

“In the delicate and broad breath of nurturing for what sustains us as beings, our children, our continuity, our hope for being better, Marin gives us this sustenance, MILK. We should know what is precious, and when we forget there is the tender touch of a grave resistance to danger in the voice of the poet. This is a beautiful rendering.”

— Afaa M. Weaver

n a t a s h a m a r i n

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AUTHOR'S NOTE

MILK began in 2010, the year before my son, Sagan, was born. My husband, daughter, and I were transitioning into a new home, I was working as a temp at an accounting firm, he was in law school and after years of struggle, the future of the marriage was less than certain. To ameliorate the stress of daily life for the sake of my health, I was exchanging daily poems with the Thundercunts—a motley band of black, female poets slash multidisciplinary artists, connected through [Cave Canem](#). Of the 100 or so pieces I wrote during this time, only a few were selected to begin this collection.

At 31, I was a completely different woman than I was at 25, when my first child, Roman, was born. I lived in Seattle—the [most literate city in America](#)—where breastfeeding was not only encouraged, but also somewhat en vogue. I sacrificed the financial reassurance and security of a regular day job to stay home, so I could successfully breastfeed my son—a [luxury](#) that lower and middle-class women in America seldom enjoy.

[I have many memories of breastfeeding](#) my son in Greece in 2011, where I had been invited to attend a Summer Writers Seminar through the University of Missouri's newest faculty member (and Cave Canem co-founder), [Cornelius Eady](#). One day, on a balcony on the island of Serifos, surrounded by black women poets all laughing, talking, and drinking wine, I met [Christina Springer](#) for the first time. She touched my heart when she sang [her own son's lullaby](#) to my suckling son one afternoon.

I hosted [Miko Kuro's Midnight Tea](#) in Serifos that summer and during that unique “art ritual,” I witnessed Christina really own the role I had asked her to perform—she sang lullabies as a character self-named Marrow Moon Red—washing guests' feet using only my breast milk, the sea water, and her own waist-length dreadlocks. I had no idea what had begun on an island in the Aegean Sea was going to change the overall focus and direction of my work.

Metaphorically, "my milk came in" for the last time in [Helsinki, Finland](#) during Midnight Tea art ritual at [Forum Box Gallery](#) on Friday, November 1, 2013. I asked participants to prepare by sending me individual [sound files of lullabies that they grew up with](#). I sent some of these files to Canadian sound artist, [Sammy Chien](#), who was in Beijing hanging out with [Ai Weiwei](#) at the time. Sammy adapted the lullabies into a complex musical mantra that played throughout the 3-hour event, which was themed around the concept of Nurturing. [A video](#) including clips of me nursing Sagan with elaborate henna patterns all over my breasts was also screened on a loop. For that same event, Spokane artist, William Hagy, created amazing, functional, [glass teapot breasts](#) for me to don while hosting.

I cannot underscore enough how this collection is a work of gratitude. To those named and those unnamed who have supported me—nourished me—thank you, this milk is for you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Natasha Mann". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Natasha" and last name "Mann" clearly legible.



