

A man in a black suit and a woman in a red dress are embracing in a room with a patterned wall. The man is on the left, and the woman is on the right. They are looking at each other. The background is a wall with a repeating pattern of overlapping circles. The floor is made of wooden planks. The lighting is warm and soft.


Awaken

Risa Kaparo

"The Bible, Before"

The John Lennon
SONGWRITING CONTEST

Grand Prize Winner

A man and a woman are shown in a romantic embrace, silhouetted against a window. The man is on the left, wearing a dark suit, and the woman is on the right, wearing a dark, flowing dress. They are standing on a wooden floor. The background is a warm, reddish-brown wall with a patterned texture. The lighting is soft and intimate, highlighting the couple's profile and the texture of the wall and floor.

Everyone I Touch

Everyone I touch is god
play us as one instrument
I have yet little experience being all I am
Reveal me to myself

When a woman sees herself reflected, he is already within her
When a man feels embraced, he awakes within her

I am leaf in light nourishing the trunk
I am trunk lifting my lover weightlessly
my strength adorned by your vulnerable beauty

It matters not, which is root, trunk, branch, or leaf
only that how you love what you love
nurtures the seed of the other
that it flowers into what we yearn to become

Everything I hear is the beloved speaking to me
Everyone I touch is god
Everyone I touch is you

How else can love endure?

Querencia

What can you give that can never be taken?

He felt suspicious of this woman,
of the yes she lived unambivalently,
of the distance she traveled that he
had never known.

How could he know of the years that yes
grew within her
the way a bamboo leaf bends under the
weight of mounting snow?
How could he trust it?

How could he trust it?
Seeing only the sudden slide of snow,
how could he trust it to the ground
and the leaf not stirred?

Hold onto yourself when everything stands invisible
She once hurt so bad
A safe place
Querencia

I will hold your thin bones against my ample flesh
till the quivering subsides.

Thirty years the little one remains in hiding
children who buried themselves neck deep
venturing into the forest by night
when everything stands invisible.

How could he trust it?
Seeing only the sudden slide of snow
to the ground and the leaf not stirred.

Hold onto yourself when everything stands invisible
She once hurt so bad
A safe place
Querencia

Hold onto yourself
She once hurt so bad
Afraid she'd spill
Querencia

Last night I found her amidst the muffled cries
I will hold her thin bones till the quivering subsides
How will you hold the rare and perilous given you?
Querencia

Hold to yourself
When everything stands invisible
Hold on to yourself
Searching for that sacred space
Querencia

Dawn begins in the bones





Exequy

She finally stops resisting the dying gods,
the darkness and the darkness.
The necessity, as if her soul required devastation by fire
to set off those latent seeds.


Her daughter's embarrassed.
The father thinks, What kind of mother takes time from her child for
this shit?
Did you think it'd be this hard?
And what if you knew?

I like laying back,
Laying on my back.
Desires, those winged creatures,
great birds of imagination
so awkward on the ground.
Silhouettes dispersed upon the ceiling,
her arm, its weight settled evenly across his chest
as though a night wind had strewn a mound of sand along the ridge.

You are a hard sell.
Don't get me wrong, I'm not complaining.
This is as much pleasure as I've had in a long, long while.
Maybe if you drew arrows into my chest
I could do it
cracked open.

This is a love letter I'm sending thru this little hole
so on the other side,
when my testicles have lost the slipstream,
I can feel my way back.
needing the beloved to yearn for me.

I call upon you, gravity. Let down
your hair. Take me home.

A man in a dark suit and a woman in a red dress are dancing in a room. The man is leaning towards the woman, and they appear to be in a close embrace. The room has warm, golden light, likely from a window or door in the background. The floor is made of dark wood. The overall mood is intimate and romantic.

Feel of a Woman's Tongue

The lusciousness, pure lusciousness of being embodied, so native to women. I think that's what men find most attractive. And why shouldn't they, feeling a woman's tongue-- the texture indescribably smooth, form dissolving into liquid azure-aze. I think it's the best kept secret, the feel of a woman's tongue. Men are always talking about--

You know--

But they never talk about the feel of a woman's tongue. I think they just don't want us in on the secret. You probably wonder how I know this--

Well, I'm not telling.

Such a meditation in lusciousness
breakfast in late September
sitting in the canopy of a fig tree
ooze of ripe fruit drenching my lips

Who can resist the feel of a woman's tongue?



