POETRY

cicada girl

by Caroline Kuba



"Bird Singing" by Virgil Suárez

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You once told me
The word ‘beautiful’ should be reserved for mother nature —
For mountain views and stalagmites,
and landscapes drenched in moonlight.

So tell me,
Where do your eyes go
Whenever my skin starts to imitate their surface?

Am I not nature…
Or not nature enough?

Is that why
You *DO* call me beautiful
When I open the gates and let my hair wash ashore on my hips,
back arched like a fallen tree stuck between his brothers,
decaying in their arms?

Is that why
You *DO* call me beautiful
When I blow lab-cooked raspberries on my lips,
and sprinkle myself in the redness of what you could never achieve?

There's puddles on the floor now.
There's puddles on my floor.
Soaking the pillow I made for you to rest upon

For me to watch you wither away, leaving the stench of artificial oranges.
Unmoving,
Until one day,
I’d hear cicadas start to chirp within my kitchen sink.

I’d leave you,
To oxidize in silence.

I would go
Hide beneath the floorboards,
With mice and rotten apricots until spring arrives from her journey,
And I would grow again like the box trees outside,
All fluffy, like a squirrel,

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With buck teeth and bug eyes and I would bury my belongings,
Leave all the shiny things behind — I'm not a fish, yet.
I'd say and go somewhere where you could never spot me.

And once you'd wake
From your human hibernation,
I might just let you take a peek

Just to see
Whether
You'd call me by my name
Or beautiful.

Of course,
I wouldn't care by then.
I'd be

A cicada girl
With a hummingbird heart,
Equipped with a blade of grass.
And boy!
I'd be ready to devour.

I'd fly southward to where the sky blooms — take them with me.
So there'd be nothing left for your autumnal hunting.
Does the starving feel familiar? I'd ask.

Lizard tongue between puffed cheek.

And I'd forgive myself,
For all the times I used to crawl in disappointment,
Wearing the wings I gathered somewhere by the seaside

To bring back to you as a souvenir,
Only for you to tell me to smile more…
But, not too widely.
As not to stain my temples with crow's feet.
Since you'd prefer a clean shave
Over ruffled feathers.

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I will not care then.
I'd be
A cicada girl
With a hummingbird heart.
Too busy detonating the city
to sing the song of longing
for handsome boys that tell girls they're pretty.
Because 'beautiful'...
It is reserved for nature,
isn't it?

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