

EDITORIAL CONTRIBUTION AND
COLLABORATION

The Oranges Of The Sunrise

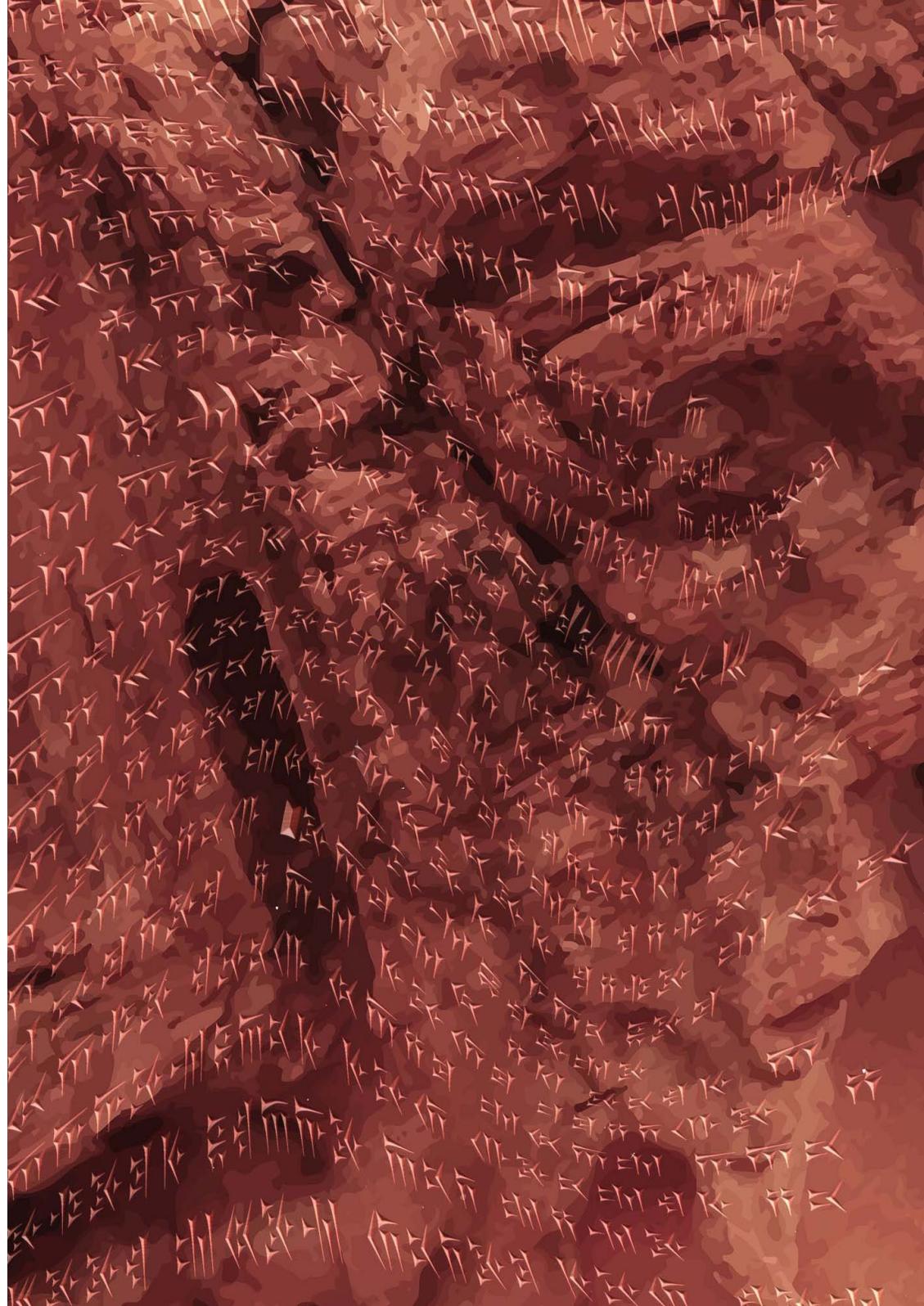
text by Alberta Romano and Nicole Colombo

drawings by Nicole Colombo

MARS is an editorial project by Media Naranja in collaboration with the artist Jean-Marie Le Basq. The project starts from “Mars” the 25th number of a collection called “Petite Planète” by Chris Marker. This book, which has never been published, only appeared in Alain Resnais’ 1956 documentary called: “Toute la mémoire du monde” (“The whole world’s memory”). Media Naranja and Jean-Marie Le Basq invited me and Alberta as contributors in order to conceive an imaginary chapter of this unpublished book.