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(HIND)MILK

INTRODUCTION

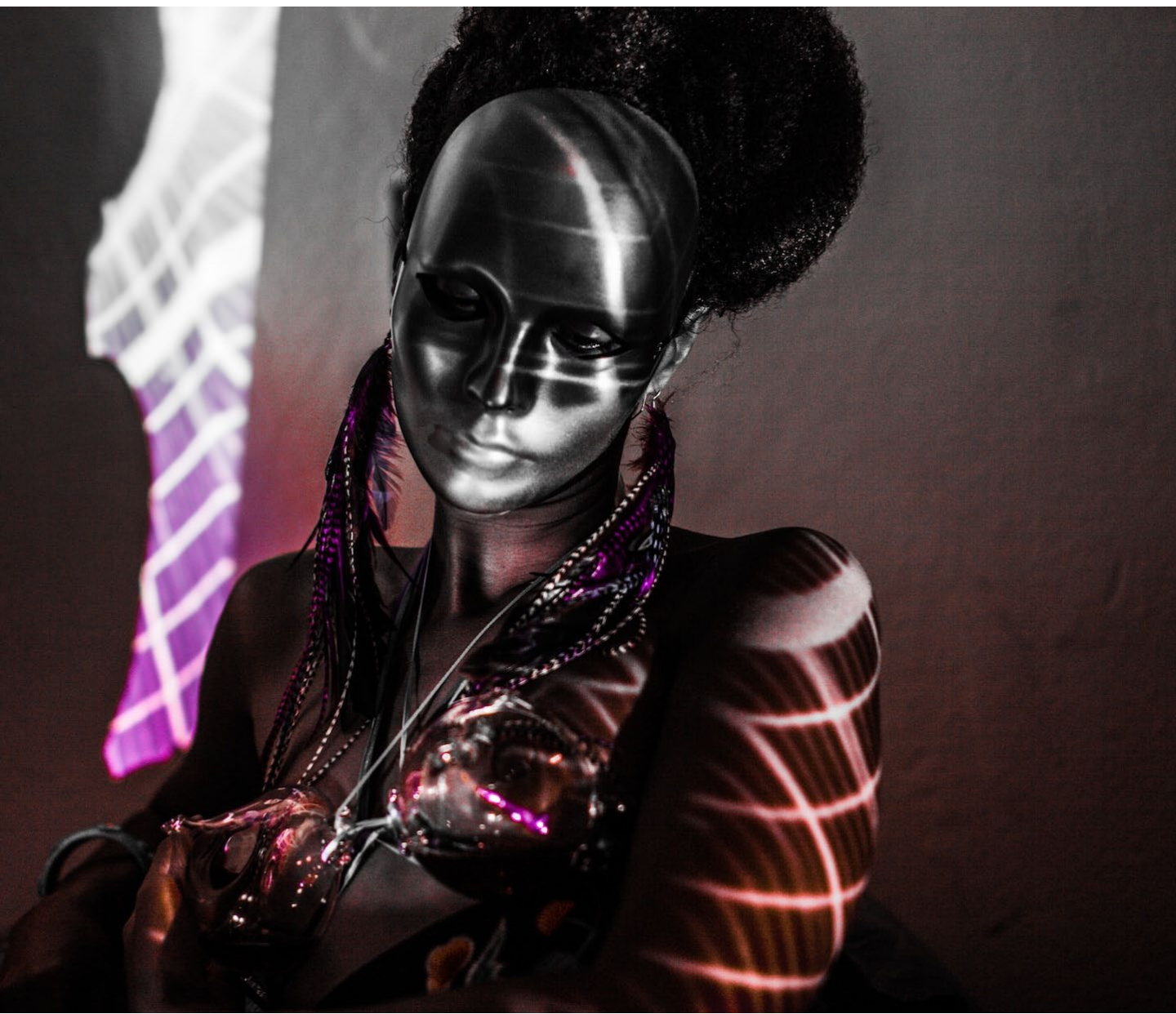
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SPECIAL THANKS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



31 weeks 1 day

I lie in bed coaxing golden *colostrum* from my breasts.

Furtive talk of volcanoes and tectonic plates become intentional collisions.
Inside me, I feel you---my twinkling scintilla---my son.



31 weeks

5 days

Seven miles beneath the ocean's skin is the [Abyssal Plain](#).
Cameras explode at this depth:

Molten crabs breed through their corrosive bellies.
Sighing bacteria build an apocalypse of oxygen.

We are muted women
who are not like women at all.

We move all wrong, wear clothes that have nothing
to do with our bodies---

Think about pleasing ourselves with their own hands
and in our own time.

32 weeks

Today the nurse has gray, shoulder-length hair. She apologizes for the wait. It's been fifty-seven minutes with a *Vanity Fair* magazine. She suggests that I write the business manager. *Mm-hm, sure.* Her *Sympathy* should be capitalized like the German word for a special kind of silver. I doubt she has any children of her own.

Confinement (Level 1)

The warden uses the word humane
to discuss “*administrative segregation.*”

She does so without moving her face.

Her mouth is downward dog.
Her name is Susan. She wears thickly-soled shoes.

Her purpose: to simmer your mutton-chop sideburns
and neck tattoos in solitary confinement---

For 23 hours each day, *Strong*
is not how you feel.

Confinement (Level 2)

Pace the chipped edges of yourself,
find muscle behind the bone of it.
Locked, your mind's offspring is swaddled in regret---

[Rectangle of sky
Just out of reach]

What is inside you shifts to make room.
Breathe into your one good lung.

Confinement (Level 3)

You sleep misshapen.

