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AMI XHERRO

The Unfinished  
Flame of the  
Lower Oceans

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A SWIMMERS GROUP CHAPBOOK

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A love that endures:  
 feed it crust and it will not leave you alone  
 in America, oceanless continent,  
 America with her pants down,

I am next door menstruating.  
 I am next door taking cover  
 under my snake  
 snapping venomous tongue  
 at the seven seas of Europe.  
 Even they are ugly in the wintertime.

Without you the sight of the ice storm  
 unshackles me. I fly like the rejected cards  
 of the poker moon's game.  
 If you are so lovely,  
 why don't you leave that place  
 and come home?

Winter without you and my skirt is torn,  
 my flesh a fire, one cool unsheathed stone.  
 There are bones that muffle the ring  
 of that red marble phone.

*Ines, the shadow that crossed my youngish heart*

I let myself play there  
when I was very young  
and in the sunny  
afterschool afternoons  
the light spilled  
like a generous veil  
across a place in my childhood  
where I played a sexy game  
with my sexy friend Ines.

I taught her desire  
although it was my own,  
and the arrival  
to a mature conclusion  
the young girl  
had not yet known,  
no girl but I,  
for I knew my hands  
and where the body feeds  
and could tell apart  
a lily from a rose.

The lesson would conclude  
with a push of my pelvis  
into the bush of her bulb,  
my thighs into her hip;  
the eye of my groin,  
the bone at her side,  
as I carried her across  
the Titanic, to save her,  
and take my rewards.

Oh, that cruel sea  
slipped moist  
from brim of throat  
to neck of my spine  
into Ines,  
a generous maiden,  
a shadow crossing  
my youngish heart.

She spreads herself  
across the surface of your mattress—  
that board you call a bed—  
and offers to your lips  
a measure of silence—  
a length of neck  
from which you drink.

Whose course you follow until dusk,  
for she is promised elsewhere—  
to her long and secret work—

Who, from the alcove, watches  
and proffers small comforts—  
a little music—  
water's pulse, the heart's drum—  
which she receives into her  
bottomless mouth—  
into the cosmic yawn—  
the void into which all music disappears—  
into the dead of night,  
into the deaf slumber  
of her waiting.

You disarm yourself  
in preparation for her vastness—  
entire oceans  
over which only  
she dances and ripples,  
with her army of soldiers  
deployed so deep  
into night's stillness  
that your only refuge  
is at the frills of her skirt—

Because her work is dance—  
the night, sleepless and  
stirring, toils long into the night,  
pitiful night whose life's work  
is grief,  
night the gifted author of night  
who begets herself out of night,  
who is never there herself to see it,  
who wears herself to a shadow,  
whose neck bears the sorrow  
of all and the madness of none.

*Ah the light is coming in*

The light is coming in says the poet at dawn!  
How sweet you appear finally under the guise of  
this light!  
How everything shines!  
How you smoke yourself out of the night,  
into the cylinder of morning!

Little darling,  
I love to watch  
the lazy row of your figure,  
your wet mask of skin  
giving me ideas!

Sweet darling,  
loosen your hair  
and a strip of marvelous colour  
will chase the course of your spine  
to the crown of your ass  
where the world collapses!

The chest of all things  
buries your glare  
and pulses with the fury  
of your beauty!

And from your breast there is light—!  
from your mouth light—!  
your belly light—!  
between your legs light —!  
your pointy nipples —!

Ah the poet at dawn is a sorry creature,  
squinting over the stretch  
of notepaper  
by the shade of his lamp.

When the light moves inside him,  
the hourglass flares,  
and light swallows light's likeness.

Like the poet his mistress  
where they are equally bared  
into the gully of dawn  
where skin cleaves speech  
and tongues dry with the usual song.

*Last night*

You are the child of a sheep farmer.  
I suspect your siren songs  
Were taught to you by your father  
Who sang lullabies to his sheep  
and cast spells on the owls  
who frightened your sister  
with their nocturnal calls.  
She preferred the ringdoves instead  
as every cage-diver does,  
as every virgin girl and boy,  
as every juggler of cash.

I carried you  
to the edge of sleep,  
to the heel of plenty,  
to the night's interior.  
Well you do not, do you,  
deserve to live so plainly?

Now it is time:  
The candle tapers  
in a rounded way.

Let me praise you,  
lovely boy,  
let me scare you with a kiss,  
one hundred and seven in all—  
a three-oared armada  
and Paralus-led  
takes my men to the pinnacle.

What elegance is kept  
under the lid of night  
that cannot be felt  
by my fingers?  
What grace required  
to pierce a soft creature?  
What weapon, if any?

My body of eyes sees  
a great storm approaching.  
My passage is more turbulent  
though your vessel wheels  
with great magnificence  
across the water.

Your inner palace is aglare  
with highly hung armament  
of gold, iron, and bronze.

As for your passage,  
I fear you did not stop  
for anything;  
not to eat a sweet pear  
or to hear a cicada's cry.

*Dare to fill your hands  
with the infinities of my body.  
Dare to fill your mouth  
with the sea of my soak—  
Dare to beat out a flood  
through my secret body.*

You keep your hands  
on the steer—  
now you take  
from my purples,  
now you take  
of my style.

Now we are sitting,  
you are only dancing,  
there is only sweetness.

*The Assembly of God in the Theatre*

He sits in the third row of the theatre  
reading the curtain  
like an open palm:

These furrows are not merely  
the consequence  
of the frequent folding of the skin  
by the action of muscles  
or the bending of joints.

The union of Venus with Mercury  
revealed to him  
the enterprise of tenderness  
and a talent for dancing.  
Excited by his fortune,  
drawing closer by the minute,  
he looked around  
at the riotous crowd  
and found good reason  
to laugh amidst the laughter  
of others.

The drapes uncoupled.  
The assembly stilled  
and the pulp of the drama grew thick  
when Iphigenia, set to be killed  
by the sword of her own father  
was rescued in a quick turn of events  
by arrow-showering Artemis.

The actress who plays a humbled Iphigenia  
sings her praises to fair Artemis  
and the audience is delighted  
to see her take on the stage  
in dancing thanks and  
Catholic infinitude.

In a singular movement of her arms,  
which she poses above her head,  
Iphigenia rouses a thick cloud  
of dust which sprinkles onto  
the heads of the assembly.

These particles of dust, they are told,  
are the last emission from the weary

asshole of God who is here watching,  
and their scattering and sifting  
is felt like the tickle of a million feathers  
on the heads and foreheads of the audience  
that grows obese  
with the bread of this drama.

The dust of God collects  
on the floor of the theatre,  
under the skin of the assembly  
and on the palms and fingers  
of those who wish to eat his holy dust.

The man sits still  
and wonders what begets  
from the unsatisfied sword  
and the clean hand in an  
unfulfilled promise.

God perches back in his seat  
and relishes the reception of this crowd  
with waxing satisfaction

that peels like parchment over a flame.  
His uncontested regard  
for the theatre is refreshing.

The assembly rises  
and with a joy so complete  
they look to each other and smile  
and the dust of God settles thickly  
into the brine of their bones.