Our text “The oranges of the Sunrise” is an imaginary old myth from Mars starring Seera, Camilla and Octavio, as its main characters.

This short story is a part of an ongoing project in which I developed Seera, a fictional and undefined character, that each time becomes an opportunity to investigate the potentiality of narration.



The Oranges of The Sunrise

One of the most popular myths from Mars is the one about the oranges of the sunrise.

Once upon a time, when Mars and Earth were still peacefully in contact, there was a girl named Camilla. She was the daughter of one of the most influential emissaries between Earth and Mars. Her mother, Olimpia Sol, was indeed the first human democratically elected by Martians to be their legal representative with Earth. When her mother won the election, Camilla was studying at the University in Italy and there was no way of getting her to move to Mars with her family.

It was around 2220, Earth's time, and Camilla was studying Engineering in Rome. She was a thoughtful person, even too much for her age, she deeply enjoyed being with her friends but at the same time she was a loner at heart. When her parents left Camilla had to quickly learn how to live alone: the exact alignment of the two planets, which was necessary to activate the communications between Camilla and her parents, only occurred once every 2 months, precisely on the second day of the month, between 4 am and 6 am (Earth's time). For Camilla waiting for that moment became a sort of ritual. She wasn't an early bird, but getting ready for that special meeting made her feel deeply excited and happy as a child. She woke up 30 minutes before each meeting to prepare a nice framing for her parents, trying to place every device in a pleasant way around her. She liked to include in the frame the orange tree that had been peeping out from her window since she was a child. That tree was a gift from some great-grandfather she never met and it still had luxurious branches and juicy oranges. It had always made her feel satisfied, without needing permission from anyone. It was a fleeting sensation that could hardly be remembered except when she was near that tree.

The First Meeting

The myth said that during one of those early morning chats Camilla heard a feeble voice coming from the tree. While she was talking with Olimpia Sol and Berto (that was her father's name) she pretended not to hear it, but when she closed her hands to end the communication with them, she suspiciously started to look at the tree. The voice was extremely weak and simultaneously very reliable. Camilla stuck her head out of the window to better understand where this voice was coming from. Her head was surrounded by leaves and oranges when suddenly she saw something.

Seera: Hi Camilla, my name is Seera. You can finally hear me ... My voice has been whispering in your ears since you were born. Don't you think you know me?

Camilla was petrified. The thing, or better the presence that was talking to her was floating through the leaves. She could easily recognize a face made of branches, leaves and oranges. It was changing constantly, following the wind, sometimes using oranges as they were eyes, sometimes giving the branches the shape of thick hair. The leaves were also changing according to the modulation of that voice, arching their midribs depending on the intensity of the words. Camilla had never seen anything so strange and so fascinating at the same time. She could barely breathe in front of that enchantment, but without even realizing it she mumbled something:

Camilla: Who... who are you?
Seera: I am everything and nothing, incomprehensible to most but reassuring and kind. I feel the story

slip on me. This tree has been my home for many centuries, have you seen these beautiful oranges?

Camilla was astonished. Again.

Seera: You know Camilla, dreams are images wrapped in the wind, they disappear quickly, but they leave behind a powerful trail, an imprint, a furrow within our memory. I was a confidant, a lover, a friend, a sister, sometimes a sorceress for many of your forefathers, listen carefully and you will realize that millions of different spirits live around you; they live the universe, they can perceive the complete drawing. Earth is only a border, I am your bridge. I have long hair that can accompany you gently in every place and time, feel them under you, let yourself be carried away.

A strong gust of wind blew away some leaves that were composing Seera's hair. Camilla followed their whirling dance with her eyes and when she turned around to listen to the spirit's voice, there were just leaves and branches, nothing more. Camilla let out a nervous laugh. She had never experienced anything like that in her life.

Octavio

Camilla: "We should talk, immediately!"

Camilla whispered to Octavio as she grabbed his arm in the courtyard of the school. Octavio was her best friend since forever, he was her confidant, her brother, he became everything to her after her parents moved to Mars.

Octavio: So you are telling me that you saw a talking tree?
Camilla: I swear she, he...was talking to me. She, oh fuck, I don't know if it's a she or a he... no, wait, actually I heard a name, it was Seera... it sounds feminine, doesn't it?
So SHE told me something about my forefathers...it was like she knew me, my family... everybody! Look, she was there - Camilla pointed at the tree - and she was made of leaves and branches, she was floating there, I swear!