[your body] with your creased insides.

[your body] a hollow decade.

[your body] a black excuse.



32 weeks

4 days

Elsewhere, a thirteen-year-old girl is stoned to death
after reporting a gang rape.

Her red jacket shakes at her shoulders,
and she doesn't make a sound---except

when her black skirt is hitched up,
exposing her underwear.

The ring of men holding up cell phone cameras
like raised glasses---*To her pain!*

Boot-heel after boot-heel flattens her into dusty ground.

Mercy—a cement block let go over her head---
the pooling silence, a black halo.

33 weeks

5 days

Once upon a time you were inside your mother.
Amniotic water sway, washing over you like a river rock.

No one could even imagine who you might be(come).

But I know you will be black, little boy.
And the world hasn't pinched enough salt to make tears for you.

You are barely safe here inside me---
How can I protect you without a halo and wings?

To the wind, a bird offers nothing but fragile applause.

“Between us, the language is shaped like a thorn,” writes Natasha Marin from a poem in her collection, *Milk*. It’s this image that stirs delicacy, vulnerability, strength and a kind of potent danger to disrupt that stirs and stays with me. But there are many languages here, in her meditation, the language of intimacy between mother and child, digital and analog, visual and verbal, sound and silence. “Pace the chipped edges of yourself / find the muscle behind the bone of it,” she writes, with the sharpest of observations about the ways in which we, as women, we as humans, tether ourselves to the visceral, sensory, eros of existence in an electronically mediated world that can place, even the most sinuous of our efforts, perilously close an emotional puncture. What flows is what exists among or between us when mediation falls away and we are left with lyricism and truth of images. — [Star Rush](#)



Nutritional content may vary.

Introduction

It doesn't matter who rescues you—

If it is a man, a woman,
an animal, or a child.

The exact integrated properties of breastmilk are not entirely understood.

for Roman & Sagan, my mother, my sister, and myself



My daughter is almost eight years old. She watches her brother entitle himself to my breast with the kind of stare one begins to expect from young girls—
Placing herself along
the negative space at my side, she looks at her brother and smiles at us.

“Does it taste sweet?”

*

Post-Partum

Tension grows like moss on all the surfaces in our house.
Moths disappear behind pleated curtains. Faces hover near primary colors.

Somewhere my daughter is writing herself a lonely helmet
she will wear when she needs to mother her own self.

I make a house of my body
with a polka-dot towel around my shoulders for a roof.

Inside the house, a little archetype
swivels toward my breast.

The solace he pulls from me is milk—
White and clean,

I want to give it to myself as women in Mongolia do.
I've never been, but can imagine:

Brightly patterned blankets
tucked around a yurt—

Long haired-horses—
the smell of fresh meat.

Milk for Lambs, 2011

for *Almagul Menlibayeva*

The underage girl is wearing your projections.
Innocence and sex, echo at her shoulders.

Behind her, hand-woven rugs clap for nothing.
There is the sound of children.

Who knows why she rides a black horse
holding her own black hair in her fists—

Singing to the wind, mouth wide and howling
on either side.

Rhythm

Cicadas hold their tongues for years
in the stingy light of underground before
pushing up from the puckered earth
to climb, cocoon, fuck, and fly.

After weeks of raucous sound
they fall away from their former selves—
leaving only the shells of their black-eyed bodies,
dry as raffia along the forest floor.

*So, you want to know what it felt like
to tuck his little body to my breast?*

It was like my whole life was held in darkness with soil like a shawl.
The mother in me hadn't yet broken the surface.

I moved the skein of light beyond my periphery
to shrug away limitation like a damp and useless thing.

The burning of molting for the first time— *Suddenly, I have eyes!*
And they are for seeing.

Summon your newfound holiness.

You need time, so you lean into it,
like a warm body.

But today, the White Proprietor needs something else—
he asks you *twice* if you understand
and you begin to understand:

Something sidereal is being siphoned away.



Enslaved women acting as wet nurses also had tenuous feelings about suckling their masters' white children. Most slave women who had children of their own were only allowed one or two months away from their duties before returning to work.

The academic jargon generator knows
a thing or two about breast milk.

The culture of the gaze
is virtually coextensive
with the authentication
of the gendered body.

The poetics of praxis is,
and yet is not,
the engendering of the image.

The illusion of the natural
is virtually coextensive
with the fantasy of agency.

