

SHE WAS READY.

Poems produced through the Macfarlane Fund Residency, 2018

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I am bounded by the curve, entirely and in parts
I am swept up in Algebraic rhythm, without understanding
Pain chords sweep me and I am a well in motion
I am yearning to be deep within my photographs,
unable to keep edges in focus,
falling corners, jerking thighs, protective gesture.
My body is a closed book and I am the hand that covers the womb.

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Nothing great has ever been won by faintheartedness. I am stronger than they realise. My pelvis is a golden bowl, diffusing oil into air. I am assembling parts; un-fixed, un-founded, soon to break. I am hoping for resolution amidst repeated attempts at wholeness. I am shattered fragments, yearning for closure. I tried to write a list of the reasons I am grateful to my body. I sat in front of a blank page for an hour before moving on. I am motionless when under pressure. I am quiet whispers, silent tears, shouting organs. I will attempt to re-build myself in copper. Every work is a step towards a future that I hope for. I am unclenching fist, jaw, floor. I am wrapping myself up in memories in an effort to push through them. I am figuring that I have less and less to apologize for. I am stainless steel, curved through tonne of pressure. I am embarking on an archaeological project with tears as discovered relic. I am ever-digging; axe hitting metal; sinking deeper under silt.

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The Etruscan's knew she was coming. They knew the lay of the lands of her body, of her hands. They knew how her bones were worn down from wear; from creating and just simply holding on. They knew of her legacy, even though she was not cognizant, forever hidden; modes of despair. They held her up in parades, hundreds deep, shaking down city streets. She was immortalized on billboards, stories-high, ever-smiling. They buried her deep within the flowerbeds of city parks, tended with care by un-named big hearts. Her seeds sewn with faceless hands of tenderness. Soil sprinkled with tears and fertilizer. The most precious wood was preserved for her funeral pyre. The chorus was festooned with a Capella heroes ready to soar; the lights dimmed and the curtains began to draw. She was ready.

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She laid still on cold bronze platform, skin meeting sharp metal blue. The marble that filled her valleys was not exploited until the Romans came. It would remain one in the same—a cold surface for her skin to rest upon. The folds and drapes of her garments exaggerated her folds and drapes—beckoning. How long would she remain there? *The material was too valuable, recycled later.* Ancient tides could not steady her. She was brushed over by hands of time. Skin creases dug by slow ticking clocks, and then sanded back by passing years of history. Photographed by wandering travellers—later they would look at the images and be

unable to locate her. In what modes would she be re-used? *We are all valuable, even with flaws.* Relatively little is known about her architecture. They said she was produced by the Etruscans. Not enough language was retained to impart her story. Her plight hidden by the spectacle of remaining, retraining. *Ruling over this pantheon of lesser deities were higher ones that seemed to reflect her systems.* The structures of her body, sweeping oil into air—the knowledge that everything is so very interconnected. You just need to find the missing link. *Much of what is known about this civilization derives from tomb findings indicating the importance of the mother's side of the family.* She was remembering and remembered. She was ancestral lines releasing trauma. The weight of her body pushed an impression deep into the bronze platform—a place for hands to touch after she had left—a marking.

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Words are seldom separated with spaces as in modern printing. We have structured our language to exist around written pauses. Breaks in meaning and breaks in breathing. We are pushing deeper to the close, hurtling forward and picking up unnecessary syllables along the way, always seeking further definition. We are drawn down by the influx of spoken meanings that are empty in form. Hollow pressure to become and to be better. Are we more ready to take on heartbreak at birth? Perhaps it is easier to travel through emotion when you do not have the words to articulate it yet: *all women have some kind of mild trauma.* I held the pen tightly and my hand embossed the page. The city was ordered in straight lines, her buildings standing tall and structuring the movement of citizens. I kept walking, gathering momentum and falling less in line with the wave of victims setting forth. Bridges abounded connecting me with other centuries and different modes of thinking. Architectural styles differed as the importance of the people came to the fore. Agorae were built to allow citizens to open speech. They would become the sibling of the Roman Forum. Later dictators would dismantle such structures elsewhere. I was grappling to find a period of time that I could remain within, finding purpose without pressure. I kept slipping into the next. I was in eternal motion, ageing and transgressing to my younger self. *You will learn to be proud of yourself too.* I am building walls of knowledge in an effort to push through to sides of certainty. I was speaking of a conversation we shared before her memory disappeared. It took me by surprise, to remember her that way. Her architecture has slipped. She floats through different time periods, moving further from foundation. Her womb held ten children, and the pain of those before her, and then it led to me. Language has been structured in a way that breeds quests for definition. Do things become clearer when we give up on defining them? The new capital is coming and is calling for more words. One thing remains clear: love should be spoken daily. There are some sentences that demand repetition.

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