The Bible, Before

You, I want to tell you how I love--
midnight clings to my breast
coils blue flesh around me

Now I can see the reason why night falls

We fell

Throwing away the book of time

You said... I am

What the bible was, before

You said... I am

You are my Shams*

You said... I am

What the bible was, before

You said... I am

Veils of Sleep

On October 20, 1991 a firestorm ripped through the Oakland hills. Nearly 3,500 families lost their homes. Twenty-five people lost their lives. This song is dedicated to them.

I lifted it like the Zen gardener
who touches the edge with one finger.
The rock splits open, unveils
a millennium, the history of this
place, story of creation;

the crystal bowl opens
the way lips part to form sound
the last sound a crack--
how it waited through the forging of fire
the fall
until that moment
my two hands lifted it,

the touch unraveling matter
through veins of stories unknown:
fire, woman, grail.

Fire storms the hillside.
We weave our way through people pouring into the streets;
a woman carrying a child in one arm, flung over the other shoulder,
some things wrapped in a tablecloth.
A man shouts after his wife as she stoops to tie her son's laces.
Your fingers wrap firmly around mine--
so small in your hand-- and running,
running into the center of the flame.

He comes to her as one to a lake,
kneels, cups her in his palms,
feels her spill upon his forehead.

She knows he has dreamt of her again.
He feels that remorse he carries on such nights
when he comes to her
like a tribesman to confess dreaming harm to a soul companion
-- as if it were a sin to love water.

Your Voice, through veils of sleep,
etches into my heart
the way veins of fire cut across a prairie.

He feels her there alone
His voice she tastes without swallowing,
lets it linger in her mouth
We have never touched like this before

The hillside still burns.
Ribbons of memory unfurl
carried by the wind into fields of dreamers
everywhere. Nothing is lost.
All that has ever been is at once alive.

A photograph of a man and a woman in a room, embracing and kissing. The woman is wearing a red dress and the man is wearing a dark shirt. They are standing on a wooden floor in front of a large window with a decorative pattern. The background is a dark red gradient.

Before: Su Nombre es Risa *Her Name is Laughter*

By Risa Kaparo & Richard Garcia

Cuando yo muera
Quiero tus ojos para lámparas

Quiero tu pelo para mis noches
Y tu risa blanca para mis días

Cuando yo muera
Quiero que las estrellas
Se quemen a través de mi piel
Quiero un barco hecho de tu cuerpo
Que navegue dentro de mi pecho

Quiero que te acuestes sobre tu espalda
Me arrodillaré en tu pelo
Pondré mis manos bajo tus costillas
Y te levantaré desde la tierra hasta mi boca

Alcanzarás
Tocando el interior de mi cráneo

Esto será cuando mis huesos
Se conviertan en agua oscura en tus manos.

*before earth rushed through your fingers
before I could offer myself to you*

When I die
I want your eyes
for lamps.

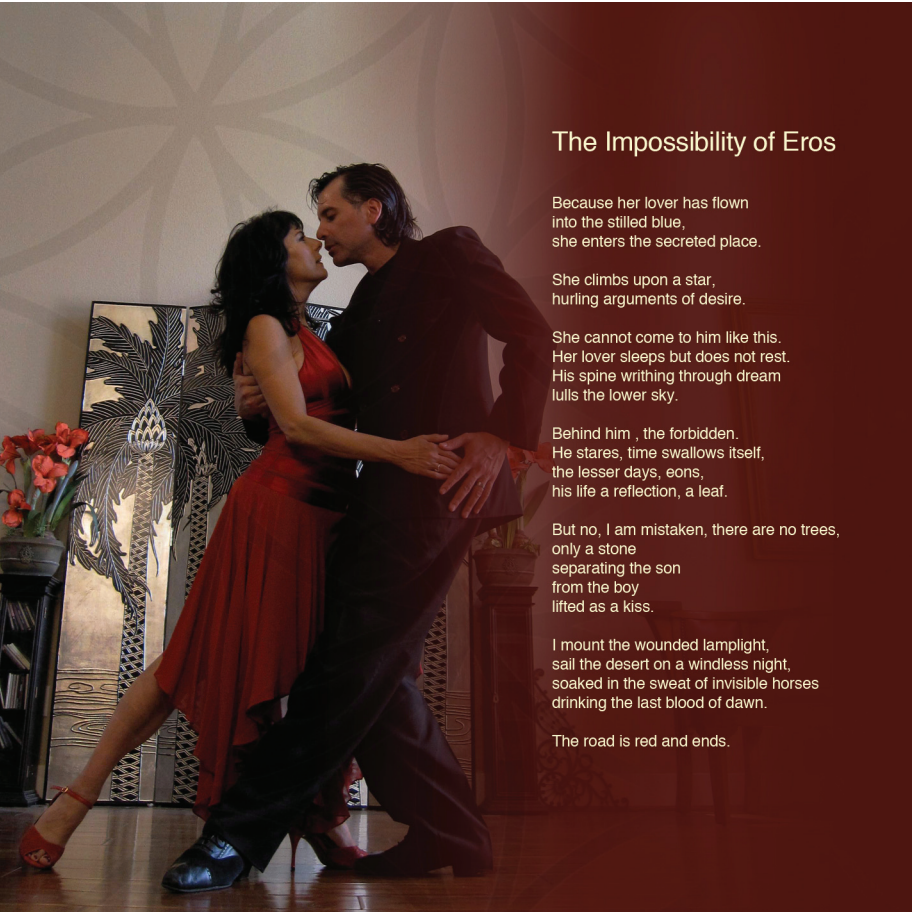
I want your hair
for my nights
and your white laughter
for my days.