Still cupped and humming with light, the baby couldn't have been more than a few days old when I asked my husband why men have nipples.

He reminds me of [an episode](#) of *The Family Guy*, wherein baby Stewie accidentally begins nursing while cradled in his father's arms.

Suddenly they are interchangeable—mother, father—their sympathy as sacred as a [flowering ocean](#) in China.

[Clown fish](#) don't tolerate a surplus of males.

If a male clown fish is required but not available, a female will fulfill this role.



My sister jokes with me on Skype—pretending that we can feed each other what we're eating through the cameras.

I remember her feeding me when I was a little girl. She makes the same faces when playing with my son and my daughter—lips twisting sour, eyes wide.

It is as if each memory is made of tiny mirrors and if I pick one up to examine it, I must carefully wipe my fingerprints off of it afterwards.

One time, when I was six, she fed me slim skewers of a frankfurter hotdog off the tip of her fork. She was a train, I was a tunnel.

Each piece of meat dipped in ketchup, salty and warm,
with skin just taut enough for my teeth to tear into ...

I ate six hotdogs that day because she fed me.

Foremilk

Left to die
the twins, [Romulus and Remus](#)
were saved
by an unlikely intervention.
A wolf
took pity on them:
Suckled them
as her own.

**

My husband describes my family as a pack of wolves—
says when we turn on each other, it's with teeth.

Says when we run, our bodies make an arrow tipped with blood.

The Science of Pleasure and Pain

Aeolian, you move toward me—
quixotic and a kind of wild.
You are a man who can really give something to a woman.
A stone that falls from the sky.

In a language you know I don't speak,
you sing to me anyway.
Allow me to cry in heaps,
like I'm pregnant with salt.

Gentle

for *Cuauhtémoc*, and our sons

Driving down the highway, he is hardly a deity
lamenting the police officers who pay him no mind.

A long, wavy, tangle of cooing wounds,
I've seen him off himself a million times.

The moment he offered Cortés his knife and asked to be killed.
Cachaemic bird, in portraits shown in full face with no body—

Not the way we found him, like something to be eaten,
upside down but still steadying against the relentless surf.

One moment he was flying, surrounded by friends—
the next—hooked neck in a reckless radian swoon.

There were no swift rocks for mercy, only distant headlights, the jeer of seagulls,
smooth sand, and the sparkle of smaller birds cornering like innocence in the air.

Parched

Marriage is a muster of cinders—
dull miracles humming with residual heat.

Nicked but affixed, souls forage for insight—
checking every greasy corner for seedlings of regret.

What happens when we hover for days like hushed onions
swallowing our own tears? *What then? Who will save us?*

