

Tomorrow, the Goddess

*The night spreads its gauze of sable
like a fruit-bat stretching its skin-thin wings
to fly in long, slow curves of black silence,
picking up the echoes of the dark.*

*There is evil in the air,
the fug of blood unclotted,
a quaking of ashes men cannot locate,
a smur of red women cannot quell.
The evil is splayed
like the ten arms of Mother Kali,
black and frozen in rage.*

*A breath away, fireflies glow greenish-blue,
heatlessly, like luminescent streaks of tears
on the moist faces of the paddy fields.
Drunken laughter skins the night.
The evil remains.*

*Inside, within the low walls of age-hewn granite,
the flame quivers against the umber lamp
like a teardrop straining to be set free
from the corner of the goddess' bloodshot eye.*

*To the women, already moaning, it appears
like an island of orange incandescence,
hot and hypnotic, as it retracts
from the wick of cotton pregnant with oil,
leaving the tip no longer white
but an arrowhead of molten gold, held back
by an anklet of charring.*

*To be free of chains, to be free
of the loam of fertility,
the gods must die, the goddess triumph.
This the women know as they wait
with palms folded over their breasts.
Inside the head, the throb begins.*

*Devoured by fear, sickle-slashed by eons,
the little man in the head,
the small oracle with the lacerated forehead,
shakes his matted locks,
blood coagulating fast into a crimp of furrows.*

*Through these crevices the night's waitings seep in.
The oil-lamp's leaf-like exhalations swirl up
to brush the sandal paste from his forehead,
drying between the scrag-ends of his temples.*

*The night is now cretaceous
as tendrils of sootsmoke climb the air,
holding up the hot sky of March,
bluedark like beetles, but now cooling
to the frenzy of Mahakali's children
as they pray:
O Mother of mine,
roaring drunk on the blood of our children,
throw us your crimson waistcloth
and arise naked, black and old.
Let your fury spume into our loving.
Let the lamplight coruscate still
on jour goldecoin necklace.
Let us be you.*

*The night remains dark like a prayer
and inside the head the drums still throb.
But tomorrow the goddess will triumph,
tomorrow the light will glint.
This we know, this we can feel.*

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