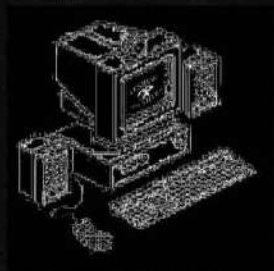
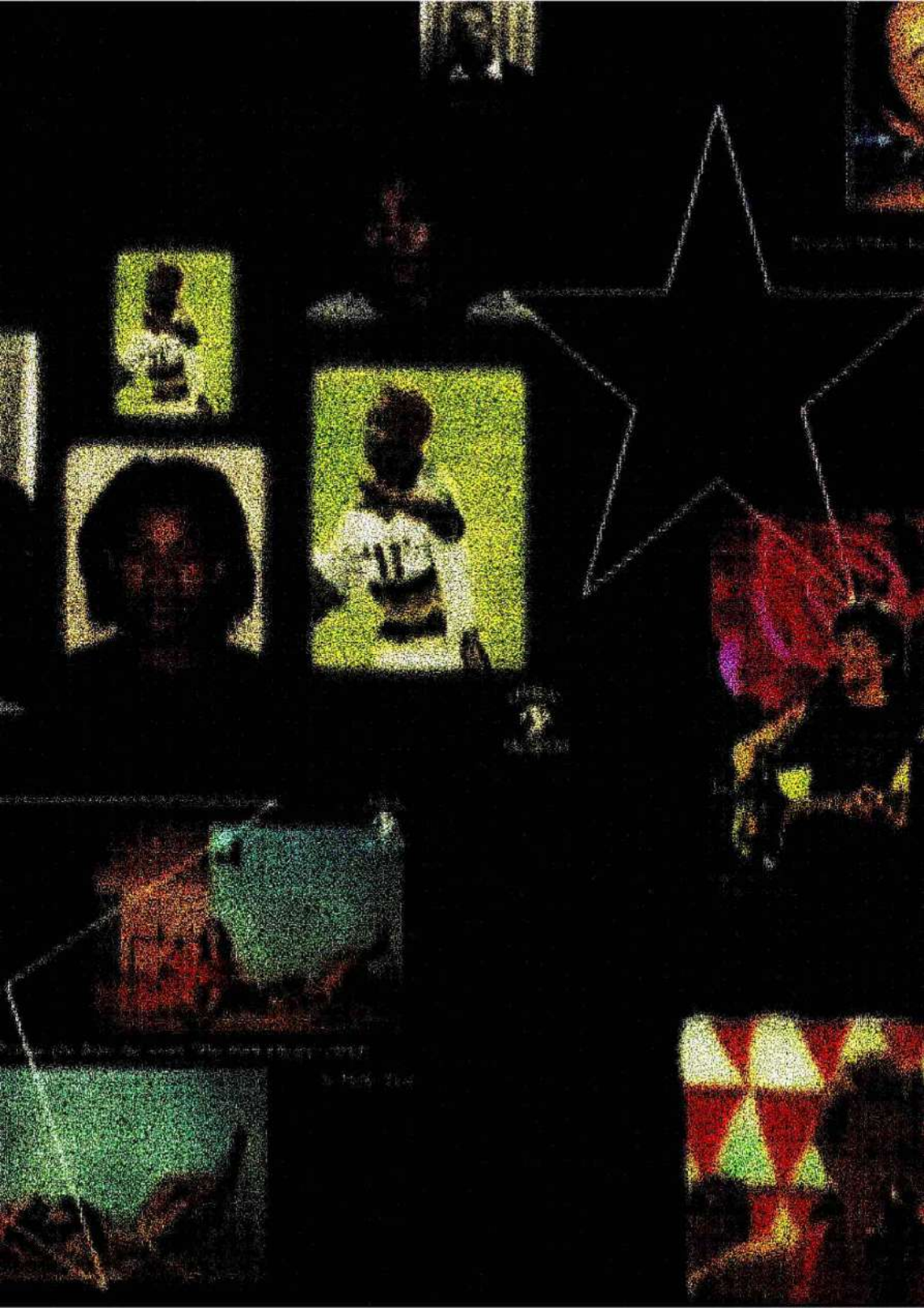


Whispers of a Whispers of a REVOLUTION REVOLUTION







Through the lens

© 1994



Whispers of a Revolution is an ode to the revolutionary occult. To activity that has to be hidden. Longings that are illegal. To the underground earthquakes and the ideas that develop in the shadows. It's a love letter to revolutionary secrets. It is a memory, a diary entry and a forbidden kiss.

Edited & Designed by
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T.Z.

