

snapshot: mason jar of macon, georgia dirt

ancestral invocation

mugwort. motherwort. white candles. sardines
offered at the riverbank on mondays.
when i'm really still, when i'm still reeling
 i can feel your pulse in the atmosphere,
 in the midst of me. melancholia coiled
 around my throat. wires of grief corroding
 my metallicized breath. sometimes, i glimpse
 you in dreams—the ones where i overflow
 your old leather suitcase, mahogany,
 with marigolds & brume, magnificent
 magnolias & rheum. afterwards, i rush
 to drape the mantle's three mirrors with mauve
 sheets. that's when you appear in mulberry-
 stained linen. mulling. murmuring. humming.
 massaging comfrey balm into your left
 arch. with your free hand, you point to me, jut
 your chin to tell me to quit my meddlin,
 tilt your head instead to the maroon socks
i should hand you before you smolder once
more into embered memory, leaving
me only with a wind of sweat, maple,
 pepper, & moonrind. when i wake, i ache
 with a mouth tasting like muscadines mixed
 with cigar ash. this. i want to tell you

this:

i try to be good

i try to cry

when i need to cry

drink water

when i have thirst

deny myself nothing

when i need it

if i got it

to give myself

no, that's not quite what you taught me, not quite
the language of our lineage but still
what you'd want for me. & you'd say, you'd say

"mmmhmmm. that's my baby." yes. i wanna
be yours. you know, i wonder where you been.
how you been. been calling on you for you
again. shin-deep, back-bent, both hands churning

the rivermurk, wishing for a glimmer
of you. you know you can call me sometime...

it's so good, it's so good to hear your voice.
yes. call me sometime. you can always come
back. come back now. ya hear? & rest by me
just a little bit. don't be gone. too long.

call me home.