

Wanton Woman

By Tichaona Chinyelu

They say ain't no sunshine
between my legs
just a wet satanic pit.
The pains I took to inform them
my name isn't Lilith,
first wife of Adam,
runaway bride,
semen stealer,
wife and mother of hundreds
of demons
dampened my ardor
and pushed them
out doors
where they discovered
a newfound proclivity
to call me bitch.

I reveled in my bed
and the passion it could produce
without affiliation
or affliction.
Like Sinead,
I was no man's woman.
Like Renatta,
I fought for the sovereignty
of my space.

Vituperative, claimed repressed
into goodness women
and their hypocritical men
as they dragged me
and my medusa-attributed hair
into the court of public opinion.

Lilith, the judge called me
but I only answered to Ntozake:
she who has her own things.

Eve, biter of devilish apple, he screamed
but my reply was Assata:
she who struggles.

Margaret Garner, he howled
and I said yes, I deny you
the right to raise my children as slaves.

Unreconstructed pagan, he spat.
The sun and the moon both
are my church.
Unreconstructed?
Why should I construct myself only
to fit your reality?

Harlot! Whore! Slut!
I laughed. I've turned down more men
than I've embraced
and the ones I've turned down
are here, leveling these charges.

Adorned
with my free woman accessories
and sense of the sacred feminine
I reject your imprisoning baubles
and religious rhetoric
for the sacrament of she.

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