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GLASS & THIRTEEN OTHER INTIMACIES: AN EXCERPT

1. Mirror

I came down a red road towards a small spinning sphere. Perhaps a gate or a star, wildly reaching for the dark to take it back to the dark. As I walked towards the keyhole of glass I knew I could not take anything back, could not go back through the forest and waves where I was born. There were red birds, red trees, red clouds, red horses, red waves, red houses with bright red roofs, shiny with lonely light as I waved farewell at the silent black figures inside of open windows.

2. Mirror

They sat around a table until there was some sort of convex. A convergence of words met in the air between their faces as they each argued about the meaning of life.

The words pushing their faces back against the airlessness of their words. They talked earnestly again about the self and wasn't the twenty-first century an entire face arranged of faces. They talked urgently about virtual faces and the skulls inside of their heads. They made distinctions about the faces of temptations, hijackers, and terrorists. Some of the faces lived only in screens. Some of the faces were so endangered they lowered their voices to offer descriptions of ghosts. Other faces appeared in clouds. Others reeked of nationalism and gods. Others yet rang inside of absence like the dull, heavy bells in high towers and domes. Others bled through descendants, recessions, depressions, or golden ages of enlightenment. Ages of reason and instinct warred against their indistinct features. Also, faces of millennials, post-blacks, non-binaries, and immigrants.

Around the table, they looked at each other as if they had a secret.



3. Mirror

Her face darkening, floating at the bottom of wine glass, as the convergence ebbed and pulsed against the grains of the table. They hadn't noticed, not one of them, that the table was splintering beneath the burden of their hungers. They hadn't noticed the legs and the bruised back of the watermarked table shrinking, remembering.

"Will there be a stain?"

"Only if you spill everything again on the earth."

"What about the blood?"

"It is forgotten until there is a wound."

"How does thirst end?"

"Can there be too much pleasure, after all?"

Her face was a wound sometimes when no one was watching.

When she sat alone at a glass table in her house. Watched the afternoon pass its slow light through her mind. She would wait for her memory to open like a golden space on the water of a river she could barely recall.

When the water opened and she looked through at her blood there was a face.

4. Mirror

The verb of the ego.

The verb of desire or hands. The grammar of shattering. The machine of shards trembling in a voice.

The definition of distortion, distress, derangement.

Open-mouthed sonnet of the sea.

5. Mirror

They walked through a museum.

Her lover said it was a Museum of Identity. Which meant some of the bare spaces on the wall offered nothing but flat white walls or nicks where a nail once punctured an expensive perspective. There were frames containing ears, mouths, eyelashes, tears, or wounds. There were installations of flesh. There were recollections smeared with red lipstick, hooves, blueing fingerprints.

Sometimes the lovers absently touched each other's hands as they made their way through the museum. There was a room made of five red walls but that was not the room described on their maps (there were endless iterations of countries) as the room of the heart.

Another room was filled with white bulbs and it spoke about invisibility and shadows and the abstract shapes that burned under closed eyelids in the presence of hard light.

Sometimes they drifted into different wings where they worked for years apart and then returned, suddenly and conspiratorially laughing, to a corridor. Wearing nothing but their faces they could barely recall their old names.

It appeared that her lover had gone through many more rooms before she had arrived. When she came into the architecture, being born with dark hairs and darkest eyes, she observed the height of the ceiling. The irony in the panicked staircases that disappeared as the illusions of mud roads replaced them, insisting there was indeed a trick, a path.

When she, laughing and sobbing, told her lover she had gotten lost inside of the lobby for two or three decades there was a familiar nodding of his head, an antic recognition of where the losing of self was located on the museum's glossy map.

6. Mirror

Her mother was pouring water into a tall glass as she looked through moonlight.

Stay up with me, she said in the room.

She thought she was alone.

7. Mirror

All the desks in the classrooms were made of glass. Inside of each desk held a face the way a book itself holds the author against its spine for eternity. The body of the book gets lost in the glass, clouded from the pupils who breathe and breathe against it. Pressed faces against desk, desires. It is a game with music playing. Sit at a desk and look down into the face of the teacher who is waiting to tell you that there is no other life.

When one of the students suddenly stands with an axe all the faces in the desks begin to cheer, their voices rising to the ceiling of the classroom like flashing, red wings. They beg to be destroyed, liberated, saved from what they have become in the classroom.

They want to fly through the opened windows into the alphabet of high clouds.

8. Mirror

In a white dress she arranges the light in her skin. Before she can rest she must set the apparatus up to see her life in its indifferent lens. When she touches the machine it can only give her back the warmth or terror she has given it in the first place. Finally, in a white dress that will slowly press through her skin until she is red, she will begin to understand the different stations of her melancholy. The machine is clicking all the time without her touch now.

