

a doorway dilemma

above
the doorway
she is waiting.
three bronze visages turned away from one another
as if disagreement were a form of prayer.

I am not here for revelation.
only for passage.
only to cross over from the planned-out life I have meticulously rehearsed
into the life I could not name.

but thresholds are insatiable conspirators.
why must they demand an unappeasable offering?
(always an offering that I never know the customary rites for)

wait...
have I arrived too late,
maybe too early?
my wavering words hang from me like unfastened garments.
I have spoken with one voice all my life
and now I am speaking with three.

one whispers for me to stay.
to keep the home hearth warm.
let Hestia count the hours in embers.
for there is mercy in menial repetition
and safety in known doors.

one urges me to go.
to unfurl myself like the ebony wing
of a cultured crow.
not an omen but a witness
to circle the fields of my former wanting
until it looks tiny enough to bury.

one says nothing.
only shifts her gaze towards the undergrowth,
where roots braid themselves in dark grammar
and choice is a blade without handle.

Hecate
(if that is the name you answer to),
did you choose this post to help me,

or were you placed here
like a warning bell without a tongue?

your chiton falls in diaphanous folds,
pinned certainty at the shoulder,
Doric weight clinging to your bronze thighs.
you have earned my trust, at least.

for there is no room left in this narrow doorway for disbelief.
I have unsung the songs,
have stripped stones bare of magic
and yet you gleam.
I have given power to lesser gods,
to calendars, to lovers, to fear,
and taken it back in splinters.

what miracle survives
the impossible pacing of a single night?

I am done with fables retold to nothing.
weary of vultures high above my imagined ruin,
measuring my life for carrion
before it has even ripened.

I do not want to die at a crossroads.
I want to live there
even if living means not knowing
how to 'adult' and 'bring home the bacon',
even if living means knowing
that every direction is a gaping wound.

I have travelled three ways and none
in the quiet, adolescent theatre of my mind.
I have shattered myself like pottery and
scattered geometric fragments across the tiled floor,
asked each shard in vain to yield an outcome.

I revere your three sacred objects:
1) moon-torch imagined between your absent hands
2) snake coiled in the shadows
3) key heavy in a grounded fist I cannot see

Triform Hecate,
I prostrate at your altar of lintel and light.

if you are guardian of the threshold,
guard me from paralysis!
if you are keeper of the underworld,
teach me what must die
before I step through!

what ending is there
when you kneel beneath a doorway
and refuse to choose?

listen to yourself.
all these wild proclamations you have made,
not one has stayed with you
through the countless hours of pondering.

let choice be smaller.
let it be the act of crossing.

I lift my eyes once more.
three faces.
one body.
no spinal division.

perhaps the dilemma is not which way,
but whether I believe
I am permitted to move.

I

step.

and in
stepping I become
three:
the girl who stayed,
the girl who left,
and the girl who, at the threshold,
truly answered herself.