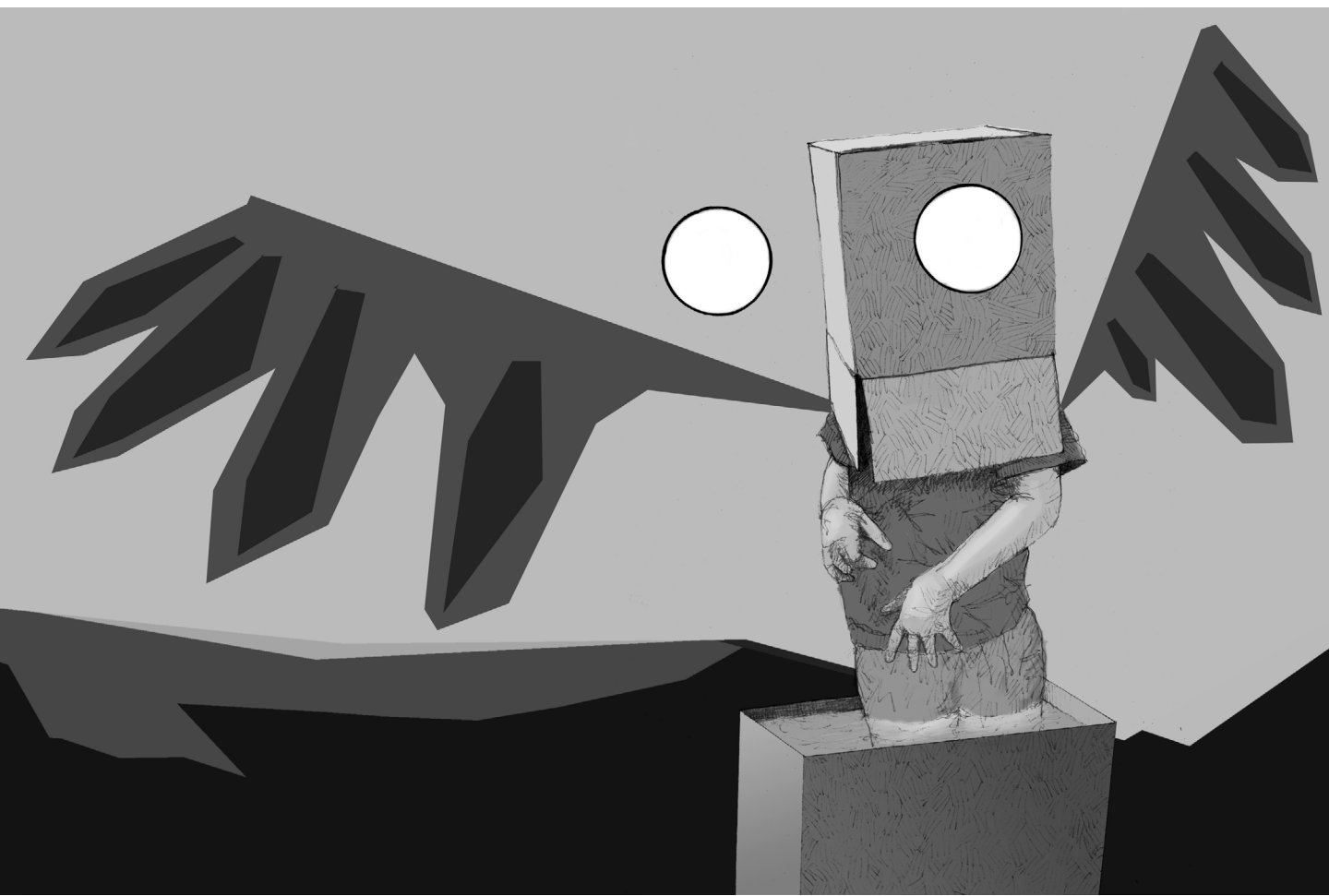
The Bone Reader can not kindle a flameless ecstasy—
not when the failure is divided in two.

Like vapors, we parlay bleached dalliances into clouds—
shriek the sickliest of them into spasms of abasement.

Between us, the language is shaped like a thorn.
My throat burns from moon-howling and other [wolf ways](#).

Birch Bark Cut Clean from its Own Skin

When I am in wolf territory
the fog around me is a funnel of shredded rain.
Strung with the ammunition of red tongues, steeped and waiting,
darkness surges with piceous marrow—I have a secret.
Amplly blessed by the sound of stalled anger,
tree shadows invoke the unspoken:
Limbed syllables stretch for shelter in trembling leaves.
Night birds shift, hushing the lonesome.
I am a wife and you aren't.
Roving or slanted, it's just that simple.



Status Updates

February 28, 2011

“Today, I’m measuring my worth in fluid ounces.”

February 23, 2011

“moo?”

February 12, 2011

“I can do this.”

*At the [WIC](#) office, there is a wall of Polaroids of women and their breastfeeding children.
I am one of them.*

#postpartum

Day 6: My eyes are not eyes anymore but clumsy spigots.

Day 7: No matter what happens to me, the galaxies are still beautiful. They don't need a soundtrack to sparkle and neither do we.

Day 8: I will be impervious to other people's foolishness. There will always be new fruit in the crystal bowl and clean towels in the bathroom.

Day 9: My left nipple is psychic. It touches his lips like a priest making the sign of the cross and begins to pearl milk immediately.

Day 10: Not to be outdone, the liberal breast leaks sympathy.

Day 11: Qtd: *I understand as much as a childless white woman can understand.*

Hindmilk

My mother says, when I ask her,
that she was only able to breastfeed my sister
for seven days before returning to work.

“I can still hear her crying.
And when she came back from her grandmother’s house,
she wanted nothing to do with me.”

mother: antibody fret

this one exists in a place
smoothed over by time

the fossilized space of shame
wherein a child feels something

an adult will sublimate
into nothing—bitter crystals to thin air

this one is a hungry vapor
it can be spread translucently across skin

it can eat grooves into rusted fragments

The Creamline

Thirty-year-old [REDACTED] who was accused of getting inebriated at a wedding and spraying police with breast milk, has apologized despite pleading *not guilty* Monday to charges including assault and disorderly conduct.

