

## Two by FARID MATUK

### HENEQUEN YARN SONG BEGUN FOR ÁNGEL DOMINGUEZ ON THEIR BIRTHDAY

Anzaldúa's tree on the coast I know through you  
and the agave fiber you strung about us people of color  
are not a thing but we can hold the string  
watching occasions strike at time, light rain  
starting in 15 minutes, the wet grasses behind Naropa  
already in that future ready for Bhanu's idea - undress  
at Ginsberg's tree and keep walking  
our obscenity as a home of unsafe passage being one way  
I know the tree right through you, I can feel it  
the light off restless waters arcing to dirt, cool  
at its shaded base, somebody's long hairs shed there, or elsewhere  
my mom's pocketbook pulling her scent  
from the aether still. Mutuals in next season's coats  
find quartz in their pockets you gave them,  
Mercury & ferrier, but shaping us casual as a cat.  
It's the trees who own the poets. It's the agave string  
that comes round us when the fascists are silly off themselves,  
no pretending. They parade in boats, they dance  
at the rally to whatever's playing,  
they tighten their faces. Everyone knows the truth  
all the time. It's beautiful like that, abiding,  
immovable, common. Fady says Darwish said  
no people are smaller than their poem. Say it again  
when someone comes to ask. Rigor, value, coinage

mouthfuls, heavy enough to think we're here.  
My child's fitful, hard words in her sleep. Quiet that follows  
the State's circling planes. Long avenues and different drugs  
to meet the moment, never dangerous  
or disposable enough to kill or disappear.  
Revolution finds a way, Tongo says. You guys  
are negative, Jane says through  
wind chimes tuned to the golden ratio,  
another to some scale impossible for the piano.  
I love their answering way across the gravel,  
following four coyotes down our street. Foxy dogs  
staying together for their mirroring smells.  
My family walked after them. The child's game  
was to say Spain in various intonations and rhythms.  
We were to respond France, but with the previous nation's  
effects mimicked exactly so. Assigned,  
unoriginal countries, disturbing two hawks  
into flight as we went. Our space given into their wake.  
All done, the child said, of the distance the hawks' eyes  
traveled to get to her. I think you know this already,  
you can feel it, and if again you're a distant memory,  
if you are the distance, if distance is the force holding  
ourselves together, if you are ready,  
if you do not want to be alone, if you are free  
to stay near, if near is more of what there is  
than what's distant, if distant rides away  
on near's back, are we a people  
coming closer - goodbye and welcome  
can you feel - these bodies entire are waving.

## DAMBALA REACTION SONG & NOTES FOR LINDON BARRETT

“chao’s toy” “the one without breasts” – Alice Notley

Key cast

of gold worn  
by the turn  
down to art  
and service

obedient panic  
just enough  
breathing back into place  
turngiven to the state

and my imagination  
wake each other  
holding on to  
a sound on sound’s heels

men ed  
ified in  
subservience  
entrusting duration  
they’d give

time to men  
when  
relentless

leeward  
  earthside  
shelter

already  
  arcs  
time in  
mycelium  
  chem song

folded  
  hyphae  
thin  
  shell  
of dirt,  
  ring

\*

The streetside obscenity of me  
displaces the streetproud obscenity of me –

Sweet Counsel  
at two speeds – running and rising –

he was here right then. My task  
after sorting the ocean waters – by brine,  
by froth, by plastics,  
by reflected light's penetration –  
  was to pull on California  
like the moon coming closer on the questions we ask

thought did feel an enfolding  
into what's before me and what's about  
brought inside me. Gone under a name  
like memory or grieving.

I could sleep right now, that's how I know we're close.  
Sustained flight and mysteries of vision. Exhale  
radiant, who'll deliver light  
all the way through its translations –  
salinity, erosion, effluence –

to learn dirt loosened and moving? Enough to bring him with it.

Did he want to go so fast?  
If you have to ask, moonchild,  
you're glowing,

pockets empty of music, of sudden noticing

taking up the space we left, drinking in the unfinished upper floor  
of his building where we could hide naked, singing, see trees  
come right out of the sidewalk, parked cars,

trees in the street singing. With such speed,  
is the ear the mind's, discontinuous but claimed?  
Meaning is easy, I don't mimic. Or ritualize his gestures, but they layer

on what's drawn in. On every breath  
of a word tumbling out dissect diesel air from scaffolded  
rooftop to miles above.

The ear isn't the mind's, but the outside's. He has written,

nothing to do with style. He has left me in a sentence. Whatever  
verb. Against the heroics and capital of poetry

left alone or stolen from, not believed in enough  
to manifest their undoing or become  
the administrator of their replacements.

Every letter in this poem is my language of grief,  
but not a single word more will be.

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I've looked down toward your bed so many times,  
where I'm told your corpse would be. Thinking I was driving  
or on a walk, glancing into a delivery bay, or reaching

to turn off my lamp, but I'm levitated in the corner nearest your  
bathroom, I sense but can't see, your round shoulders, the  
planks of your collar bone. Run

down, or risen, I don't know the third speed  
that would let me hover. Dropped through and out  
the space of death. With what official eyes would gather

round a corpse to shape your room into a theater, eye of  
significance, eye of peering, desperately averted eye returning in  
its duty, eye pulled a ways out

into the vacuum of your going. Did I even know my friend,  
sightlessly can I sense, if I can't really think  
of reasons you would've cried?