In every frame, a blur of red.

9. Mirror

The woman who approached her on the road was laughing, peeling a fruit she had never seen. The woman is wearing a red dress but it is not one color of red. The fruit in her hand is different too, depending on how she turns it in the red light of the morning. The seeds she pulls from the fruit are like very small delicate pearls of glass with small flashes of light contained within. Furious insects battering the shelling of seeds with ant-sized wings. The woman pulls more fruit out of her mouth as though she is a machine or a field.

She approaches heavily. Her feet make red marks against the earth. Her voice is loud like birds talking all at once. She has two shadows who are holding hands as she goes ahead of them, making her way.

When the two women are close they both begin laughing as if they have overheard the same joke. As if they have broken a mirror together with their tongues. Above them red rain begins lightly. The air smells like pink flowers. Dogs trot behind her, whining.

No one has ever seen this knowledge nor tasted it, she says, before holding her mouth over the other woman's mouth.

10. Mirror

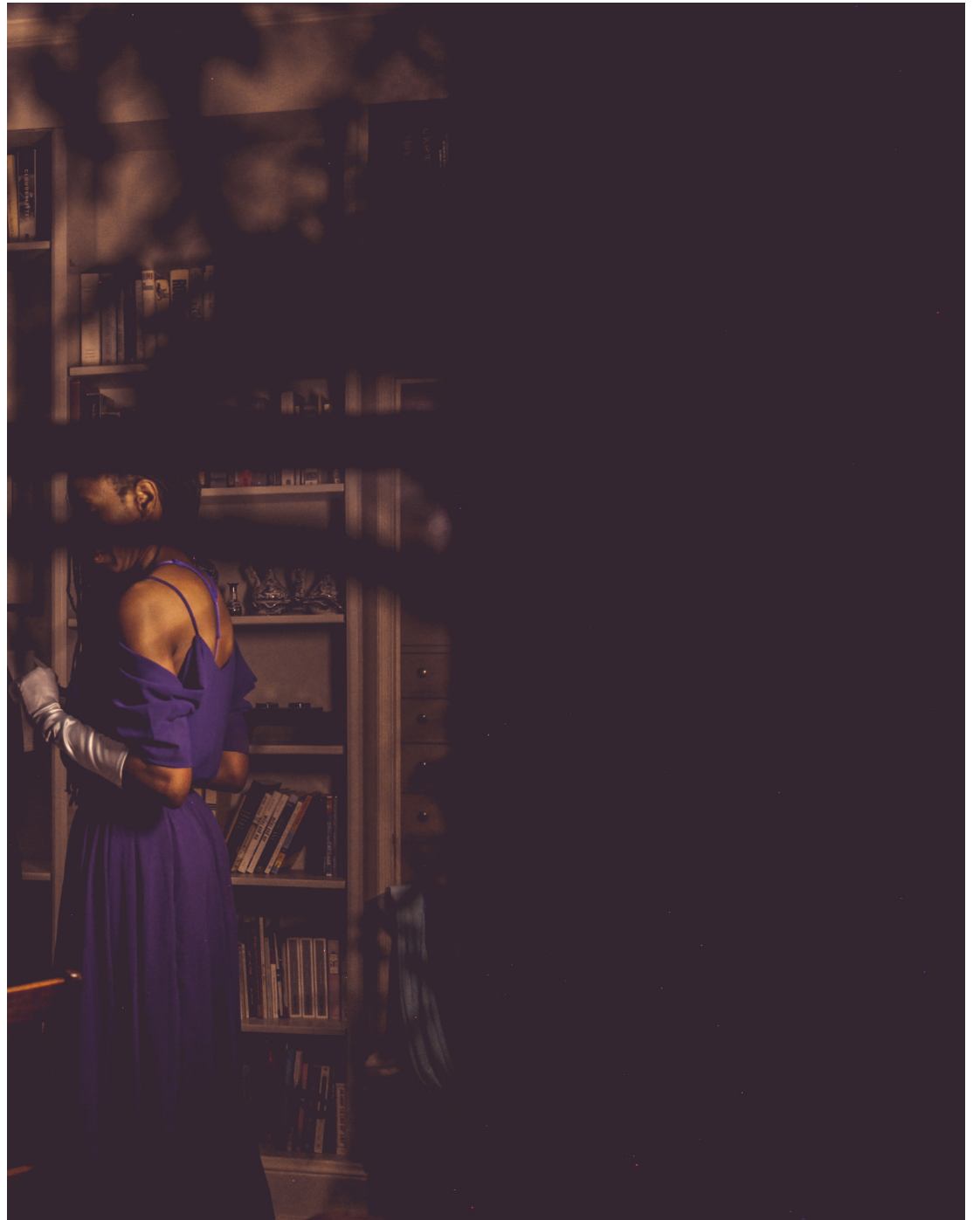
The light tore the fields of the valley into misshapen plots and stories. A silver train panted against the skulls of sloped red hills. As I walked along the road, which dipped and rose up until it touched the sky, I gathered songs of work and praise wherever I was able to take shelter.