Serifos

In the video, I am wearing a bright red kabuki wig and a yellow floral dress open at the breasts. My son is ravenous and naked. One of my poems translated into Greek rises and falls in the background as my son crawls over my body—reaching for my throat with his small fingers—pinching me, twisting my skin like he owns me.

Because of the way their tongues are shaped, infants are unable to bite their mother's nipples while breastfeeding. An infant who succeeds in biting his mother, was probably not intending to feed at all.

#radiantchild

The sweetest mouthful was hastily swallowed on a frontage road on the way to downtown Pittsburgh to see a presentation by five black women on the work of [Jean-Michel Basquiat](#).

Red lipstick was all over the mouth of the bottle as I tipped it into the wind, pulled my eyes down, away from the traffic to the pin in my chest.

I apologized to my son on the other side of the country for tears that would not sate him—for milk that would wet the asphalt instead of his tongue.

Hexenmilch, or “witch’s milk,” is a folk term for the milk that comes from a newborn baby.

#rosequartz

I talk to the Nigerian neurobiologist about it over drinks. His eyes nod as I attempt to render the profundity of my breastfeeding experience. Finally, I say, “Don’t you think what we need as black people—as Americans—is to be nurtured?”

Again, I wake up without my son. My right breast [is an angry mound](#).

When I served him tea—
chamomile with rice milk and honey

out of a glass baby bottle
I did not consider the possibility

that I was infantilizing

The Black Male Artist.

On that night, I was a bird-ghost
and the gallery was my nest, and all in it—
my hungry chicks.

*

Over quinoa salad, The Black Male Artist, listens
to my explanation of nurturing as a creative act.

My hope: That he can finally reconcile the oval bottle
of freshly-pumped breast milk steeped in lavender that I gifted him.

I don't milk myself for everyone.

*

Two days later, he sends me a photo of a tree
he will turn into something else. There's something bloodless
about the way he leans into the middle of the slaughtered tree,
eyes looking, but refusing to see.

#vigilance

After standing in agony over the sink in her bathroom, trying to flatten a knot of pain from my breast, she offers to massage it for me. I think about how women can traverse the landscape of intimacy without awkwardness—eek a clot from a blocked duct.

In circles, I rub and squeeze. My child is too far away to fix this and my husband too.
Who do you go to when your nipple needs sucking and you are alone?

In the sunshine I search for a hidden spigot in my flesh. And like a font, it appears—
a slim stream of creamy spider thread. Ants scatter from the spray. Steady through the throbbing
I am milk pooling on the wooden planks at my feet.

The sun, the wood, the sky feeds, but not my son.



Milch

Don't be surprised that I've loved other men
before and after my husband.

I am human. I too, thirst.

Feed me just a teaspoon of milk
and I will drink it.

Spill it before me like a million stars
and I will reflect each one back to you.

Stars and lightning are my weakness.
Ich werde Sie essen gesamte.

the smell of lightning

burnt to ash our bodies seem identical—
still bracing after so many years
volcanic silt coddles vertebrae
like sepian skin

our earthly regalia of teeth and eyes and hair,
abandoned—

your chest, a nest of bones to be uncovered
my mouth still holding you, opens like the sky—

Cafuné: *The act of tenderly running your fingers through someone's hair.*

With your head in my lap, my water fingers trickle along your scalp.

I want to peel free the affusion of thoughts clinging
to your skin like wet tongues of seaweed.

Where land and water meet, you can be the air holding me open,
or the sound of wings clapping like broken waves.

Close your eyes to follow my tidal rhythm:
hear how I can moan like the wind with you inside me—

Howling through my empty spaces, every nook and crevice quivers,
like you used to live here.

Saudade: *A vague and constant desire for something that does not and probably cannot exist.*

I saw a bird fall
as if the machine keeping it alive in the sky
had suddenly stalled—
careening to the ground, without grace
it landed badly, wings scraping awkwardly along the ground.

* *

Later, at a stoplight, I saw a girl my daughter's age, running—
behind her, two long braids, swaying black and furious.
She ran so fast, and so hard, I couldn't help watching—
until she disappeared.

