

Mihee Kim

There are times I can no longer imagine having a body. Which is to say that I've left my own. There are times I am unable to operate as is expected of me. A well-rehearsed ego looking for restitution of perceived wrongs, seeking redemption that is at least, hundreds of years overdue.

In other words, I want power. Beyond bodily, beyond psychic or institutional. I want the words of it to curdle the ears of my enemies. These enemies exist, around us, in us, in the walls of our society.

It is grief about this that softens me in ways I thought I was incapable of. 6 dead, 13 years old, dozens more, hundreds, thousands of deaths I grieve.

This language is strong, perhaps alarming, because the nature of the world is dangerous for bodies born where power is slippery...seductive. As convincing as the illusion of safety driving the decisions of so many middle class, so many violent bullies, so many occupations across the world.

Power in any setting is as addicting as the intoxication of infatuation, the allure of influence, the dream of ease. We, the powerless, do deserve intoxication, deserve influence, deserve ease. But most of all, we deserve life.

I've approached the last several years of my life as a conduit for my work. What has passed through this small-town body is not new, but no less than a rousing awareness of death and powerlessness in a pandemic and racial uprisings inspired by murder: a frequent and foundational mechanism underneath the clock churn of white supremacy. All the while bound by the lines of my skin, the flesh of my fat, the parts of me that have been deemed unfit and unworthy by society, even as a pandemic imprints its lasting affects on our world, even as it dies, it takes many with it.

This is a poem about ghosts, about being one on purpose. It is a story about power, claiming it like the 7-headed wild beast of Revelations. A chapter in the bible which consistently inspires much of my poetics as a formerly indoctrinated Jehovah's Witness. We believed that the end of the world was imminent. On the other side of that cognitive dissonance, I fear they were right. But it is in this truth that I created this image. In it, I feel a kinship with complexity, with the shades and sharpness of light, with the possibility of living inherent in creating. Also that we cannot claim power without touching its darkness.

If I can be both monster and god, ghost and ancestor, harlot and woman, fat and limitless, privileged and powerless, I can and will do more than survive. If I can live in the gray matter but elucidated by the act of creation, I will use power until it is time to put it

away. I will walk with it and wield it for my loved ones, even for those I do not know. I will raise it from the dead and haunt, until it has done its work. Until it is time to let it go.

Character count: 0/3000

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