

AUNT CHLOE

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3 poems

by Kamilah Aisha Moon

Song of Solomon Remix

If a child already burdened
by his tombstone name ventured off
the beaten path into backwoods
to peer into the windows of my life
he would see little, thus seeing
way too much. My kitchen
has no pulse, my pots not slick
from use. I don't shuck anything.

He would see one woman, face unmade
& breasts exposed, dressing for the day
from a heap on the floor, or dozing upright
in a cracked, fifth-hand chair. Blankets
twisted in sweat & serrated sunlight—

scenes of quiet disaster seared
into tiny retinas. No harmonies
riding breezes to bring comfort or joy.

When did the need for nourishment flip
into a desperate feeding of desire?

This figment of boy hunched in the shadows
yearns for the broken chains
of parents' choices chapter & verse
to give him something to strive for!

Who wants to be born unable
to outrun blue-lipped destiny?

I yearn to cut my matted hair
so a woman's hands will run through it
to make me over.

The last woman's hands lost
in my thick roots unraveled me,
sparked a prolonged fever.

Less magic than mayhem beneath
my navel (I'm no Pilate or angel),
I've lived long enough to know

why a man would choose a moment
of soaring over a train of unsung years
freighted with loss & memory.

I don't wish this knowing
on anyone's child—
especially a son's soul growing among trees
that might be watching.

These Are the Breaks

Oh broken bewildered girl I wasn't born to be, break
yesterday under heel. With each step I won't break

apart like old cake on a cracked plate
deserted, the fate of wasted sweetness, or break

like a dropped heart's smithereens
speckling sand until fresh waves break

over, wash them into crowded sea. Bruised
moon drawn to gritty, slick earth, break

her pull, resume rightful orbit

in the vast, vast sky—never should a break
up break life in two. Ever. No one
but Christ with His Before & After can break
time's body like that, shock dark hair white
with belief. This is my story, my song—let me break
it down: I'll glow with *borrowed splendor*, ripen
my soul day & night between clouds, break-
through wide & undeniable, fuse a new Aisha
with what remains, resists & refuses to break.

Still Life as Rocket: 42

Thanks, Yolonda

This is the part where the boosters begin
to fall away, & I'm moving so fast
it feels like slow motion.
From here I can see
the blue contours of my journey
against eternal midnight lit

with torches held by unseen hands.
I understand why many choose
not to look—it really does take
my breath away, steers this ride toward
terror & away from thrill. I think of
Joy, Théma, Kerry, Anthony, Phebus. Sandra & those
lynched by cops, satellite spirits
who didn't reach this orbit alive, how I must
feel the fuel burning & praise them
by not cursing the mirror or clinging
to the rear view & its new
blurriness; dare to comb defiant curls
emblazoned by moonlight.
There is so much still launching
in me.

Kamilah Aisha Moon is a Pushcart Prize winner, Lambda Award finalist, and a 2015 New American Poet who has received fellowships to Vermont Studio Center, Rose O'Neill Literary House, Hedgebrook, and Cave Canem. Her work has been featured widely, including in *Harvard Review*, *Poem-A-Day*, *Prairie Schooner*, and elsewhere. Moon holds an MFA from Sarah Lawrence College and is an assistant professor of Poetry and Creative Writing at Agnes Scott College.

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