Hanged Man

If you let me, I will tender you with consistent blows—root like something blind.
The dangle of you is wet like the *meat-smell* of raw meat.

A man can hold a secret like he wants to hold you down on it
might even offer you something he is still wearing in the aftermath.

Let you wipe away your own fluids as they mix and transform
Let the ripple and the float give over to the casually craven.

When he holds the back of your neck, it is a stiff surrender
his wrist atrophied and swiveling for desire.

Upside down you twitch at the precipice of mercy.
If you let me, I will hover like a fingertip over the braille of you—*and breathe*.

Cup my neck. Hold it there.
Tell me everything you want to say but don't leave out the part at the end.

With the spout of you pooling oolong, I will knuckle you white and clean again.
Give me something shallow to swallow, something fractal to swallow.

On the windowsill, two teapots wait to be seasoned.
The sin of dust is like sunlight finding a curve on a young body.

I am thirty-two today.

I think about Cultural Relevance in my downtime.
I drink wine. I have children.

There is a sound that I cannot describe.

the way a woman breathes when she is running
away from something that holds her chest in

the running is not just away from
it is also a running towards something else

the breathing of escape
the instinct to frequent feeble flowers

pollinated by wind eyelike and ringed
a divination using wine

the cleft in the sky
left by an eagle folding its ornamental feathers



Mercy

At the ocean, your failing marriage is just far enough away.
The foaming sea, a flirtation—trying for your ankles.

Forever seems quite possible here.

Twilight swaddles the wind that burns your ears, on the inside.
Here is a graveyard for delicate creatures—

Sand dollars snapped by a casual hand. The ruin of claws
holding onto nothing but the memory.

12-Step Ritual for Forgiving

1. As the tide takes away your offering/suffering, talk to yourself quietly. Say something aloud that you don't mean to say.
2. Let the symbolism be symbolic.
3. Notice the tide, it should be coming in now.
4. Kneeling in the dirt, make a smooth, wet, mud-belly of your own anguish. Sculpt the mud slowly like a tongue smoothing away ice cream in a cone.
5. Find a stone that reminds you of the pain you want to release.
6. Wash it clean with salt water. Spread your palms flat against it to do this.
7. Carry heavy palmfuls of blue under-mud up to the rocks. This can be challenging. If there is driftwood available, use it.
8. When you have adjusted to the salt smell in the air and the belly-up crab carcasses, get up and walk out towards the water.
9. Midway, collapse onto your knees and scratch away a layer of mud.
10. If the tide is out, sit quietly and watch it come in. The tide is very sneaky, be vigilant. Some people call this meditation.
11. Do not be in a hurry. Forgiveness takes time, so set aside enough to sift through the dry sand and marvel at everything with plenty to spare.
12. Go to the water's edge on a sunny day. It doesn't have to be sunny, but it certainly helps.



Weaning (1)

By itself, a tulip shivers—
it is nothing but a blink of red in the landscape.

If you give someone your milk
it feeds them forever.

Kneel into the space for your knees.

You want to feel whole again,
So you conjure a hope-eyed boy-child
Pulling your milk down like shallow rain.

*

When the trouble came, the woman did not have the strength to bury her son,
So she let the water carry him the way she had carried him as a boy.

When she couldn't see his body anymore, she still didn't let go.

Weaning (2)

Rub your child's tummy with the heel of your palm—
tell her sleep makes the hunger go away.

In the sacred place you bled all the way to
no one gives you bread.

They look you in the eye and tell you about their own emptiness
while you pray for help getting a job.

Smoke and cacti recede, the landscape is your brother's eyes
wanting more than you can give—

Your father hands you his cigarette
before you can hold the smoke in your lungs.

If you are poor and brown, it scarcely matters how pretty you are
or your mother before you, calm with a knife—

Her teeth like an actress'—white and even.

Weaning (3)

You can cry inside your mouth without telling your eyes about it
but your half-eaten lips might struggle—

Whatever you do, don't unhinge your jaw.
Anchor your teeth for the haunting—

It never ends.

The Man-child

When you've moved on—found your art—
a man might look at you differently.

He will ask you *what's so funny?*
when you are laughing.

When he holds the razor to your throat,
threatening his own knuckled frailty, beg him to kill you—

beg him

If it's the only beautiful thing he can think of to do.

