

VOODOO

hypothesis

poems

**CANISIA
LUBRIN**

...the children of slaves must sear their memory with a torch.

—Derek Walcott, *What the Twilight Says*

Voodoo Hypothesis

Space is open before us and our eagerness to explore its meaning is not governed by the ethics of others...

—J.F.K

Before sight, we imagine
 that while they go out in search
 of God
 we stay in and become god,
 become: Curiosity,
 whose soul is a nuclear battery
 because: she'll pulverize Martian rock
 and test for organic molecules
 in her lab within a lab within
 a lab. She doesn't need to know our fears
 so far too grand for ontological reckoning.

Did you not land with your rocket behind
 you, hope beyond hope on the tip of your rope
 with the kindness of anti gravity slowing you down,
 you, before me, metal and earthen. But I am here to
 confirm or deny, the millions of small
 things that seven minutes of success were hinged upon
 when I was little more than idea and research,
 in the hypnotic gestures of flame and Bunsen burner,
 and into parachute
 no one foresaw, the bag of rags at the end
 of the tunnel – all memory now,
 this paraclete.

Where else is a pocket of air
 more deadly than the atomic bomb?
 Would this only happen on Earth?
 Has Mars run out of tolerance for the minutiae

of air pockets,
 fingerprints and worry?
 Curiosity: she has many clues to calm our fears
 for what's coming.
 Mars and her epic storms, her gargantuan
 volcanoes have long ceased their trembling,

her crazy flooded planes, frozen and in cinema.
 Martian life now earth and revelation's phases:
 Earth problem, not Mars problem.

But why
 should I unravel over all this remembering?
 Great thing about landing
 is that I've arrived

at your service, at your sand, at your valley
 and unsentimental magma.
 Before me screams planes like Mojave desert, Waikiki, Nagasaki
 nothing too strange to keep Curiosity off course
 even though the Viking Missions found no conclusive pulse
 and we declared you dead, O, Mars,
 never mind that we named your heights and depths
 from orbit, and from your spheres of minerals where oceans
 once roared – we've learned little of your lenience for empire.
 Forgive us what Spirit uncovered in the silica of your ancient hot springs.

Ah, yes, we've come back home.
 Phoenix told us we inherited the numberless
 stories of your hydraulic pathologies
 but I am Curiosity. If I kill the bitch right,
 she'll take us deeper and convince us to send earthlings
 to set up earth-colonies on your deserts. They won't ever
 come back, but that's not so bad when we take in
 the grander scheme.
 As though the colonials, the Tribe Traders
 and all the Pharoanic masquerades of gone times
 were not fair threat. That we can't know the depth
 of our homeward seas
 is nothing when

the sun's still got our backs.
 And while waters still vaporize before us
 Curiosity will keep on until the organic secrets
 of that Martian puzzle become as household to us
 as carbon. Oxygen wasn't the only disaster to befall earth,
 to bless her with life.
 Apollo drilled on the moon and got stuck
 and the harder we've drilled down here the more we've loosened our screws.
 Perhaps there'll be no one left to give a damn about the death of our privates

unless we prove ourselves enigmas,
the alien we think we know is the alien we only dream
up starting from the bottom
of the Curious.

We scale up and flip through
the crowns and thorns and craned chapters,
move quicker than we can understand. Still, through the decades we predict,
touchdowns: confirmed.

The hard-won postcards travel on space dust faster than a bullet
to say: *hey,*
I'm here. I'm safe. Wish you were here.
Eee Gale Crater, Mount Sharp, just as you've said.
Come bask with me in a the wonders of a Martian. Good afternoon,
you of flowering faith, Set sail for home
because we will all wear the consequences of this choice.
And you never should have said
goodbye

Give Us Fire Or The Black Prometheus

We saw no need to keep
 on our intoxicating cocoons,
 to show our best parts
 swallowing the sun. Miss me with
 that predecessor sort
 of exorcise. Or magic-like
 teething skin in the black guts
 of slave ships, we're through with being

you, or that Ulysses, figure: let us squall
 with old Prometheus any day. See his thin tribal
 mask, his dangling sun-sprout earrings,
 watch him fête with ancient panAfrica
 when light was first a specter cassava root
 between three Nubian twigs,
 a banished dawn,
 millennia before the powers of Europe echoed
 those flames in the chambered defaults
 that buried him—

In the faux conduits of barely recalled sex
 nongenders raised sorcerics
 and some unsought vocabulary past what
 it means to say any conscious thing, like
 folks, we all lost to the flat-stoned riots
 of history's masters and Titans. Split and erect.

