

Wilderness House Literary Review 19/3

Sophie Garlick

When Do Pariahs Become Parents

Palms pressed together I prayed to you.

Each parable morsels fed to a hungry, desperate soul. Placed high on a pedestal forever out of reach.

On my knees I begged, I bargained, I belonged. Tears flowed freely and frequently.

Yet as the last one falls, I am baptized once more. So when do martyrs become mortal?

When do pariahs become parents?

I am trying to find Him everywhere but the sky is empty.

My anger becomes biblical—incoherent, unidentifiable, inconsolable. I stopped believing in God the day I stopped believing in my father.

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The Keeper of Dreams

The hot stench of summer seeps into the cells. Inside one, a young boy
dreams of a free county.

Across the world, a young girl dreams her family to America. But to dream
for forever is to always live in your head.

Another boy puts his life on hold and posts his brother's bail. Another girl,
monitors her mother's schizophrenic dreams.

But to keep for forever is to never live your own life.

And so, we have the dreamers who move mountains with their minds.
And the keepers, watching over ensuring they don't die trying.

With two flags sewn as one, I am equal parts of both worlds. But to be two
halves of something is to be whole of nothing.

I do not have my father's eyes, but if you cut me, I have his heart.

I do not have my mother's skin but if you cut me, I bleed her colors.

For now, I am both my father's dreams and a keeper of my mother's tongue.
I am half of two somethings, and I am wholly alright.

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Hurricane Season

My own home like the echo of a thunderclap.
The winds change direction swaying as the weather does.
But the rain pours without fail permanently residing over my street. My
house.
Me.

So, it is no surprise when you find me drenched.
Palms bleeding I pick pieces of the window off the pavement.
You collect the soaking envelopes that have gathered at the doorstep. I
watch and for a moment it seems the rain might subside.
Crumpled in your hands as if my worries could be so easily suppressed...
The rain continues.

Handing them back, "You seem well versed in natural disasters. Are you
alright?" Too tired to meet your gaze my eyes fall to the water seeping
out from under the door, To the envelopes returned to the hands of their
rightful owner.

Lighting crackles from inside the house.

"It's hurricane season once more," I say as I turn to open the door.