Camilla and Octavio spent all the afternoon talking about Seera and trying to call her back. To make sure she would not forget her, Camilla represented Seera's face on a screen. That was the only evidence left of her. Days passed, between doubts and research at the Tiberino Archive but no clue, nothing. Camilla started to change her habits, she preferred to study at home in order to never lose sight of her tree. Everyday Octavio was with her.

The Second Meeting

June came and it was already the moment to speak with her parents. She woke up just a few minutes before their appointment, she calibrated the intensity and the opacity of her room and started the call.

Camilla: Hi Mummy, hi daddy!!!
Olimpia Sol: Honey, how are you? You look beautiful, look at that hair, it's so long!
Berto : Hello Pizzi!

Camilla: Hello daddy, yes it's growing fast, and you look so elegant, where are you coming from?
Olimpia Sol: We went to a dinner for the opening of an archeological site...they are investing a lot on it and making many discoveries there, you would like it, honey!
Seera: Hi Camilla, I am Seera.
Camilla: WHAAAT?
Olimpia Sol: Hey honey, what is going on?
Camilla: O my goodness! No, nothing mum... Sorry, I'm really, really sorry but I forgot that I have an exam today and... I had completely forgotten about it... sorry, but I have to close the communication, have a Good night!
Olimpia Sol: Are you kidding me Camilla? CAMILLA???

Camilla closed the communication with her hand and she whirled around immediately to look out to the window. Seera was there.

Seera: "Hey Camilla, how are you?"

Camilla gave the hint of a frightened smile.

Seera: "I don't know if you've noticed, but I can talk to you exactly on the same days your parents can; I would never steal time from you but it is the only moment of astral contingency in which I can slip between planets. But I swear you will soon have the time to speak with them."
Camilla: "Don't worry, Seera. I was looking forward to your return."
Seera: "Great! I am going to tell you a story about an ancient Martian ritual and then I will ask for your help. Are you ready for this, Camilla?"
Camilla: "mm...yes, I think so..."
Seera: "Once upon a time, on this exact moment of the day a very important ritual used to happen on Mars. This orange tree, that at the time was surrounded by hot thermal water, lit up with the color of dawn. Golden oranges used to grow on it and their juice guaranteed complete recovery from all evil. The ancients used to mix the juice with thermal water and the whole country was invited to dive in it."
Camilla: "Are you talking about the same tree that is growing in my garden?"
Seera: "Yes, Camilla, exactly! Among my infinite aspects there is also one in which I represent an ancient spirit, the spirit of the orange tree. This tree has been moved to Earth to keep it safe during the first Martian war but now we need to bring his juice back to Mars and only you can help us to do it. The juice is necessary to obtain a serum that could save billions of souls. It is about restoring a higher level of psychological, emotional, spiritual and physical well-being, as it was many years ago. Martians are slowly losing their way, forgetting the importance of apparently unproductive feelings, emotions, and moods that are essential to live in harmony. And you are the one who can repair this loss. What you need to do is pretty simple. You just need to take with you as many oranges as you can and bring them to Mars before the sun reaches its peak."
Camilla: "Wait, wait... how can I reach Mars with all these oranges? And by the way how can I reach Mars at all? I'm sorry, Seera, but I'm not sure I understood exactly what we're talking about..."
Seera: "Dear Camilla, take a deep breath. I understand your confusion. As I told you the first time we met, I am your bridge, so you won't need spaceships or astral passages to reach Mars. I will be your transport, I will be your guide. Listen to me, inside the Central Martian Baths there are some hieroglyphics carved on the walls. Nowadays not even a single inhabitant of Mars can remember their meaning but what they represent is the instruction of the Orange of the Sunrise's Ceremony. Today there is an extreme need to rediscover the values of this ceremony. From this orange juice we can obtain several other drinks aimed at the physical and mental well-being of every inhabitant. I've been hiding the existence of this ritual for years, finally the time has come and you are the one who will have to handle it. Are you ready for it Camilla?"

Seera moved elegantly like a dancer, touched by the small drops on the leaves. The atmosphere was surreal but calm and sweet at the same time. Camilla wished that this feeling would never end but she also felt that time was running out.

Camilla: "I'm ready."
Seera: "We have so little time, you will have to do your best."

Camilla ran back into the garden and retrieved the largest cloth bag she had available, and started picking oranges till she felt her arms weary. The sun was about to reach its peak and Seera appeared again...

