

Five Songs for Petra

I

They say my great-grandmother was mad,
but I like to think she flew into herself,
got trapped in the wool of her feline heart
and decided to stay there.

II

He was already married when he met her.
Her name juts from the borders of his own,
half-Carib woman with a forest in her bones,
mother of his mad children, she who would dare,
with her sharp white teeth, to try and eat him alive.

III

They say my great-grandmother lived alone in the leaning house.
I slept there once, long after her death,
my body rocked between the walls by
a slow August earthquake.
I smelled her in the damp floorboards.
The syllables of her name
rolled through the broken windows like
swollen fruit and grating metal.

That was how I found her.

IV

He was already married when he met her,
but there was something about her
that caught him, pierced his skin.

Her love was an unsheathed claw.

He waited, tunnelled around in the flute
of her hip to find the sound
of himself.

But soon, the beasts around the bed
would not let him in. The house bulged
with books and bared teeth.

When she began to sing to the trees,
he decided it would be best
to remain whole.

v

There is a door that leads
down a broken hill. Trees grow there,
but are dark, burdened with moss
and too much hunger.
If she walked here, with her dogs
barefoot and half-blind, then
I might still find her.

If I go mad, like she did,
I wonder if he will stay.

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