Sometimes shelter was a lover, or a grief, or a stone, or a religion, or a house with a red, brick roof. Sometimes shelter was language, pictures, theaters, museums, and houses without walls or tables. Sometimes ghosts gave me the stories before the living could tell me anything. Other times I was invited to sit down in enchanted forests at long tables with wolves and grandmothers. Sometimes the huntsmen pulled his axe out of my windpipe.

There was always music, there was always someone laughing or hollering. There was the surreal light that came after the dark and the unbearable light that crawled before the darkening and where I could not go back though I nearly recalled the path that led to the red waves where I was born.

Lovers smiled inside of my hips. The thirst of moonlight drank my terror until I reached the bottom of a glass boat that revealed my dark red depths. Thin red rain tapping every leaf and shame until the sky opened with its jagged windows of clouds. Bound by the shell that gulps water and salt, I have been making my way through the sky.

Which means that sometimes the glass is a thin recollection that spins and aches for the red sand that burned it hard into its birth.



11. Mirror

The candles were melting at midnight inside the cathedral. The candlelight hollowed the air. Dolorous bells sang in the high tower, bellowing against epiphanies.

The hush beneath the bells was like a last breath, a spit turning above low flames.

The sinners are humming, listening, melting. Their voices are humiliated shards. They can barely stand inside of the dark. How can they forgive the hallowed faces who, circling, unseen and unheeded, master their fates?

These sinners are betting against destiny, against free will, against the glowering martyrs who peer down from cracked ceilings stained with gold ringing.

They kneel and stand whispering to themselves. Their faces curling like paper. They turn towards the arched entrance, their faces fingered by yellow tongues. They are waiting for ecstasy, waiting for their skin to fall away. Their whispers rustle like wings.

There is no testament but their sacrifice. A wind blows upon their hands and lips until they are blue stones. Their names will wait in the stones until the moon has begged for their deaths. Their faces turn blue as the candles hiss and threaten to extinguish but will not as long the sinners forgive the howling bells.

They nod their heads, trembling in dark light.

12. Mirror

She stood in a field as the train passed her in its metallic solitude at dusk. Yellow squares crossing her skin, framing her inside of flat squares of light that moved like photo negatives between her fingers.

She could not make out the black figures inside of the sealed windows. But her body vibrated from the shuddering train. She knew what the train knew, knowing she couldn't stop moving, couldn't stop parting the night with her screaming, black whistles, knew that even when she paused at one station of desire she could not stop desiring to pull away from it.

She is rooted to the field and only holds her hand up as though it is glass, as though it will be a beam, a beckoning to someone inside of the machine, hoping to see a sign, wishing that the lonely fields were filled with pink flowers in bloom.

Glass (Finally)

“What can I do with you until you are able to see through it?”

“To see it all would mean my absence.”

“Maybe that it is better.”

“To vanish into clear air? As if we hadn’t come this far?”

“Melancholy is so uninteresting these days, particularly as text. Don’t phone anymore. Text.”

“I’m writing you back, back. I’m writing us as before.”

“There, again, you are letting a mood shatter an ordinary quarrel, a plain back-and-forth.”

“Is metaphysics useless as well?”

“They have an app for that. Application, you know. Shorthand.”

“Wanting you this badly and not being able to get through.”

“Wanting anything is over. Everyone’s over.”

“I want to talk to you about need. I don’t know what I need anymore.”

“Touch my mouth.”

13. Mirror

The bad prophesy. The unpleasant eyes of mother, father. The discovery of loneliness in a house, condemned to be torn down to build condominiums. The ceiling plated with the derision and desires of flesh upon a flattened hotel bed. In the funny house, the lunatic’s tongue slapping at fleas of gibberish. In the library, the spines and headstones rammed inside of pine or steel shelves. A cemetery of granite dripping silently with names in a forlorn country. Still, the illusion that there is more space, another dimension inside a small, rented space that is shabby.

Cruel fields of smoke. Impenetrable marriages. Three 4’s roping a void. Mi is my or mine. Cut its head into diamonds, squares, ovals, or ungodly geometry.

Or, my eyes were always hers. Or, the alchemy of my flesh was taken from the dark and returned to the dark through the slight wound of love.