

BODY OF HANDS

I have come to set it free.

I've carried his honesty too long,
A loaded question pressed against my temple,
So much weapon named truth.

It is with me now,
As I crawl my way up the mountain,
Begging the wind to let me scream.

But a landslide fills my mouth with rocks,
The taste of earth wet on my tongue,
and as I choke I begin to laugh.

It is absurd to have a name,
Tearing holes in my lungs,
To have a body made of hands.

I still feel them,
Only every now and then,
For it is not how it was.

But it is still how it is,
And how it is,
is dreadful, mostly.

Sometimes quiet,
In that moment of unfeeling knowing,
When the earth tilts before it falls away.

I wish it were different,
For your sake,
Love of my life.

This body of hands aches for yours,
like my soul aches for silence,
"Peace", I say, *"peace"*.

But my thoughts run headlong,
Through every fence I carefully built,
Trying to domesticate pieces of myself I did not agree with.

As if one could decide
they are allergic to truth,

As if it were a shallow poison.

Sweet like candy,
Rotting at my teeth,
I wish you'd kiss my bleeding gums.

Erase the blackness etched in my eyes,
Across my throat,
Seeping into my heart.

You, a beautiful watercolour,
Childlike wonder,
Finger-painting on the walls of my past.

It is a past that I can still taste
like the barrel of a gun in my mouth,
Feel it's cold grip in my teeth.

If I blink too hard against the shiver of its weight,
I still see the grotesque image of death's hollow face,
I've always belonged to him.

"You belong to no one", you say.

And it is only then that I remember,
I have come to set it free.

It is only then that I become the mountain,
Even more insurmountable than my odds.

My skin a slippery slope,
Broken from those who did not tread carefully.

Crushed under the weight of thousands of hands,
Clawing their way up my body.

They ache to reach the top of me,
Just to feel like they cannot be killed.

Yet here I am,
Having outlived them all.

I make a fool of death,
And I finally scream.

The voice is wretched and lovely,
Survived years without water.

The voice of a sweet little girl,
who survived being his daughter.

Suddenly, I am her again,
Resilient as the tide.

All at once, the hands are my own again,
And they bear an artist's hide.

Weapons of creation,
Harbingers of freedom.

They are peacemakers,
In the war waged on my body.

This body of hands.

It is a war I never asked for.

I did not ask for it.

Not once.