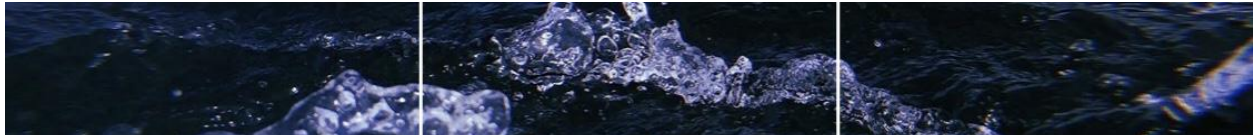


a cento for contact sub rosa

By Ica Sadagat

The SOUND of bodies touching, the beginning of things,
then...

...another sound rising -- from afar -- the SOUND of waves
crashing, rushing onto shore.



B

{ Sub rosa : Latin—"under the rose."

i.e. I

will *sub rosa* afford you my best
assistance : that is I

will privately / secretly / in confidence : below
the rose

watch : your eyes
brighten as you eat
the lingering tingle of unlanguage. }

R

Easily thrown I want to be
thumbed and wished upon
I sink in—a single dream

the pebble
before enveloping the lake

containing the content of my soul spilling

throughout your sleep.

Where are you now? Who lies
beneath your spell tonight? Whom else
from rapture's road will you expel tonight?

My hand remembers treading your watery
room just behind the rose-veiled eyes
of memory—where everything I long for

I long for
using my mouth.

These are my arms, your shaking lungs.

I

Some fires kindle freedom.
 In order to touch there first
 after the city is destroyed
 You can't stay a fantasy
 skin I will take you / in my mouth

Some consolidate your bondage.
 must be space to do so
 I will touch you on the surface of everything.
 / more flesh than plum lips breaking a plum
 as you : steam : into speech
 : say : ocean with the paddle
 of your tongue fire in the dark

: open : my little animal

cage
 touch me

: candor : be about it.
 where my grin shines brightest
 in a noxious guilt. I would make for you
 the barest of sounds wing against wing

—there at the point of articulation : cold wood turned to coal in the fine fine flame.

M

If you would only walk
 into this room again and touch me anywhere I swear

I would make a burnishing
 of you—the naked salt of your
 far gone hips breaking the skeleton within
 us. All above us is the touching lips
 of yes -now beholden to heat

like dawn.

No more doubting

the active space between :

my hands at your high tide
 dare me to be untruthful

—our bodies light -harnessed
 light -thrashed
 bruising : bilirubin bloom.



Color
 other countries
 Ica Books LLC.

Sometimes I write to you as you
 hold me. But words are just words and
 I'd rather revel in your breath with my tongue.

“a cento for contact sub rosa” is constructed entirely of pieces borrowed from the following, in order of emergence:

Black & Kevin in *Moonlight* under moonlight at the end, a beginning
a blue blue sea that buoyed me

B

definition of “sub rosa” - unknown

“The Peaches” - Jericho Brown

“Dream House as Erotica” from *In the Dream House* - Carmen Maria Machado

R

“alleyway” - Aziza Barnes

“So Many Dreams” - Essex Hemphill

“Tonight” - Agha Shahid Ali

“The Aureole” - Nikky Finney

“Between the Meat World and the Real World” - Angie Sijun Lou

Dub - Alexis Pauline Gumbs

I

“The Undressing” - Li-Young Lee

“tongues³” from *The Lonely Letters* - Ashon T. Crawley quoting Jean-Luc Nancy

The Yellow House - Chiwan Choi

“What Lovers Do” - Alex Isley

“By Tuesday, I Am Fading” - andie millares

“Water, I want you” - Lo Kwa Mei-en

“ars pasifika” - Craig Santos Perez

“Little Red Plum” - Safiya Sinclair

“w/ you in the slow hour” from *Wild Peach* - S*an D. Henry-Smith

“Between the Plumage We Were Everything” - Muriel Leung

“Love Poem: Centaur” - Donika Kelly

“The Tree of Fire” - Ada Limón

M

“A Poem for Haruko 10/29” - June Jordan

“Love Poem: Centaur” again

“Untitled” (Last Love) - Rachel McKibbens

The Yellow House once more

“Elegy” - Aracelis Girmay

“love life, with stitches” - Evie Shockley

“Object Permanence” - Nicole Sealey

“Active Space” - River Spirit

“On a Night of the Full Moon” - Audre Lorde

“For Audre” - Pat Parker

“Skin-Light” - Natalie Diaz

flowers at a park on a day with Nikki Giovanni* after a new moon

my ink in the morning before I Wrote a Good Omelet* and ate a hot poem, after loving You.