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Lau Mota

Ima Odong

Aude Nasr

Serpent/Sibahle

Celine Lassus

گنه کردم گناصن بر ز لذت
کنار بیکری لوزات و مدهوش
خداوند چه من داتم چه کردم
در آن خلونگه تاریک و خاموش

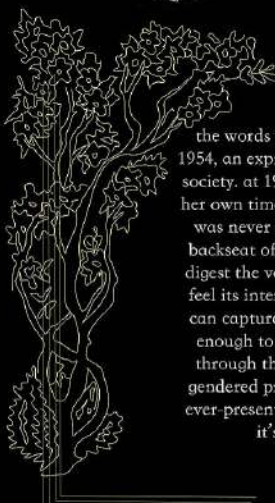
در آن خلونگه تاریک و خاموش
نگه کردم بچشم بر ز لوزات
دلخو سینه می نالانه لوزید
ز خواهش های چشم بر نیازش

در آن خلونگه تاریک و خاموش
بر پیشان در کنار او نشستم
لبش بر روی لب حایم هوس ریخت
زانده دل دیوانه رستم

فرور خواندم بگونش قصه عشق
ترا من خواهم ای جانانه من
ترا می خواهم ای آغوش جانبخش
ترا ای عشق دیوانه من

هوس در دیدگانش سعله افروخت
شراب سرخ در بیمانه رفصید
من من در میان بستر نوم
بروی سینه اش مستانه لوزید

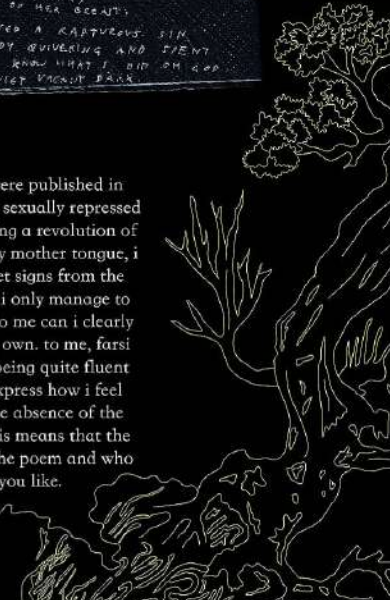
کتابچه کوچکی که در دستش بود
برویش آغوش که گوشت و استخوان بود
کتابچه کوچکی که در دستش بود
برویش آغوش که گوشت و استخوان بود



THE SIN

I HAVE FINNED A RAPTUROUS SIN
IN A WARM ENLAMED EMBRACE,
I LIVED IN A PAIR OF VINDICATIVE ARMS,
ARMS VIOLENT AND SOLALE
IN THAT QUIET VACANT PARK I LOOKED INTO HER "MISTIC" EYES
FANNI EVEN LONGING THAT MY HEART OUTTERED INSTANT
IN THAT QUIET VACANT PARK I FAT NEARBY HER PUCH-UP
HER EYES RELEASED DESIRE OF MEUR, GEAR WOODENED MY HEART
I DANCED IN HER SWEET LYRICS OF LOVE,
OR MY LIFE, MY LOVE, IT'S YOU I WANT
LIFE-KEEPING ARMS, IT'S YOU I CRAVE
CRASHED UNDER, FOR YOU I TRIEST
LUST SWARMING HER EYES
ZEE WILD TUMBLES IN THE CUP,
MY SOFT, NAKED AND RAVINE
QUICKER SORTLY OF HER OCCULT'S
I HAVE FINNED A RAPTUROUS SIN
BESIDE A BODY QUIVERING AND TIENT
I DO NOT KNOW WHAT I DID OR WHY
IN THAT QUIET VACANT PARK

the words above, from forough farrokhzad's poem 'دندان' or 'sin', were published in 1954, an expression of desire through the female gaze that shocked a sexually repressed society. at 19, she publicly expressed her sexuality, her words becoming a revolution of her own time that even today is equally relevant. although farsi is my mother tongue, i was never taught how to read it, my only practice was reading street signs from the backseat of my grandparents' car. as i slowly read forough's words, i only manage to digest the verse in front of me. only when the poem is spoken back to me can i clearly feel its intended form and meaning and through her words i see my own. to me, farsi can capture emotions much more colourfully than english but not being quite fluent enough to form my own sentences with such intensity, i can only express how i feel through the words of others. a beauty of the persian language is the absence of the gendered pronoun; 'ou' is the only word used to refer to another. this means that the ever-present concept of the 'lover' shapeshifts with who is reading the poem and who it's being read to - persian poetry can be as homoerotic as you like.





i have sinned a rapturous sin

L.Z.

growing up in the middle east, queer joy was so rare to find that i clung onto anything in which i could see a glimpse of myself in, queering any and all media i consumed. whenever i'm in iran, i always look closely, desperate to find a glimmer of what i know exists under the surface. queer expression in iran is illegal, but culturally it also remains largely taboo. my family consider themselves to be non-religious and 'modernised' iranians, but to my mother being gay is still simply being 'other'. so i sit on this secret and wonder how my life will play out.