When I die
I want the stars
to burn through my skin.
I want a boat
made of your body
that sails
inside my chest.

I want you to lie
on your back.
I will kneel
in your hair,
place my hands
beneath your ribs
and pull you
away from the ground
towards my mouth.

You will reach up
touching the inside
of my skull.

That is when
my bones
will turn
to dark water
in your hands.



The Impossibility of Eros

Because her lover has flown
into the stilled blue,
she enters the secreted place.

She climbs upon a star,
hurling arguments of desire.

She cannot come to him like this.
Her lover sleeps but does not rest.
His spine writhing through dream
lulls the lower sky.

Behind him , the forbidden.
He stares, time swallows itself,
the lesser days, eons,
his life a reflection, a leaf.

But no, I am mistaken, there are no trees,
only a stone
separating the son
from the boy
lifted as a kiss.

I mount the wounded lamplight,
sail the desert on a windless night,
soaked in the sweat of invisible horses
drinking the last blood of dawn.

The road is red and ends.



I Believe

*In one generation, I see the world fear lifted by wings.
They will come. Bless the children waiting to be born.*

*Lured to the garden, you ask
when will we meet again?*

*Sometimes, when you look upon this body,
I think you remember--*

Feel the beloved...

*Having placed your heart
Most delicate in our hands
You slide down cracks between fingers
Awaken on tendrils of light*

*Feel the beloved, yearning for us, learning by heart,
becoming.*

I believe in you.

*Invite into this space all those beings whose light has made
this possible. And they will come. For now is the only reason
we ever existed. Bless the children waiting to be born.*

*May you never want from hunger, body or soul
May you carry the wisdom of earth.
May you always feel this love.*

We belong, we become, we believe.... in you

C'est une chanson pour les enfants, toute le monde pour toi

(It is a song for the children, everywhere, for you)

Canto para los niños, Creo en ti

(I sing for the children, I believe in you.)

The Stutter of False Play

How disquieting,
the stutter of false play.
Seeing yourself, the way you look from a distance,
assuming you are the same at no distance.

Asking questions that ended marriages,
she sees herself in the face she's becoming.
You ask, Who will she be in the next life?
She wombs herself,
unravels all that can be undone,
her longing shaping the amniotic landscape
sensing what she loves most this lifetime.

Inside her first memory: fitting within his two hands,
the radiant present of his hands enlivening her spine
fishtailing her through dream.
She chooses touch,
And first morning laughter.
Tendrils of light,
the thin lace of her roots,
a convergence of rivers.





Ancients

Hawaiian Chant: "Voices of The Ancestors"

Opal, through the dark manes,
spreading fields of white adrift waves.

How does the dream dream the dreamer into appearance?

It begins in a riot of cyan
at the graves of children drowned in mirrors
bathed beyond the powers of prayer.

I learned to sense the streaming of a deep current in the vessel
of my body, resting my testicles in the base of this canoe.
Hula maps this passage, navigating the mid heavens
across a portal into the timeless.

How do you navigate?

Even when the men are lost, I learned from the Seven Sisters
to bear the next generation, drawing seeds from my vulva.

convulsion of wings.

How do you receive the infinite
and give birth to god?