



blood orange

an experimental poetry tarot

the rage, the loving, the fucking, the desire

by samantha rose johnson

my love for you is a whisper at dawn
same as the palm's whispers to me under a merciless sun
 they know our collective secrets
 they watch the noise & wonder how we let it get this way

if only the planet reflected our love:
nurtured & eternal, blossoming & flush
unlike the weight of the apocalyptic
yellowing of the air

 the palms,
 they've seen it all:
 the rage, the loving,
 the fucking, the desire
 they rustle our secrets to each other
 timbres that hook my buzzing existence
 wondering what else may live atop those trees
 like all things that live atop my mind
 everything concealed, longing to escape
 like my breasts flowers of flesh pining for effulgence

privacy is vacant in this LA sun
on a balcony overlooking one of hundreds
of permeated streets in the Valley
dressed in succulents & humans, unconcerned,
oblivious to our sensitive cacti comrades
thriving ubiquitously

i look up: see mountains i'd like to escape to
i would fly to the tops of them
fast as the hummingbird that said hello earlier
though she prefers the trees
& maybe so do i

i absorb the warmth on this balcony best i can
my petals bloom & i want to top you

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you're at the base of those mountains
but as i write these words i imagine you here
walking up behind me
 hips in hands
 before i feel you
 pressed to my ass

i'd let you top me
right on this balcony
under the unforgiving sun of Los Angeles

 who's paying attention anyway
 besides the palm trees, succulents, & mountains

the sun is still close
but animals are vanishing:
 the squirrels aren't eating in the bushes,
 spiders aren't stalking & building in the trees
 the quarter-sized beetles aren't buzzing in the tepid breeze

& that's how i know winter is coming to crusade
for its cause though it may not win
 (palms & people have witnessed its gradual compromise)
so winter will join us
even if the cold does not

i'll be a new woman
by next spring
 but i'll still be whispering
 my love to you: sensuous
 like our soft skin sweeping —
 then, & every jewel-dripped night
 until the sun decides to forget us all

samantha rose johnson (she/her) is a Bay Area-born writer. Her poetry chapbook *L'ACQUA* was published by Tiny Divine Press in 2017. She is the founder and editor of the cult feminist magazine, *Pussy Magic*. Her writing has appeared in *ILY Mag*, *Occulum*, *Tiny Flames Press*, and more. She is a graduate of University of California, Riverside with a B.A. in English, and is currently a student at the UCLA Extension Writer's Program. She lives in Los Angeles where she manages events at the legendary Sunset Strip bookstore, Book Soup.