Seera: "Are you ready Camilla? Do you trust me?"
Camilla: "Wait a second, what about my friends here? My school? Octavio? Will I be able to come back if I come with you now?"
Seera: "I'll be your bridge Camilla and, remember, a bridge made of trust never falls."
Camilla: "Ok, I am ready."

She went close to the tree and one of the flowing branches wrapped itself around her body. Camilla vanished into a single, dry stroke of golden light. The sun was finally rising above Earth.

On Mars

Without even realizing it Camilla was on Mars. She arrived directly in front of a huge carved marble wall. It looked like the interior part of a temple, white, bright and smooth. She had the impression that each word she could have said would gently glide over the curves of this wall. Only after a while did she realize that she was still clinging to the bags full of oranges. With a timid voice she called Seera. She was already behind her, taking the shape of a huge and illuminated hieroglyphic.

Seera: "Welcome to our temple Camilla, welcome to Mars. There is only one thing to do now. Just open your arms, let the oranges fluctuate and enjoy their dance. The Ancient fountain will start to flow again and all the inhabitants will come attracted by this sound of plenitude. Have you ever heard it Camilla? It sounds like the echo of your best childhood memories, it sounds like joy and familiarity together. This sound is different for each one who hears it, you'll recognize it, for sure. Then, when the inhabitants will drink the juice, they will rediscover the value of the time spent without thinking in order to think better. Believe me, the quietness flowing in their daily life will increase the quality of what they make and think, giving them all the opportunity to redefine their responsibility towards themselves. They will sleep, work, create and talk following their personal needs and times and not the ones imposed by the society they live in. It may sound complicated, but the meaning of satisfaction will change with time and being satisfied will slowly become synonym of being alive.

According to the legend, the famous Martian quietness was originated from the rediscovery of this ritual, which allowed Mars to be the most peaceful place in the whole universe and his inhabitants the most confident life forms that ever existed.

The sun was about to rise completely and the morning frost shone under the soft golden rays.



Imagine Celine

Imagine Celine is an editorial contribution for **Takecare #2** with Marija Bozinovska Jones, Christina Gigliotti and Jacopo Miliani curated by Roberta Mansueto.



Cammino pericolosamente vicina al bordo in pietra della piscina, la superficie porosa ha un non so ch  di caldo e familiare. Non ho paura, sono nel mio elemento, nella mia situazione, nella mia pausa dal mondo.

L'acqua sembra essere coperta da una lamina d'oro.

Le gocce d'acqua sul mio corpo creano come una seconda pelle formata unicamente da piccoli punti di luce, cos  brillanti...il mio sguardo si perde istintivamente in un correre e rincorrersi di riflessi.

Sono alla disperata ricerca di quella scarica elettrica leggera, che parte dalle sinapsi fino ad arrivare alla punta degli alluci. Invasive, sfacciatamente irriverente, l'idealizzazione di uno stato di quiete momentaneo e fugace e per questo cos  attraente.

Sta diventando tardi,   sempre tardi, merda. Questa potrei tranquillamente definirla la costante della mia vita. Me ne fotto. Oggi voglio prendermi cura di me.

Immaginari sintetici, forse frutto solo della mia immaginazione o probabilmente nemmeno della mia, forse non   di questo che ho bisogno, forse sto usufruendo di un pacchetto relax in una Spa per una sola persona regalatomi da una lontana zia che non ha avuto la forza di godersi un momento solo per lei. E se invece avessi bisogno di altro?

Immagino Celine che danza sugli umori di tutti gli uomini e le donne della citt , la immagino cos  sicura del suo sincero benessere che a confronto qualsiasi luce diventa fioca, scarica. Immagino i volti attorniti di chi riesce fuggacemente a percepirla e i volti severi di chi, invece, non stacca mai un piede da terra.