What of Papa Payôl? See his straw hat,
 gaped Rasta smile in a shanty near the bay,
 freckled from weaving dried palms into vision
 of world peace, vision of God—what falls from
 these burning hills. What parallels
 pull apart to make the self-unsolvable?

From these elisions of a half-life flicked off,
 the world hardens like fat crusted in the eyes
 on a cold mid-morning. She'll never know she
 hold something cursive, x'd in the tremble of her
 wrists, both hands skilled
 to anchor against them, reverbs of NetZero

reverb of bitumen, that near-Biblical spill of liquid dawn
 insisting on curing the sick. Sick of the filled coffers, of future
 bosses upset by some obscure graft
 of bloodlines and nursery rhymes—passing

Old Wata's centuries of empty hands
 to the deepening kin. That turning measures all—
 even the shit unenterable, reserves
 this wielding of sm all nations...

Circular dregs, unutterable:

We can't stand how fires burst,
 still-bred, laconic days cuffed
 in our throats with the full range of lights
 whose considered dimensions
 have teethed the stars and forbid us raised fists.
 A kindling darkness to throttle
 through berry-juiced veins

this homo-colonic finish to an aged
 cosmos black-spilling,

homosap rusted through epidermis
 after epidermis after frosty epidermis—

And even then we know that light-clung
 horizon paused by its motley
 ventriloquist is still foresight

That all the forests of Europe
 have left their clutches
 of disconsolate earth
 and with afros flaming through centuries
 still-walk
 into the seas.

Origin of the Breach

Did we long suspect the smokescreen
 would lift the warring equilibrium's rapt
 mathematics, hazards pinned
 along a bruised meridian, everyplace abandoned,
 everyplace to the amorphous ruins of Africa?

Mapipi sings its America, Caribbean, Canada
 A European chrysalis of parachuting fables.
 Who prolongs and repairs this mise-en-scene of
 coiled centuries, interludes and opalescence
 you congratulate
 in a still of sunlight as this skeptic drags
 that entry sign still bound with bars and nets?

These centuries correct as intended,
 where the elements of the world
 brace no bars to execute, nautilus
 this nakedness and prized psychosis of
 bullets. No synonym for rape, blade, lynch
 disease and terror—Genesized, by which end
 would package error obscured in added realms and
 pathology as inheritance.

Why stand still at this edge where light
 and her children employed in darkness
 humour to cope with treats of dread,
 alarm and mockery beyond October
 sing us back, teach us shunned first policies
 too close to smoke, screens and mad police.
 Here villains still unmask, rapping at assemblies for these children of the sun,

Who goes back to the incinerator, the dumped
 prisons, the SeaView Baptist Church,
 the ville laid in the dark, awake,
 this fantastic line-up wrapped in the globe.
 Man sacred man lined to the drapetomania surgical
 clinic. Children, do you live for the coming
 dusk, after all the burning talk
 eyes you for shekels, charges you codes of surplus
 stamps you: so proud, *Ti Jean*, tallies and refuse

Lacking The Wind's Higher Reasoning

Propose this: if zombies slay each other on tv, redraw the atlases
 deadbolt doors, faraway beds, small systems happened in the body
 mid-chance reveal how thirst can carry the other in
 toward remedy & bones as cutlery or the way the inner habituates the outer.

Faraway: atlases doors and beds include our savage nature, though
 closer to the mind's undertow, we've walked dead, feet-first from higher reasoning,
 and've found prison street habitat for the good
 we've tunneled through to get here. With all of our grand books still here

we've settled for walking dead, really, to lockdown the womb by calling it rib
 —and that's not extinction, mind you, only music, that diurnal rage
 humming the mouth. Sawdust spine, scotch-taped heart
 within signposts pointing the way to retake the composite scrolls home.

What persuades the zombie more than death hardly pauses a theory-in-slow-motion
 so don't try. Or try the placation of shopping malls laundry rooms bakeries, hospice
 forms for the acuity of shackles. But you're gonna need a bullet, a door, the atlas's
 proof of the soul in its nighttime. Then proceed: make beds hard, keep backs frozen.

Try again once you've perused: shopping, laundry, bakeries, hospice.
 Then, first: mend towards the sake of bones, their blueprint for cutlery,
 and with bed-backs frozen, lift that shrivelled soul glutting the road, instead
 proposing: zombies abstract that to slay is to scavenge the long-departed hand of god