

© 2009

Rochelle Owens

“Sovereignty”

The matchmaker says a body is its parts

Ever on the surface appears a story
of Iberian days a state of mind
white sand from end to end
explaining the surface of the skin
a naked martyr standing pigeon-toed
opens her right hand pale yellow
the sand in the hollow of her palm
the shade expanding more than
half-way organizing the lines between
atmosphere following the course
a space between words etoile horseshoe
evil-eye taliswoman
And power a conjurer and truth a fissure
darkening yellowing on the bottom
of her left foot

*

A woman says a word that you know
her high cheekbones cut from a red stone
a red stone sought by a global market
trafficking in human kidneys and an index
finger waves a finger waves for it is
a versatile tool uniquely capable a word
that you know from the earth's crust
plant material and blood is cleansed in
the fist-sized bean-shape a word that
you know which consists of a brain
cut out from the skull of a woman her high
cheekbones cut from a red stone and a
typhoon the head-butting rains gaps in
the sequence of events laid down
and eroded away

*

Away from the traffic and pointing at
a hypothetical male a woman says a word
with a smile while her key ring slips off
slips off an index finger and before
another theft another theft in Calcutta gaps

in the sequence of events
sequence of events a marriage between
pauper and wealthy woman from Delhi
and naught but sovereignty says a word
a word that you know on the earth's surface
seven continents rivers and deserts
the flexible long neck of a woman stretches
and an index finger waves spiraling bands
of wind and rain and strong little legs
of a pauper run little legs of a pauper run

Escape to spring from one continent to
another and a sign says "keep out" those
who will not dance to a tune of their misery
to a tune of their pain their pain as perfect
as tubular bells tam tam gongs and sitars
to be no more of this story cut out of the
middle this story of Iberian days and naught
but sovereignty says a word a word that you
know dividing itself into head inchoate eyes
and ears that grind up sound for the word: theft
is sound ground up becoming a gift and it is
a gift of a red stone red stone in a bean-shape
and the size of a fist and beauty is the arch
beauty is the arch of the foot of a pauper

*

The operating room and lights that beam
scan across the screen are the eyes and eyes
are organs of wonder wondrous organs and
the two eyeballs set in bony sockets Behold
the gift the gift of a red stone in a bean- shape
precious the intact skeleton precious the skull
spine bones joints the form of the human body
and naught but sovereignty is the matchmaker
naught but sovereignty says a body is its parts
knowing which side his bread is buttered
as a surgeon on a safari or a trip around the
world Behold the bread of kali!- –an abundance
of paupers paupers of inchoate eyes rattling
spiral seashells jingling bracelets They are called
the bread of Kali because Kali devours them
and they are deaf from birth they are the deaf
paupers deaf to the flutes deaf to the sitars deaf
to the tam tam gongs deaf to the tubular bells

*

The paupers ears are drawn

with a quill-point a beautiful form
a calligraphy that is a curved stroke
like the letter C and the C multiplies
becoming cumulus clouds and paupers ears
the paupers ears are pale yellow silk
sliding through henna stained fingers
of the wealthy woman from Delhi whose
gift to her son her only son is a gift
a gift of a red stone bought from a global
market trafficking in human kidneys
whose only son has the dark blue skin
of Siva and Siva wears a rugby shirt
racing his chariot contracting his biceps
his skin mild moist racing his chariot
a bronze Hummer a gift from the wealthy
woman from Delhi her pale yellow sari
a glowing streak of light layers of silk
winding around Kali's waist the folds
cascading down becoming cumulus clouds
and paupers ears her bloody thumbs and
index fingers knot and tuck cumulus clouds
and paupers ears and swirling around
Kali's feet and toes light rays of sovereignty
sovereignty under the skin fat muscle
and bone sovereignty is a cutting tool

mass-produced like the toy monkeys

rattling spiral seashells the jingling bangles

of the deaf paupers the flutes sitars

the tam tam gongs

2012 Wood Coin: Already Okay with Little Brother and Big Brother Watching Issue: Owens,
"Sovereignty"