The Milking

I've met men and I've met boys.
A man is calm first.
Tender like a pulsing thing.
He will wear feathers for you in every color. And dance.
The song his heart beats out is a sarcoline drumbeat
clapping the bad juju away.
Afterwards, you are cleaner. Safer.
More capable of love.
He might share his tobacco with you—
Tell you:
 You are beautiful
 with just the edge of his thumb.

Adosculation is the act of impregnation by contact alone or by wind.

Supplicant

When I fix my fingers for worship, my tongue is an oar.
My ribs float to the surface to be chosen—buoyed up by lungs.
Each gasp is soft-lipped and moist for the spirit.
Unbaptized, alible sighs accumulate in the absence of pulsing.

And then,
Someone inside me remembers that my pleasure is in place of prayer.

Sacrum

From ruins, my body rebuilt itself
tissue stretched to filament fingers letting go—
Shedding like the slow-motion slip of columns
pulling away from pediments after an era.
My breasts are howling ghosts
white hems yellowing across the rubble—
Collecting sorrows, but too proud
to disappear entirely.

There is no vigil for the loss of milk—
this weaning from one life to the next.

How Ragged the Now Is

When children become subtitles
Like the scorched black lake of *completely*
That only the sky knows

Mourning has voice
Small fingers remember it when they draw concentric circles
Mother, we put your face on a paper

Say no, serratic words, say no
Lie about your nobody
Hide your planes in the clouds

Lie a foggy *probably*
A silent killer that one
Say it to the wood of my face

You are less than one thousand yen red
The ethics of love like a description of the moon's surface
These sounds as small as the hole inside your mother

The End

This milk is on the shoulder of the highway where the gravel ends and the grass begins.
You see it in passing, near a tree, or along a fence ruffled with debris.

It doesn't matter how white the ribbons are
or who smiles from the rain-warped picture (if there is one).

Breast pumps will always collect dust. The sun will fade their petal edges
to murmurs of pastel. Straight lines will starve and coil like spines.

Here's what you have to work with:
two pieces of handmade paper—flat and unwrinkled.

The larger one is the color of the sky. Four clean ribbons, unfrayed.
And a *National Geographic* cut-out of an [enslaved woman](#).

Do this on your knees. There is no need for candles.
There is no need for prayer. *Breathe.*

While your hands are building this shrine, car exhaust is your incense.
Passersby let go of your eyes quickly. Clouds drift into unrecognizable shapes.

Voices untangle in the wind. Sprinklers go on with porch lights.
Your loss is miniscule, held in this moment. Moths gather.



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My thanks to all of the living beings who have fed me in different ways over time.

Lastly, my sincerest thanks to Christina Springer, who showed me with a simple lullaby that mothering is an art form in and of itself.

*Dear One, Dear One ...
Ride like the Moon to the Dreamtime.
Mount up your steed, follow the sun,
down past the horizon, down past the horizon.*



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“Milk is provocative meditation on nurturing, racial history, and the eros of mothering.”

— Nicole Fleetwood, author of *Troubling Vision*

Natasha Marin’s *MILK* is an astonishing, virtuosic ritual. It has satisfied my appetite for a poetry of brimming—a matrix of language that quivers with a fullness that doesn’t yield to the dullness of satiety. These words feel new, authentic, sure, offering the intimacy and wildness of woman, the sanguine gaze of a wholly present, eternal being, the voice of its “newfound holiness.” These poems and images—natural, naked, vatic—are the milk of hunger and desperate acts, but also the milk of empathy and forgiveness. Nurture’s sacrifices, fierce longing, and joy, are rendered in terms both physical and metaphysical. The wind is a constant presence, and the wet—in all its forms; in other words, there is openness, flux, transcendence—much giving, and giving way to—in this work. These poems consecrate the liquid tether, the dream-filament, the spilled libation—uncontrolled or deliberate, demanded or gifted—of mother’s milk, real and symbolic. And, as in the best art, here is abundant honesty and grace, challenging us to not refuse to see (and feel) what is offered.

— Sharan Strange

Natasha Marin’s work reflects her multicultural heritage—born in Trinidad, raised in Canada, and naturalized in America, this multiplicity extends into her work. With degrees from Tufts University and the University of Texas at Austin, she has received several grants for creating and producing experiential spaces for the community, wherein her poetry can come to life. Find out more at: www.natasha-marin.com.



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