earth
The hum of olive trees
The budding of vineyards, clovers and nourished flowers
Again
Thank her my savoir
Departed and vanished
With only an ivory feather left behind

I must remain clean this time
I will never lose myself again

Left only to find the presence of another:
Hips, legs, muscles
Carved from tender rosewood and callous bronze
"Who are you?"
"I am The One"
"The One?"
"The One meant to nurture you always"
Always...?
"Drink this girl, your wounds need healing"
A silver vial, an elixir swallowed—pushed further is the drift
"Who are you again...?"
"The One"
"The One who will...?"
"The One who will caress the welkin's arms,
The One to kiss mesa's temple,
The One to embrace the capture,
The One for you"
"I..." the objection hindered

Lips
Legs
tongue
paralyzed
Only fingers to grip the anticipation

Tricked to lick the pomegranate

Forced to digest
A choke a strangle
 A swallow
 The poison injected once again

That One
The One who melted inside me
Welded to the memories
Smelted to my essence

A staff—the scepter of
Snakes coiling
 And I forcibly uncoiled

一人

I am my own Atlas
 The heavenly burden is myself

To allow Eros' entrance
 Never again

Journeying
Under the crust and mantel's steady hand
Witnessing the castration
Through eons of patriotism
And generations of patricide

To ask a question
 To console
Fighting the fog to find my last consort,
Consult the maiden of the Arching Sun:

“Your only identity is the victim now,
You the overtaker,
With not even an identity to claim
Who seeks a certain Set
You are the arachnid—the dawning recluse
Farwell, the toxin is swallowed
Inhale your forced pollutants
Fight and resist
Spin, spin until it is strong again
Crumble before the judgement of the falcon”

I am not the overtaker,
I am the overtaken!

Surging that poison injected
A poison that eternally remains
That tight hand's grip
Nails broken
Breathless
Heartless
Pulseless
Wristless

Deceased
But still undying

That purity
I need it back

Four steps forward,
An infinity back
A stone is unturned
Third is broken

Enter The Topaz

A wandering scorpion
Amazed and swollen by time
Shifts through the dunes
Embraced by return

Home
The forgotten home
Deserted and neglected
Once an oasis
Where spirits pranced
A riverbed of nectar curled
And sweet gusts of honey bowled and spread

Null

Is this what remains after my assault?

That control
I need it back

This sets me again across the Styx
Boarding the familiar Khufu ship of Ra
Dismantled

Resembled
Waking into Osiris' cradle
In canoe still antagonizing the current
Toward Luxor's Light
All to reattempt a conquer of Karnak
And again to walk among the Valley of Kings
Facing specters of Pharaohs—my Kingsmen
Fearless with cobra scepter
Charging my Sphinx, my stead
All to stand with toe on Pyramid's top

This is the call of heroes' crusade:

“The threat of sunburn is too evident to take shelter!
We must fight the fire at the root of the cosmos! Come,
Come my brothers refuse
To bow and kiss the feet of the Jackal King! Outweigh
His judgement without the fear of Heaven's rejection! We are
Men, destined to revolt against the Gods' unjust
Universal laws and fates! My Kingsmen, my fellows,
Charge into the stomach of the Colossal Sandstorm, unbrew
Yourself from the ferment of the elongated hour and its waitlist!
Plunge yourself into me! Rmerge as hardened usurpers! Rmerge
fully restored!”

Hold the chimera's jaw

With fangs of thorns
A crumbling bite

A swallow

The carnage of Karnak indeed a reconquering
This is what my rage has built?

I the trampled one

The one who thought she could overthrow the gods
Was it worth overcoming the desert?
Corpses tattered limbs crimson painted once golden sand
Skull fragments and teeth among the cracked pebbles
Vultures feast on once Kingsman
innards swallowed taken flight
To plummet to the foundation once again
Innocents desecrated among the followers
Treasury plundered and women plundered
Was it worth overcoming myself?

Ripped from the cradle
Spear shot down
 It is uncovered again
And again, weighed down by
 The stamped feather

The warrior discarded
The warrior again hopelessly dismantled

Enter The Emerald

Mutiny
Misguided passions
The only method
join
stand beside the preacher
rotate the cycle of the drum

This is the coping method for genocide:

“Spin,
Spin, my brothers!”
 I have neither true totem nor mantra

“Spin,
Spin, sing and dance!”
 I move around the utmost concern:
 Where does God’s salvation lie?
 In neither circumference nor the center

“Spin,
Spin and dance,
Behold, God’s shade dances!”
 A lie
 Along with our history
 And promises to see my departed again

Prophecies
Prayers
Howls of hope and mercy
Offerings untouched
My blood
my bones my feathers

Null

With the final omen
The spinning ceased with
A vermillion massacre

Too soon
 Too familiar

That kinship
 I need that back

This is where I lynch myself
 Too dulled and beaten down to slice the rope

Smokes and fogs of my ancestors circulate
Into uncharted horizon
External from the husk I follow
 Swinging and spinning into obscurity

Enter The Sapphire

A battle cry distant
 behind

No more ropes thorns or burns

My voice remains intact

“Is Anybody still here!?”
“Where!?”
“Why!?”

