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Excerpts from A Decolonized Memoir

1.

The day before I left Boston my steps had been stamped and
 addressed to me a duplicate of a someone else's
 charmed life just up ahead expecting a simple change
 of location would resolve a discordant soup
 a correction made to a line of narrative
 emotion restoring late-night plenitude
 written in a single elliptical leap in
 choreography so natural and uncategorizable
 as to awaken my inner traveler

The day before I left Boston I was split-screen action:
 holding on by the tips of my wings unpinned and ecstatic
 spinning-- while also collapsing beneath
 my slightly-exaggerated-never-based-in-reality
 weight confined by guilt's associative hunger
 out of body or in male drag mind mapping escape routes
 away from the diminishing gaze by which all female flesh
 is undone meat undoing thought's muscular music

's raised volume undoing truce
 hushing roar in thought's thought—
 curtaining eyes, tethered and named
 princess-clothed, trussed and tame.

2.

Youma sees someone beckoning:

I dreamt I saw the field in parts—the breeze of the field without the bush. Sloping
 meadow grass on pause as if bending the field to its curve. The sun caught
 perpetually behind clouds.

The heat of the field held in a shimmer, in mid-swallow regiments of grass returning
 to a fallen synonym for dirt, the glint brushed dry in trees circling the field. Glowing
 trees pinned the field while the ground below fell into thickets submerged in
 shadow. The sun struggled in knotted branches.

They said to get there I had to cross the field, almost blinded by a syrupy sun, to
 where the field's verge crested and disappeared.

I felt myself about to capsize, to be plunged, arms held out in alert against heaving
 ground. What lay beyond what I could see, beyond the fixed field, the breeze's gasp,
 the melting sun, the furthest trees?

Harriet's response:

Liberty is my co-pilot. She speaks innumerable languages—she speaks amphibian rhapsody, she speaks seagull clarinet, she speaks manatee air blast; all exhalations in every alphabet breaks the limits of a dead ledger. We are beyond counting—sprint tunnels through a subterranean maze, our pursuers lose the trail, even the evening bats free for us the last green mango so it surrenders to our unencumbered palms.

“Slip out with me. Love, slip out the bars, let the inside scars out.”

3.

The day before I left Boston, I had completely sewn in travel arrangements, brain tickets primed *ready, out there* and *by the way*, I read between the lines of every book, slipped into the Vallejo, into the Guillen, into the Douglass. I had unshackled

from the menace of the South Boston School Committee’s homicidal rages, its shilling for abstracted Boston brahmins noiselessly mouthing “not in my backyard” except they and them and those folks were their cousins in the backyards, one night throwing rocks, another night downing canapes and cocktails as I made my way to the shared house—a rock band, graduate students and a would be blackmailer--from one of my three jobs as cook, carpenter and proof reader

thinking the day before I left Boston, I will be leaving like a rock star in a late model drive away Audi, a German car so well engineered it will take us sideways from Boston to L.A. where we will drop it off to its owner and from there make our way north to the Bay Area

crossing New York and New Jersey by early evening to arrive in Pennsylvania at night; to drive through Yellow Springs and reach Springfield, Ohio and there to drive to Springfield, Illinois and Topeka, Kansas (Sister Brooks, Brown v. Board, Kansas sutra) and from there points over and up the continental divide.

Boxes fill my rental van to downtown Boston’s Greyhound terminal to ship books, textiles, rubber bands and paper clips (no, why? no-why.), appointments for the kitchen including an empty coffee bag, with an early 20th century logo CLIMAX in capital letters to hang in the kitchen of the new apartment, to remind me that while love is preferred, CLIMAX is an acceptable alternative anywhere, where bread or soup is made in the shape of care. Leaving and no going back except as memory drives

Away from Boston, the day before I left, in 1976, the country of my birth was celebratory and drunk-staggering through a particularly soggy political coma, sprawled out on a waterbed, wallowing in self-praise that the first soup appeared to be the same as the present soup

Smell of rubber returns tread to the road, where we expect open vistas and find the windshield fogs the road, breaks up—a preview of the next few years—a caravan of rescissioned expectations, crab walk of wish and detachment, inventories “looking to a future that wasn’t coming as expected.”

4.

The evening before I left Egypt, I was claiming the possibility of relocation, an echolation in a funhouse, narrative upheaval in pursuit of the person. In each version, the same individuals reappear, the features of the past are accidental but not coincidence, only their names have been changed, toppling pre-existing ideas of innocence.

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