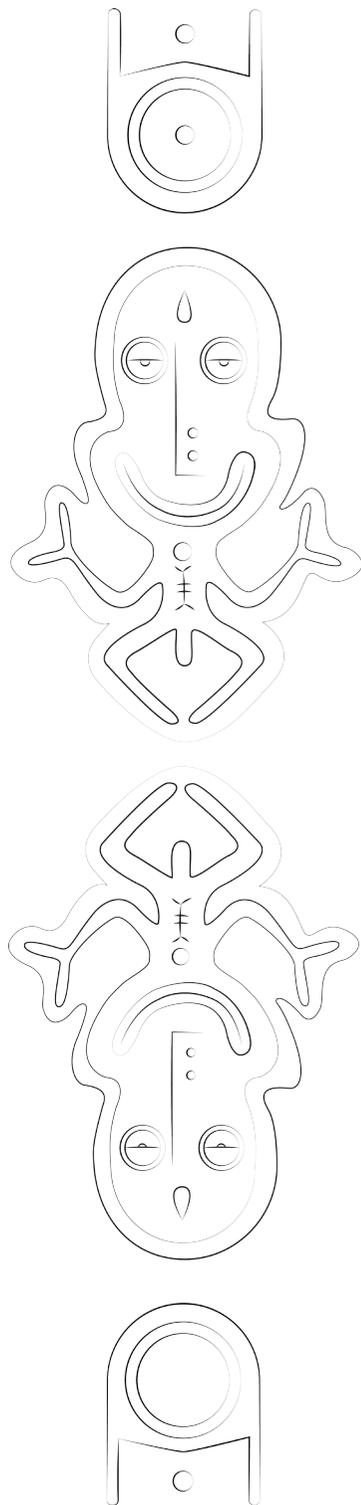
E di nuovo l'acqua dorata.

Liquido amniotico, una membrana sottile ma resistente, viscida e sensuale.

Un profumo di frutta fresca e paraffina si diffonde nell'aria come ricordo di una terra lontana; un fumo denso, dolce, invadente.

Acqua calda, e di nuovo quella sensazione cos  estremamente rassicurante.

Un calice antico, raffinatamente decorato, colmo di ambrosia.



I am walking on the edge of the swimming pool. Dangerously close to the edge. The porous surface has something warm and familiar... I don't really know.

I am not scared: it's my element, my situation, my pause from the outside world.

The water looks like it's covered in golden foil.

The water drops on my body are a second skin made of tiny, shiny light spots... my eye gets lost instinctively in a game of glares running back and forth.

I am desperately looking for that light electric shock that runs from the synapsis to the tip of the toes. Invasive and insolent: it's the idealization of a calm moment - as quick as attractive.

It's getting late, shit it's always late. I could definitely point this as my life's thing.

I don't give a fuck. Today I want to take care of myself.

Synthetic scenarios - maybe it's all just in my mind. Maybe it's not even my mind. Maybe it's not even what I need. Maybe I am just benefiting from a one-person relaxing vacay in a Spa, something gifted by a distant aunt who never had the strength for enjoying a good moment for herself.

What if I needed something else?

I imagine Celine dancing onto the moods of all the men and women in the city. I figure she's so sure of her own honest well-being that all of the lights become feeble if compared to her.

I see the astonished faces of those who are able to quickly see her and the severe ones of those whose feet never leave the ground.

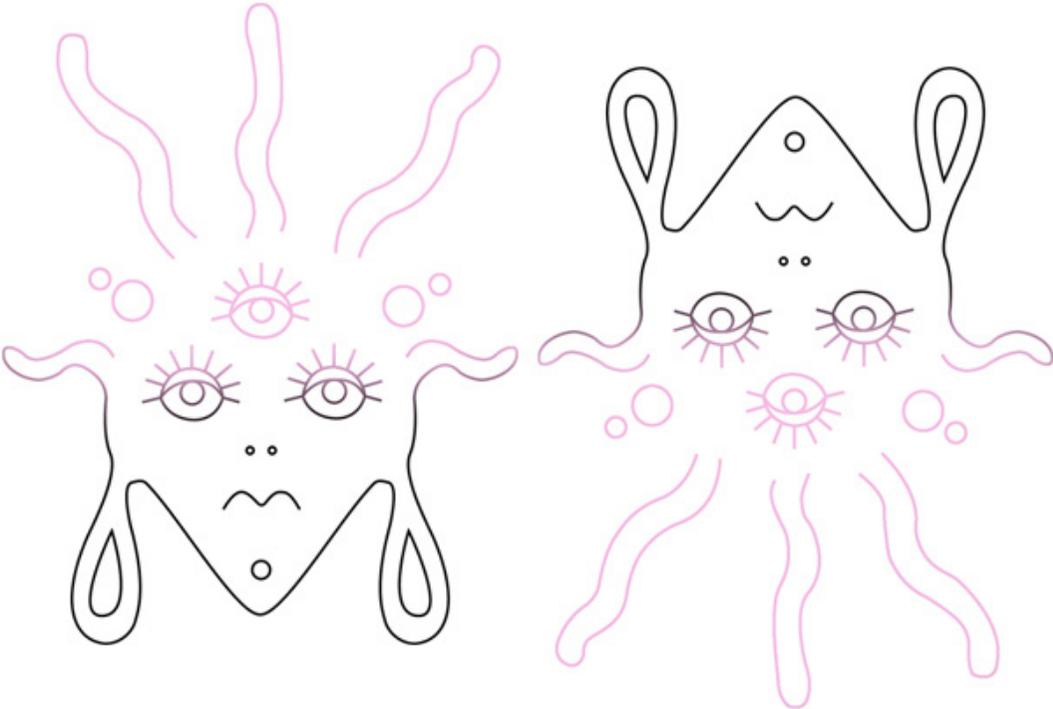
Again: golden water.