She enters tattered seam circling the jugular

You
And she backs away again
Through the toxic violet fog
Which not breath or lantern can whisk away

“Wait!”
“Where!?”
“Why?”
 A swallow a choke
 A strangle

My headless prayer pulses the nihility

My decapitated desire bottled
discarded

Lokah Samastah Sukhino Bhavantu!

When my voice stops hollering
So too does the voice that answers

When my voice stops whimpering—

*That voice
I need that back*

Enter The Amethyst

On the mountain's carved crest
With skyward suns
rivaling treetops
A stone staircase ascending
A click of the bamboo cane with each step upward

Willing to become Kami's employee
I ill and aged once arrived
Humbled kneel before the Miko
"I should have listened to you"
The divine maiden does not pass her Judgement
Or give her ill-foretelling
Only points to the alter
continuing her sacred ritual

This will undo the possession
This to reclaim all that has been taken

I endure another dance
Another spin

Rippling bell trees and drums
After offerings of tea and incense,
I let my trembling breath escape the aging burden

With each blow
each beat

Counting Gods

一つ

二つ

三つ

四つ

五つ

六つ

七つ

一人

みな

Everyone...

Small by number and as individuals
vessels deep as megacosms

わかる

Dart between the eyes

A touch behind the brow

わかった

That Embrace

I need that back

Again I withdraw

Seventh trespassed but unbroken

Enter The Diamond

Utmost devastation and destruction humbled and avoided

I grieve for what could have been

Reaching for a hug

Or a pat on the shoulder

Hollow mist, my arms enfold

Kneeling on echo's marble floor

Palms pressed down in the puddle's white vacuum

A grieving shiver, a ripple:

A faint, silver glow

A shoulder caressed by the radiant horizon's visit

Here is where I finally see
The remedy I really required

*That closure
I have her back*

The optic renders a clear contentment
Objectives completed

I meet my Panchen Lama
Sitting across from me
Again rediscovered
so am I

This is neither princess nor Goddess
Someone of saints' tier
A true caliber of women to stand bare before
And what of the seasons after?
春夏秋冬...何?

*During the summer and winter and their leaves do not fall
Whoever to know them will not taste death⁴*

Here is where the honey spreads
Autumn accepted once again
Square cobblestones pathways underfoot
We resume our departed embrace
Entangled fingers,
Building braced sandcastles to surpass the pollution
That pyramid, that objective eternal, buffeted by sand
I step to the stairwell above
A guide for my hand
unneded

Words and seasons acknowledged but not fully digested
only embraced
brief instance to listen
To hum the intangible tune
To sing the chorus
But when tried, only off-key notes are produced
The lyrics unreplicable

歌は僕の中だ

This is where the axis leads
The amphitheater *de Paradiso*
God harmonizes the piano

⁴ Gospel of Thomas, line 19

The voice, the grace of bagpipes

いいえ God the song emitted

Unmoving from my seat

I a spectator and participant

impassible inches from the symphony

Only a slight reach from the hand to the vector inside

Reminiscing of my days of orbiting

moving

playing

An aria, an encore, a berceuse, an opening

Indistinguishable

Risen by sleep to enter a dream

Risen from sleep with no waiting dreads or alarms

To vision via evergreen traffic lights

An unweighted charge

With irises skyward,

Nourished from the widening

Boycott on Eros withdrawn

Overshaken by the stimulant

Devoid surpassing the physiological

All to disintegrate into dew come dawn

I am hoisted from my grave and

exit life's canal

signaling a left

With seraph on the dashboard

I sit with companion among the silent seats

uncovering the solaced sheet

intermingling threads

Internal game uncovered with

Scattered remnants reconnected

Reconsidered

With finishing score undefined

I am left only and always

With her and

With the match to ponder on

Sunrise awakened at the double-bed side

With the playlist off randomize

Chains of thorns, brandings, impurities, conquests, violations, sacraments

Nullified

Infinite steps forward and back

It is only

Through the cyclones of impermanence and incoherence
I become immortal