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# Face the Final Curtain

You get used to not knowing for so long  
finding their names astonishes  
You call your soul back to your mind  
You summon your brain awake on dark mornings  
lavender dried and lilies wilted  
days heavy with frost

Elsewhere a continent burns  
where are alchemists and magicians  
who crowd our films, inflame our folklore  
to exchange wet death for crematory fire  
balance ravaging extremes and save life  
where are our imagined superheroes  
brimming extraordinary, empowered  
to airlift scorched wombats, restore monarchs  
cleanse micro-pelleted, polluted seas  
where is our will, harnassed, marshalled,  
multiplied to forge peace, to evolve

You are the oracle you await  
You plunged electrodes in garbaged ground  
speared current through, made glass,  
from these blocks, built homes, as you did  
again with expired tires and old bottles  
elsewhere as elsewhen with strawbales  
earthworked, sunbaked brick reclamations  
housing the homeless, easing distress with  
solar ovens, city lots and roofs turned to food,  
wind-turbined change, solar sails power transport  
farm barges float on risen seas feeding millions

# Paradigm Shift

We can change the rules:  
the future we lived, failed  
so now we try again  
to dodge the ball  
this time zigging left instead of right  
eating insects instead of cows  
cultivating wilderness instead of lawns  
purposefully foraging in weedy gardens  
for rocket, forest of ramps, everyone  
has truffles on service Sundays,  
skycars sail with photosilk wings,  
seafarmers harvest kelp, milk dugongs,  
ride willing whales, shoo curious squid,  
as the first world underwater Olympics  
unfurls radiant, bioluminescent flags.

So Fi Zine #8 December 29, 2020 <https://sofizine.com/cfs/>

invisible moons  
pull bloodtides  
shapeshifting folks

Scifaikuest, November 2020 print

shapeshifters' dance:  
no lack of possible  
partners

Scifaikuest, November 2020 print

shapeshifter's party  
lots of bright, new  
faces

Scifaikuest, November 2020 online <https://www.hiraethsffh.com/scifaikuest-online-november-2020>

# As Yemayaah

when i was paralyzed  
my two legs felt as one,  
sparking something that began below my waist.  
disconnected from my will, they floated on their own  
in a sea of perception, embraced everywhere  
sensate and sinuous.

i swam up from brokenness  
into dream, darting in three dimensions  
as unafraid of up as down, as skillful with left as right,  
my great lungs fill with air  
my long arms strengthen with each sure stroke  
as I plunge toward my sister,  
pink and black leatherback, who does not blink  
as we match motions and dance

and all around me, light  
from water-crossing foremothers  
who did not fly, but swam and sang  
across hidden valleys and buried mountains  
as humpbacks do, all around the globe  
at once, in a chorus of continuance, history sharing

like right whales, who survived their holocaust,  
carry memory for hundreds of years,  
outlive generations of miscreants and murderers  
unforgotten wounds now mere tattoos and testament  
to what endures, and they told me, though land forsakes,  
consigns me to the chair, wheels me in the corner

beyond the edge, water buoys and welcomes  
and her wide-board crinolined flippers gleam  
in dusk, sparkle at dawn, flare at midday,  
beckon remembrance, as she sirens return.

## Five Times More

Helped from treacherous land back to shining sea  
lifted by her human shoulders  
scale-dappled waist  
fin-engulfed ankle

grateful mermaid grants  
each man a wish.

One asks for twice his wisdom  
and poof! spouts Shakespeare's sonnets  
and sculpts

The second asks for three times his wisdom  
and voila! knows  
quantum physics, architecture, chaos theory

The third man asks for more: five times his base allotment.  
Mermaid warns: "So much, so much are you certain?"  
He insists, "Are you granting wishes or what?"

"But this will change everything."  
She troubles sweet water,  
"This will change everything."

