

Lessons from Solariss

I

Waters rise and still we hear the thrumming of the gong.

Treading through briny depths, Solariss' hands grip mine.
Silken hips command an ancient cadence until the tempo churns into

a sweet slow wine.

Twin devotees bent at the waist,
palms open.
Beckoning to the heavens,
we are emptied of tears yet heavy with salt.

It is blood memory that binds us to her altar.

Crossing thresholds that promise healing,
Mami Wata trades prayers for wishes.

She is never alone.

Forked tongues licking at her hair,

Orion and Sheeba
recollect the warping of time.

Coiled around her hips
as sinuous as a crescent moon,
these serpents cast rainbows.

We pour libations,
call on ancestors,
feeling *spirit within*.

Mami Wata unsheathes my heart and
My toes sink deeper under the spray.

opens the way.

Swallowed alive by the tides.

I don't need a death's head to know it is time for a reckoning.

Sinking deeper under indigo sheets,

sunlight becomes memory.

Tumbling into a question mark,
I devour chaos,
tasting its bitterness.
Spitting out grief,
I petition her.

She has pierced the skin separating *Other* worlds

and peeled them raw.

II

A yawning wave of dark, dark blood spills through Atlantic currents.
But even the sharks have grown tired of its scent.
They avoid it.

Stale,
even though multiplied daily
and grown fat,
this stain is no longer fresh.

It speaks of billy clubs,
bullets,
whips
and now tasers that hungrily replenish its borders.

In my throat, I choke on endless names of those who have crossed over before their time.
Grandmothers,
Grandfathers,
Aunties,
Uncles,
Cousins,
Sisters,
Brothers,
Fathers
and Mothers
Mami Wata knew this ocean when it was luminescent, rippling with life.

Now a baptism, a rebirthing under briny swells,
cresting the waves,
I am bathed in her light.

Once again, I bury myself below the tide
trailing tears and bargaining,
questing for Mami Wata.