

Isabella Colalillo Katz

Dzikir of Love

for Samantha

I

First nights there was song. there was the baby scent of new breath. the longing for sleep never overcame the delight of seeing her tiny body resting in the curve of my arms. her sweet breath near my waking ear, the breathy morning sun always moving towards the beauty of her freshness and me attuning to the heartbeat of her needs.

Long nights of song and sleepless abandon. her stubborn, inconsolable tears, her beauty and grace. the soft smile on her face when she lay sleeping. when she still talked to angels.

I remember her scent; the way she moved her baby fingers when crying for my mother-milk. there were nights she refused to sleep and how my tired eyes touched the lines of her new face. the world became a sacredness when she suckled my breasts in a mutual passion. she cried little then. she still remembered the taste of god.

Then the scars of life appearing on the tapestry of her skin. I cried to protect her from their bites; wanted to hide her from the human face of sunlight.

II

Later, words that wound. the inevitable misunderstandings. the need between us for differentiation, for the struggle to take back her godpower. she doesn't think when she strikes out—her venom singses my soul. I scream to make her understand—defensive, disbelieving. how can love turn to such bitter dust? destroy the tango of years? pollute the purpose of our breathing lessons?

After giving her love, I stand empty handed. a mother looking for love in the dustbin of time. a child crying for the serene sharpness of old words. these are the questions I ask of the goddess. why has the daughter become the arrow seeking her own destruction? why am I the enemy now? why did I think I could tame her heart with old remedies, trust, love, the gift of freedom?

Struggling for breath she rants and rages. I have no words to destroy the venom. she splinters, unrelenting. She's fighting me for her taste of life. can she remember the flavor of our nightsongs? how my milk grew her heartbeats?

Battle weary we cry. the listening moon convinces the stars to twinkle gently. She's crying for new milk. my wounded heart flutters, breaks open. the morning wants to redeem her anger. fails again.

III

Did we ever dream it would come to this? did we know then that love is only part of the answer? could we ever have known in those days of delight and beauty that the need for love could terrorise us? as only real love can?

I write letters to my daughter. she writes me. we rush headlong into tenuous answers. she's the princess who felt the pea of my love. I am the mad Rumpelstiltskin begging for my name. she needs breathing room. I give her sadness.

Isabella Colalillo Katz

These are the alchemies of motherlove. these are its sad findings. this is the poem I could not write this morning. the chant of incompatible geometries. the space between us and how it teeters for the love of you, unredeemable daughter. sweet love of mine.