"Five times more wisdom," he demands.

and Boom! He is made a woman.

something she ate, roils  
finds a home deep within her  
turns and coils, gestates

crooked cursed creature  
the one he laid eyes on, weighted  
wore them all proudly

I did not plant  
that thing climbing out the pot  
red roots in thin air

3 poems , "something she ate," "crooked", and "I did not plant". Gnashing Teeth, Halloween special, October 31, 2020, <https://gnashingteethpublishing.com/>

# LUNO

My crazy niece brought him to me  
taken from his mother too soon  
she said he needed to be rehomed  
before he got territorial  
pictures of him on Facebook  
were deemed sexy: triangle face  
yellow moon eyes, midnight radiance  
in stunningly soft black fur, a biter  
any pet one scintilla too long, too something  
I could not calculate consistently, was met  
with a swift jerk of his head toward the mound  
of my thumb 'til one day I showed him:  
grabbed his paw and bore down  
letting him feel the tip of one of the sharp canines  
crowding my mouth. His mother might have done  
this work, but he is an irascibly slow learner  
I've never been able to put my fangs away, not totally,  
my pointy grin, a small tell of what I become  
when moonful and ready



# Watch

He tells me nothing  
this dark feline emissary  
I serve. But daily, when not otherwise  
occupied, watches the portal interdimensional  
on the backwall next to the door,  
other side of tall kitchen cabinets  
near the floor. Exterminators have tested for  
incursions of trapped or traveling vermin, insects  
and found nothing. What warps or shimmers there  
what pulses or dilates, streams or inhales  
Is he guard, greeter or communicant  
without fear of discovery or relief from duty  
for we see little, perceive less and less  
and no one believes

Starline 43.4 October 2020 <http://sfpoetry.com/starline.html>

# My Dead Friend's Daughter

I relayed some credits for her unfathomable  
craftings on her spawn day when it came  
what else could I do?

Her mother had been dear to me  
still mourn her untimely end  
we the first of our kinds to be friends

so much in common despite differences  
my parents would have call her breedfolk monsters  
whose despised daughter was the first in our waters

— lobster keen and squid pure.  
Of all her various spawnlings of failed liaisons  
this one looked most like her mother

and so was least accepted by their kin  
She crafts impenetrable verse  
opaque with bile and spume

after many failed endeavors  
she's now homeless on the moon  
I can't fathom what to do

the only one of their kind  
I could withstand was her mother  
who knew how human thought informed the heart

who wore amazing headgear  
arranged herself handsomely  
who felt keenly and deeply

in ways I somehow understood  
now she's gone and I don't know  
what's good for this remnant bit of song

first female of her alien brood  
as her flailing life unravels, refusing food  
perhaps from longing or from grief



# Aretha Orbits Us

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Aretha encircles  
Sun, Mercury, Venus,  
Earth, swings between Mars  
and Jupiter, sings

Starline 43.4 October 2020

<http://sfpoetry.com/starline.html>

# Ignorance, my prophylactic

Lust lays heavy on me when it's my yearning time  
I fear the mixed and urgent heat of being were-feline  
should I conceive while in that state, far from my rational mind  
there's no guidance about what may happen  
when I'm fur her — no clues of any kind

There are others. I smell them, passing in a crowd  
emanating scent trails, nothing said aloud  
a stranger's eyes blink slowly, their iris shimmers fast  
I am aroused, but somehow manage to stroll past

Human trysts don't fulfill no matter how skilled the lover  
I always want to do it furred and pawed as my other  
but I don't know enough of her to know what satisfies  
and fear making a litter if I give in, yield all to gratify

Who or what would come, the issue I might bear  
furred or smooth, one or two, or more might appear  
when, 9 months? less or more, to form in were-chemistry  
My fluid body has just two breasts for future kits or babies

One day, a fierce and fertile tom may proposition me  
or were-dragon, one spicy afternoon's stray from my species  
so maybe twins will come as the case might be ——  
one of each, or perhaps blurred, none will be like me

stone bridge reflected in still water  
backlit by the light  
of three moons

Scifaikuest August 2020 print

newlyweds  
embark in their own  
starship

Scifaikuest August 2020 online

## Long Poems

Arrivant

76 lines

Igbo Landing

60 lines

# ARRIVANT

p.1 of 2

Overthrow this empire of reason  
the dominance of intellect over love  
fact over truth, using science  
to leave things out, not open things up

