

Where Your Children Walk

by quinn fati

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Boundaries of where the heart cannot cross, the body cannot pass through correctly lest it be marred and changed and transformed and cursed, the soul seeks an exit by any means necessary. You are bound to the room, you are in the process of being made again, remade, transformed, marred, into an image of their design even if that image is a corpse. Again you stand and again they beat you swiftly and coldly at the knees so that you will kneel once again before their god. They tell you this god is loving and is correct and you see how they treat one another, how they raise their young, how they care for their most vulnerable and you know this god is not one of love nor compassion nor curiosity nor grace. The language for their god is also the language of war. It is poison, it is vitriol and hierarchy and violence. Their baptism is drowning. It is to experience near death by the hands of those meant to be your countrymen. What was once your lands are now marked with the bloody footprints of your mother and her mother limping into the woods to perish, your compatriots poisoning themselves, eating poison, learning to cook with poison.

Your memory can no longer recall the old ways, the old gods, how your soul would remain the same but the body would transform and the soul would remain within the body. Once you transgressed the boundaries of where the heart cannot cross, they cut your hair, they covered your warrior marks, they put you and prostrated you in front of their god and demanded blood for worship. A broken arm became a symbol of love. They ingrained in you these falsehoods, these violent reminders framed as acts of love. You had never conceptualized a map before. These lands were a part of your heart, your mind, your soul, the familiarity never transferred beyond your love. But now when you see

the maps of how far you had walked with your mother and her mother into the woods to die, all you can see are rivulets of blood dripping down your face. What becomes love and what becomes hate and when does violence cease to define love in this room that you have become bound to.

The soul will leave the body by any means necessary. This transformation is profane. It is to desecrate, it is to violate you against recognition, the remaking into the devil.

No longer is it the spider and the coyote and an omnipotent being, no longer shall your progeny carry the sun in their hands but instead you are transformed into a being of a binaric god system, to be male and to be female and for all your power to be in masculinity and you suddenly are a woman bound to a room where, when you refuse to kneel, they whip your knees so hard they buckle and crash. Their god is not a god of unpredictability, of chaos magic and of one for whom you would ask for help when all else failed. Their god became that which all dependence and life was sought, for whom kept a watchful eye, you are unfamiliar with a panopticon god. You know not of how this is the undoing of your mother and her mother and how your descendants no longer sing to Wakonda but speak to God but it is also everything at the forefront of your mind. Your knees ache and still you stand and still you are hit. Language is transformed, clothing is transformed, you and your sister and those who will descend from you are transformed and the soul will leave the body by any means necessary.

And how could you know, you made of earth and sky, born to carry the sun in your hands, how could you foresee your mother and her mother stepping into the woods to perish, how could you foresee the mobile homes, the violence, the permanence of the violence of a god machinated for war, for death, for ambivalence. How could you understand the violence of the nature of those who hurt your knees to kneel, how could you know that those rivers of blood coursing down your face would become what predetermined where your people would go to die. What could possibly happen when your descendants learned how to acclimate to poison, what could happen when your descendants unwittingly placed their footprints in your footprints in the pursuit of betterment, when your footprints became the pathway to your body. These were concerns beyond you, what your focus was to survive, you, a child, now categorized as “girl,” categorized as “gendered,”

categorized as “less-than by whiteness” learning the facets of the transformation of soul-no-longer-encompassed-by-body and body-no-longer-occupied-by-soul.

The fear settles in, the violence, the fear that your unborn progeny shall face this transformation and so of your culture, of the spider, of the coyote, of Wakonda you shall not speak. No longer is it the sky, no longer the earth, but your god becomes “man,” your god is “gendered,” your god shall seek the rivulets of blood demarcating maps and shall determine that your mother and her mother and your sister and your children shall walk into the woods covered in that same blood should they dare to disobey. Your god now speaks to you in the language of war, of violence, of what shall be to pass and what shall not pass is the soul. The fear, the blood, the violence, but what makes you, what once encompassed the being has been beaten at the knees until the knees are torn asunder. Your humanity survives but the fear survives longer. This language of fear was not faced during wartime but this is the prolonged violence, the violence of the mind, the body, the soul. You shall exist in memory, you shall serve reminder, you of your heart, of your soul, of your blood, of the vengeance that you once sought and was beaten out of you through your knees, you shall become and you shall transform, once in life, eternally in death.

You shall hold the hands of your progeny and you shall lead them from the woods and you will show them the rivulets of blood streaming down your face and forewarn them that where they seek your footsteps in betterment serves nothing but to leave them covered in your blood. Maps cannot begin to comprehend your understanding of the land, the land you knew in your heart, the land that birthed you and your mother and her mother.

Your moment is the tipping point and the moment of your progeny is the revolution.



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