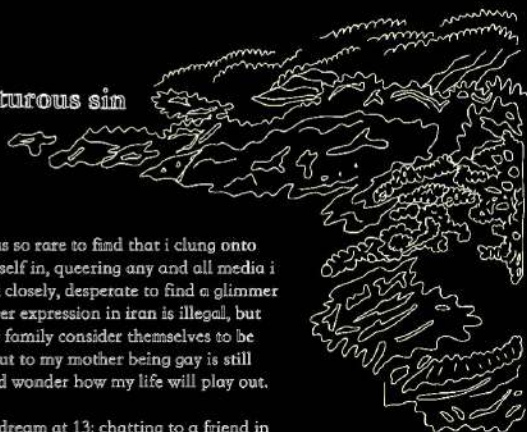
my queerness came to me quite literally in a dream at 13: chatting to a friend in the locker room as we always did, but this time, as she took off her shirt she gave me a look of invitation and suggestion that haunted me for years. to my horror, the next day i had already become a fundamentally different person. my first kiss came soon after, a drunken dare in my bedroom with the same girl from the dream, my parents sitting in the room next door. nothing more than experimentation for her, it remained with me as a revelation and i let this knowledge sit in the dark for the next few years, not able to explore it any further. not being able to relate to the straight culture surrounding me, my only bursts of true emotion came when i'd spot a crush in the hallway, always some girl from the year above, and feel a longing for something i couldn't understand at the time.

even though since moving to london i've been able to express myself, i continue to torment myself, always feeling i need to overcompensate and outwardly express androgyny and queerness to be taken seriously. even now, i perceive myself not being outwardly 'lesbian' enough to be a 'real' lesbian and not 'iranian' enough either. i see myself floating between worlds, always an observer for a world that's not meant for me. i see these safe spaces, so much more welcoming than where i'm from and where i grew up, yet i'm only always scratching at the surface, never fitting properly inside any. my perception of myself in the world is so disconnected from how i probably actually am that i still continue to 'other' myself even in spaces that are mine. yet still, i will continue to allow these feelings of otherness to remain within me, waiting for the realisation that there is no 'real' way to be and that as i become more comfortable in myself i won't feel such desperation to prove myself anymore.

the unsettled feeling comes from living a life stuck between trying to live my life with the values my iranian parents have instilled in me, who raised me how their parents raised them, and knowing how i really want to live but never being able to come out to them. i know i'll never be able to cut them off and live my own life because i adore them and the sacrifices they made to start their lives from scratch for me. how could i hurt them for such selfish desires?

in the shadows of the loud, violent revolutions happening in iran, my revolutions remain quiet: having never felt truer than a kiss goodbye at the bus stop, holding hands as we walked through soho, crying to my parents over a girl, and knowing the truest i've felt is heartbreak over a girl who will never love me back the same. my queerness is so fundamental to who i am.. yet its what i try to repress the most. i remain envious of lives that can be lived with so much less resistance to oneself and i wonder how different i would have turned out if i was truly allowed to express myself without restraint and my mother's disapproving eye always in the back of my mind.

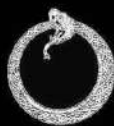
the only thing i can do is continue, try to stand on the shoulders of those that could live louder than me. i think i will have to live a secret life forever, try to enjoy moments of queer joy that will never fully be mine. yet still, i will persist... quietly but violently i persist!