Beginning will be found in the end  
the world is an old mind,  
a dreaming mind, a storytelling mind  
we must relocate eternity

In New York, standing on a street corner,  
we can see stars, hear part  
of their great song, the mystery inside  
trying to reveal itself

The old woman in the cave  
has been weaving for eons  
weaving porcupine quills  
into the most beautiful garment

She must pause from weaving  
to stir the pot of all the seeds  
and plants of the world  
when she rises to stir the pot  
the grey dog pulls a loose thread,  
unravels the raiment  
She beholds the mess  
and starts to weave again

We're in Scherezade times  
telling a story each night  
to keep ourselves alive the next day  
She weaves the broken king  
back into himself, into the world  
and so saves herself and all her sisters  
using the web of ancient stories  
as my grandmother did, applying  
spider webs to heal my father's wounds, scarless

We must participate in reweaving  
We are Isis gathering and knitting



scattered, broken pieces of Osiris  
together again

ARRIVANT

p.2 of 2

Near us is something small asking to be saved  
not too heavy to carry, it becomes  
the big thing that survives  
when the large culture collapses

Noah minds, folks, carry your own  
little fish of self, smaller than small inside  
tied to the bigger than big, dreaming

The power of the mustard seed:  
parables older than the book  
lore is the heart's learning  
law was made when we forgot

Why can't we see god anymore?  
because we don't bend low enough

We are being called by the little fish  
to save the world  
in the little fish that Manu saved was Vishnu

Stories are the way primordial thought formed  
in the old mind. Touch beginnings again  
return to paradise  
to handle the paradox of being alive  
at the end of the beginning

This has all happened before  
Take the little thing talking to you  
and carry it as far as you can

and you will bump into other people  
carrying what they can  
and the world will be remade.

# IGBO LANDING

We are incomprehensible  
to you who feel only fear  
when you hear us, spider  
silk on face, chill up back  
which is a success perhaps  
to have both sugar and fat  
to die of excess and sloth  
not like we hungry wraiths  
whose forgotten flesh was sinew  
whose nonexistent options were  
to live death or die living  
whose path was clear:  
undo or be undone

Our drowned captors are silent  
their injustice muzzles them

We sang the song of home going  
a freedom-bound journey as we  
down drowned with determination  
deliberation, avowals to never surrender  
to die and return from whence we  
came from where we were stolen,  
to resist and not submit, calling to  
our God, Chukwu, for escort, for conveyance  
for admission to the next phase  
existence beyond this abominable land  
out of reach of horrible hands:

those who would eat our souls, bite  
bit after bit, daily flay flesh  
from our backs, lynch us  
take our babies, steal their milk  
rape our young ones, remove our tongues  
and in that terrible future in which you tremble  
by our whispers, lingering laments,  
you would believe such theft was chosen?

and that is what frightens you  
we refused to languish in longing  
you hear our reverberating answers echo  
through the water, slow lapping sounds  
waves creeping on the land, our avowals

We consecrated our commitment  
how we said no with our lives  
for our lives, how we refused  
that hell on land, making generations  
of grist for the hideous mill of rogue  
capital, the codified caprice of robbers  
we brothers, sisters, daughters, sons, clear willed  
strong souled, liberty-led, freedom fed  
returned to mother water, singing a way  
open

out of 75 only 13 were found  
drowned, the rest of us lifted,  
transmuted, flew

*Igbo Landing is a historic site at Dunbar Creek on St. Simons Island in Glynn County, Georgia, where in 1803, 75 Igbo captives after drowning their captors and running the ship York aground, marched ashore, singing, and walked into Dunbar creek, committing mass suicide. 13 bodies were recovered the rest remain missing. In 2002 the site was declared a holy ground.*