

PRAYING MANTIS

In honour of Mikhail Bulgakov

Toppling desk on which you dance, any moment now, you'll fall, slipping on the oil-slicked sole of your brown spindly foot, end up on their poisoned white-tiled floor.

Spindly brown foot that belongs to a charred brown body that moves through the world on a laser beam ready to plunge at faces and bite away softness with claws that squelch with the sound of arteries gushing and roaring under the wild drumming of Arabian drums.

Woland sits across from me, asks me to donate my teeth to the pool of summer- so that the praying mantises can feast on them. Have a chicken-curry feast with lights that blaze across their narrow-slit retinae until their buccal cavities are coated with the scent of spices and white calcium.

But my spindly bony frame is already drenched in sun and ether and I am dancing across the edge of their eye beams, they narrow down on me, their green stick bodies clinging onto my brown flesh.

Pincers grabbing at whatever they can, slowly coming away with bits of melancholy sticking to them.

I belong to the Nile and its once gold fluid- the river that acts as the sole mirror for the sun.

I belong on Cleo's neck like an embedded rock that feels the rise and fall of her passionate breaths as she walks

Brown charred body that keeps gushing, and leaking out, nostrils flaring, grey matter sending out sparks of electric alarms all red across the veins of the body

Theres a carnival outside, my bloodied frame is dancing within it, dancing within the chalk lines they have so graciously drawn out for me

They do not want me going rogue against god's chokehold, against the white of their finish lines or their lies or their stiff-collared shirts

Their robotic smiles within their gilded offices where there is always a line, where there are always eyes roving like laser printers- printers whose only job is to scan until something burnt eventually rolls out and gently, soundlessly plops down on the floor

Eyes everywhere measuring your degree of awkwardness and your fidgety hands and your blinking rate and the blood on your face and the shape your lips make

My frenzied dancing is everything to them- locks of hair flaying against the sweat of my face, their dark twinkling gazes sharpen and elevate, their backs straighten out at the rushed movements of my spindly body.

The mantises fly off of me, land on the spectators until they are wild and gasping, vomiting out their sushi meals delicately into display vases until there's a stampede trying to rush out from the hole-like exit that keeps flapping and flaying in the intense wind.

I am still there dancing under the refracting photons of the sun. Laser beam eyes all gone.

If I focus for a second and cease my relentless spinning

I see her in the corner-

Cleopatra drenched in rubies and gold

waving to me like a mother.