

*moonchild*

Vivian Nguyen

I want to be those poets who compare life to the sun,  
as her rays lick the volatile floor of Yemen  
as her light extinguishes in the smog of Palestine  
With warmth two-fold when the air runs wet...  
But I hesitate  
Ghosts and meaty skeletons  
say the sun can be mere brilliance on gunfire in the sky.

I want to be those poets who write of the moon,  
where it illuminated dark backs dropped onto split battlegrounds  
where it marked the hole in King's cheek, shot on a pin-straight trajectory through the bone  
With craters that shine in the darkness, star-like...  
But do you hear it?  
Widows at our borders and across seas  
croak the moon can feel gray on the candles lit for a memorial.

More than I fear change  
I fear its antithesis  
How comfortable, I imagine, injustice feels from a distance  
if the human mind is fickle and forgetful  
if the craft of observation lies in detachment  
How quaint, I wonder, is life in dull bliss?  
drinking a sky clear and blue  
tasting the subtle sugar of privilege on the tongue  
allowing it to dance, like flying comets  
allowing dreams of the universe's bodies

How selfish, I think  
How vain, I cry  
that the lover they find in high indigo they decide on their own must be theirs  
as like anything else,  
that the moon is a thing they have taken as well  
that she is another body colonizers lay their claim to  
as like anything else,  
her value is quantified by possession.

How selfish, it feels

How vain, it is  
To speak of the world as if pain is beautiful  
To wax pleasantries about the claims it takes on people and places  
More than I find myself desperate  
I allow myself indignance  
Because black and brown trauma is not a medium  
Black and brown bodies are not entities to coax and prod for poeticism  
Black and brown people are not resolutions for the guilt of your privilege  
Black and brown people are not your contest,  
your political pawn, your pity, your profit,  
your symbol, your scapegoat  
They are just that--  
    people.

I want to be those who listen to fight.  
This is not the time for ego  
to prove, to pray, to promise, to politicize, to preach,  
laying your claim to another movement with swallowed swears of solidarity  
This is not a time for poetry.  
The sun does not rise behind prison walls  
The moon does not shine where your face is pressed to pavement

How vain this is too.