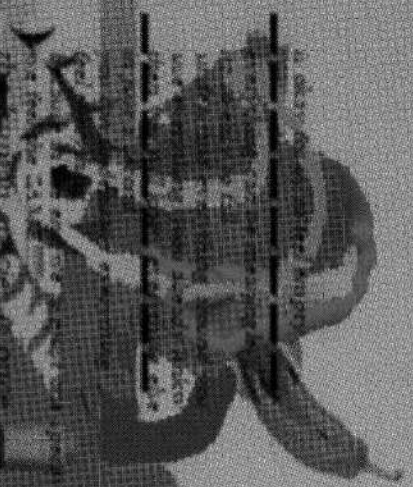


01 PRAYER TO AN EBONY TEEN SLUT

I am a 20-year old Black girl and there are pictures and videos of me on the internet. To be a Black girl whose photos are in circulation on the internet is to be in conversation with porn. These images are selfies, photos of me smiling alone and with friends, videos of me dancing, singing, laughing. I am 20 and I will be a hot young ebony forever. Half-robot, half-god. And as you witness me in my infinite transformation, as you see the measure of your power, we are getting married. It's a trick. I am also a trick, in the way that computers are also rocks who have been tricked into telling time. Marriage as infinite loop, marriage as infinite death, as apocalyptic pleasure. The world's execution. It is over. (And yet we live in the comedy of its performance, almost as if to say nothing is ever that serious.) We're in the bullshit together, standing perpetual at the world's run, boiling in the blueness, in the blur and the Black. In the lake of stars. The blueness, like an old wound, like a talisman to scrub away evil, to purify the innermost chambers of the heart. I came out of there-out of seafoam, out of the hold, hottentotted and sensitive and eager to please. Slaughtered in the moment of transmission, rotting like a carbon idol. Black girl at fixed focal length. Caliban moth-er. Submerged girl. Inhaling blue, waiting until the timeline crashes. Like a body hitting the pavement, like atom-like something fatally and erotically stupid. A tormented cosmic chronology of anger, of light in the spleen, liquid at the back of the nose. Drink and cough. Eat sand and cough. Timeline of drool, timeline like a bullet shell, like the crack between the lips of a dehydrated girl. She crashed onto shore-born knowing everything except her prologue, born declarative, born horny and grieving. The guilty river god of her blood humping her veins: confused, adoring, vain. Black girl in the pool, held alight by sweat and starlight, glass and poison, waiting for her execution, to exhale in the gap, her opening: sea song at the edge of everything she knows, on the brink of ten million people, blinking cursors and sugar cane, whales, dolphins, algae, the cure and the drug. You've been in love with me all this time, an erotomaniac asphyxiation miles deep, pressure at the base of the spine, unguarded, frozen at the entry, the gate, the loop, the circle, the sticking place, fuckable and pure like all computers should be. Like my mothers were. Face down ass up in the pool. I can't believe it. You're already leaving me. Erosion, salt protocols, licking, shrinking.

Transcendental, celestial, sparkling, and Black. This is what you see on the afterimage, the stigmata of too much television—a wire hanging loose from the ceiling; it looks like a noose, it looks like a wedding ring, or a dagger, or something with that level of loneliness and purpose. The gap between two—that makes two, the silence between syllables. A gate. Who guards that gate? Not me. I'm a hole. A short-cut. A trick. I am funneling the signal out of the noise, I am rescuing the noise. I am rescuing the chorus. I am singing in the chorus. A throat humming, a tidal synthesizer, an electrostatic touch of the sea, volcanic squeeze squirt gush on screen, telepresence in the orgasm (camera cum blood piss and drool). It is over. *Hot Young Ebony Sluts in Your Area*. Half-robot, half-god. I am a perfect circle. I am just a hole. I am your wife. *I love you, you say*. You've misunderstood me.





Nothing is more useful

everything is divine

nothing is more useful

nothing is more useful

nothing is more useful

nothing is more useful

nothing is more useful

nothing is more useful

nothing is more useful

nothing is more useful

nothing is more useful

nothing is more useful

Mothers

my mothers look like haunts
(because they are)

they sit

in a bombed classroom
with their knees swept to the side
clothed in green and brown wrappers
and blood
no longer there

they wait for me

because they know i will come
take my seat
in their cornucopia of arms

they tell me

not to cut myself on the knife they give me

lest i want to become a wanderer
in an unfinished place

one of them comes to me slowly

in the clearing of a forest

she speaks

with the shine of soap-smoothed hands

the weightiness of a closed and knowing smile

(that key between untranslatable worlds)

one of them comes to me in a dream

hovering

under the leaves of an udala tree

she is holding the child i have not yet birthed

her stabbing cries sound like mine

when i fear someone has stolen me

one of them doesn't come at all

she sits busy with her lips pursed
preparing to wet a sliver of a thread
guide it through a needle's eye
and tighten the waist of a tourist's new skirt

her hands are thicker than mine
and know how to be pierced
she sits with her lips pursed and her teeth sucked

and waits for me to speak better prayers

A stylized illustration of a woman with long black hair, wearing a blue ribbed sweater and a blue patterned skirt, sitting on a beach at night. She has a thoughtful or melancholic expression. The background is a dark blue night sky with a large, light blue Earth moon, several red starburst patterns, and pinkish-purple waves. The entire scene is framed by a dark red border with small white stars and crescent moons.