Receptive eye, eye run out to pull its face off

of thought or story or burrowing memory,  
having mixed a fake malt liquor

you drank out of an Olde English bottle lecturing hundreds.  
Running ahead. Of the blackness imagined for them. Mother  
love dressed in your fathering guile?

Under. A coroner's eye. Under eye of literary executors, eye.  
Of golden. Hour. And nude beach, my little heart  
left with room enough to pump.

Were you with us college boys because we moved  
too fast to fix you in our regard? You gave to anyone  
not hiding fear,

not memory. And still I would omit the whites. Omit what they  
thought we thought of them. You just needed to get fucked  
and I obliged but you hadn't

cleaned out so I brought your shit out of you. Tender, you  
put me under soap and warm water.

You fixed the door to not close. So, he was there

wherever you were, long before he could imagine you, in whatever  
place you made feel like the outside. Obeah. Dambala.

Learn. The angels.

Name by name. Marlon. Was he fucking you, when he  
tightened the shoelace too far round your neck? When he  
pulled back what did he bring out of you?

You were found on your back, naked in bed. So, was Marlon

still above you? In death's newest seconds. Who took care of  
him? Had you nodded

with eye of power, eye ongoing. Eye having been seen. Zungo  
eye. Eye of dirt. Eye having burrowed.

Now come through. Into his eyes. Yes. More.

Because it felt good and you wanted it to feel better?

Who'll publish this poem? Omit you, fast friend. From  
circulation. These words already committed, already

folded breath through and back. Follow and we can't  
walk away from our dead. Fast friend. Turn well in air, turn  
over a season's fire in the trees, turn blood, turn dung,

turn gravity not a force but the double edge of word  
and breath folding. Around Marlon. Found with your car,  
Marlon found dead in his cell having reported abuses

by the guards Marlon without a trial. Marlon murderer just a boy.  
Marlon dead and folded into this poem. Open door. What  
you both bring out of me. I don't ask your ancestor to stay.

Your ground. Your names in the record or in stone. What's  
worn. Sovereigns. Owners "won't go to heaven. You won't go to  
hell. You'll remain in your graves, with the stench and the smell."

You knew your name. And your word couldn't own you.  
Omit authorship. The white prize is staying in place. But it goes so  
quick, the book. You wrote the night your copies arrived  
you flung away from us. So held, its path across the space of

your room. So unfurled, space finds its folds. A breath might  
come last

but it knows to travel by doubling round. So much moment  
pressed into the empty corners I dream you left, extra corners  
the words fold back around the space your mouth was.

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My task without you. Stop sorting sex from word. Sex in  
breath. Sex at once of jellyfish and sea. Of time. Halipleumon or  
pulmo – lung given to water, a bellows given to all the water

a door can let in. It's not childhood. As if a lane had not been  
cleared by that suffix. The skyway up from dirt is all brambles,  
another relay of mycelium carrying back the word of trees.

Old enough to walk, awake enough to see the world turning  
outside the windshield going to sleep trying to forget the men who  
had reached for my child arousal. It had been expanding,

exhaling far enough to be taken under advisement by the sun  
bright reaching for every corner shaped  
shade the pool shimmering chlorine in the lashes

of all these trees wrapped in garlands from a long-gone  
national holiday, far enough to have clung in crystals collected and  
lined up at the window flares of the sun realized in cement

block by block – charge and release. Gathered and collapsed  
under the men's touch into a film around me. The numbers  
and the terms imagination indivisible.

Conditioning tales that sweep through. Learn  
the stories to draw on. Constancy, kindness, cabinets  
full of curiosities. But I've got notions – I know

I could hook myself on laxatives, it feels that good to empty out  
in rounds. They say what they say, thinkers, ruminators, keepers  
of their own intellects. I keep this body's smells, mineshafts dug to

what's just behind, riding whatever won't stave off the long  
or short quiet that follows. It's okay it's a reaction. My rage in a  
dream took all its forms at a run, kind dispersal without event

in the mutual service of dominating a sub. I don't know in the dream  
if he cares if I hold him after in what forms for my tenderness.  
I'm awake when I'm well

habituated to resisting a tender regard wherein all else, must else,  
all else. Folded together in a shared sleep. Identify or  
disidentify, but they're connected, folding and unfolding

ancestoring, unfinished, being men like balsa wood frames so light,  
experts at signaling our withdrawal from one another. The student  
asks, "how do you know when you're no longer talking as a person?"

I only know I turned on my phone's recorder after the  
coyotes quieted, in early light, out the south window the farthest  
palm tree brought forth by the cold orange light behind.

After the fact of our daughter and her friend figuring out  
how to piss in the yard, she says when they squat they face off  
with some angel of their knowing.

I can feel sea trash, arousal, and the edge of California  
you helped lift off me. A cross breeze through the windows,  
cloud cover. On what waters. I go to sleep

asleep, held by a word just behind me. To find oneself a turngiven  
key cast of air in a body, otherwise ordered. Having been seen,  
it comes with its own annotations.