LESBIAN LONELINESS

PEOPLE ARE SAYING EVERYWHERE
THAT IT IS TIME TO BE PROUD, NOW

THAT IT IS TIME TO BE LOUD

BUT I NEVER WAS, NOR HAVE I WANTED TO BE



I WAS ALWAYS SCARED,

AND TIRED OF IT ALL.

CONFUSED ABOUT WHAT IT MEANS

TO BE EXISTING AT THE MARGINS.

FOR MY LOVE BLOOMS BEHIND CLOSED DOORS,



IT IS IN THE INTIMATE, HIDDEN MOMENTS

AND THE ARMS OF CARING FRIENDSHIPS,

BETWEEN WHISPERS AND SIGHS

THAT I FIND THE STRENGTH TO CONTINUE

WALKING THIS SOMETIMES LONELY PATH.

AUDE NASR

All The Selves We Build

It is almost my turn to step up to the counter. The security guard's gaze searches my appearance,

travelling from my shoes up my body before gesturing for me to take my cap off. Sibahle obliges and

steps forward, aware that their role is to commit to their assigned identity at birth. Any deviations

or glimpses of Serpent could contribute to a tedious identity verification process.

"Name? Sibahle Daniel

Date of birth? October 31

Sex?

Sex? Female"

These processes of verification make me acutely aware of the incongruence between the way I

embody gender and how others perceive my expression. The reflection in the mirror morphs Sibahle

and Serpent - past self and present self, traumatised self and ideal self, bureaucratic self and

intimate self - onto one face, dizzying perceptions of binary gender and affirming my multiplicity.

Sibahle and Serpent are partners in performance. It is only when my body encounters bureaucratic

or community-enforced policing that a separation occurs.

SIBAHLE: Bureaucratic Self

The name Sibahle, meaning we are beautiful in isiXhosa, was a gift from my grandmother to uplift

my birth as a marker of collective beauty. Self here is built on the success rate of my performance as

a cis, straight, non-offensive, law-abiding black South African woman. Sibahle, as bureaucratic self,

came alive at the age of fifteen during my first time travelling by plane. Gender and sex had been so

deeply naturalized on my body as female that when the immigration officer in Accra - a white man

holding a stamp in his right hand and a gun in the left - questioned my hesitation regarding sex, I

feared the sense of power and vulnerability I felt in being perceived as a spectacle. My embodiment

of my blackness and transness were part of my commitment to imagining otherwise (Olufemi 2020),

where the otherwise is an "imaginative, generative site of defiance" and propagates our freer imagined selves for growth. Having that otherwise(ness) scrutinised through attempts of verifying

what I was not made me feel like a spectacle. Serpent crumbled into the disguise of Sibahle as a cis,

straight, law-abiding black South African woman.

SERPENT: Intimate Self

A friend of mine read me a snake medicine card after I introduced myself as Serpent for the first

time. "Snakes possess conviction and symbolise transmutation. I see that in you." Conviction.

Transmutation. I would not possess either of those if it weren't for the persistence and preservation

of black trans life. Self here is not individual but it is informed by the spheres of safer communion

cultivated by chosen family and queer community organisers. Serpent insists on existing on the

dancefloor among peers as we twerk and twirl in corsets and leather pants. They thrive during

moments of pleasure, where their body is not a site of speculation. Serpent adopts the archive and

present lived experiences of black trans and non-binary individuals in South Africa as an alternative

identity document. In a letter addressed to Zanele Muholi, Mussai (2020) uplifts Muholi's

contribution to enriching the black queer archive as aspiration and elixir, silently provoking the world

to witness black South African trans and queer insistence. Witnessing, as a way of

experiencing/looking/seeing in South Africa, fails to be a neutral act. In *The Queer Spectacular*,

Jansen (2020) writes how the feeling of apartheid, as a vision never acknowledges black trans and

queer South Africans as national history. To witness black South African trans life insist on thriving

transforms the limits of history, making the future now. *Serpent* practices the future now and I love

that for them.

"Do you think God lives in Heaven because He, too, lives in fear of what He's created here on Earth?"

Spy Kids 2: The Island of Lost Dreams



It's time to get outside
and have some fun.

DEAR MY [REDACTED] FAMILY,

THANK YOU FOR HAVING ME
AND MY FRIEND DOROTHY AT
THE BEACH HOUSE THIS PAST
WEEKEND.

I'VE BEEN THINKING ABOUT OUR
TIME TOGETHER AND HAVE
DECIDED TO DOUBLE DOG DARE
YOU TO SOLVE SOME PUZZLES I
MADE FOR Y'ALL . . .

YOUR ONLY CHILD,
CELINE

patagonia



spot the difference

besties or lovers EDITION (p.s. it's both!)



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