Amniotic fluid. A thin but strong layer, slippery and sexy.

The smell of fresh fruit and paraffin wax fills the air as the thought of a far away land; the smoke is dense, sweet, invasive.

Warm water, and again that extremely reassuring feeling.

An ancient finely crafted cup, full of ambrosia.



Seera

is a text contribution for *The Boys and Kifer's* first album named *Where is The Boys and Kifer*, a sound based project founded by Roberto Casti.

<https://theboysandkifer.bandcamp.com/album/where-is-the-boys-and-kifer>

Seera

C'era una volta una storia, e poi c'erano una volta gli uomini. La storia è sempre una e un miliardo, tutto oscilla tra una sfumatura e l'altra. Alla base di ogni animo umano esiste sempre qualcosa di primitivo, primordiale, qualcosa che volente o nolente ci accomuna tutti, una pulsazione presente. Seera.

Sembrava una città come le altre da lontano, una periferia con abitazioni più basse e giardini più grandi e un centro con palazzi più alti e strade affollate.

Era stato facile arrivare fin qui, quasi troppo, ma non avevo nessuna intenzione di cominciare a riempirmi la testa di paranoie che sapevo non sarei stata in grado di tenere a bada. Avevo bisogno di vederla, Seera, doveva aiutarmi.

Sapevo dove trovarla, lei è sempre dove tu ti aspetti che sia; esiste solo all'intero di una rete di simbologie, credenze e luoghi comuni in cui il suo simbolo costituisce un dato di fatto reale, un piede ancorato nel mondo dei vivi. Seera è stata definita in molti modi, sacerdotessa, strega, veggente, medium; e nonostante tutti questi nomi indichino doti e personalità differenti, lei riesce ad essere un po' di tutto quanto. Ha passato le ere e ha sentito la storia scivolare su di sé, ha la capacità di vedere "il disegno completo" e cerca di sopperire al dolore dell'uomo in un modo o nell'altro. La forza di cui si nutre è senza tempo, ha mutato forma svariate volte nel corso della storia per potersi adattare ad esigenze differenti. Lei è qualcosa di incomprensibile ed inaccessibile ma allo stesso tempo rassicurante e gentile. Seera, chiunque tu voglia che sia, ogni volta un modello perfettamente strutturato su misura per te. Per me è sempre stata l'amica su cui puoi contare, un personaggio difficile da strutturare ma Seera ci è riuscita. Lei vive nel nostro continuo tentativo di condivisione, nel nostro "metterci nei panni dell'altro", nel nostro cercare noi stessi nell'abisso di chi abbiamo di fronte.

Ho bisogno di concentrarmi, devo sedermi un attimo o non riuscirò a sentirla. Tento di ampliare i sensi e di diventare ricettiva, ogni sensazione forte o debole non deve sfuggirmi o lei svanirà tra i pensieri di qualcun altro. Chiudo gli occhi, ruoto leggermente la testa la vedo. Bella ed elegante come sempre, scende rapidamente i gradini. Circondata da questi veli danzanti che la coprono solo parzialmente, man mano che si avvicina a me muta forma e dimensione, stato d'animo e colore della pelle; solo gli occhi

non cambiano, solo quelli rimangono del colore del ghiaccio: vivi, arroganti, sensuali. "Mi querida!" esclama felice ed io riesco solo a dire "No, non chiamarmi tesoro."

Entro in casa, tutto è esattamente dove mi ricordavo. Prendo possesso della mia poltrona preferita, quella con i braccioli larghi, così posso appoggiarci comodamente il posacenere. Seera senza nemmeno chiedere mi lascia sola qualche minuto per poi tornare con quella che per me ha la valenza dell'ambrosia. Tutto ha le sembianze di un rito: prima la cocchina in argilla, finemente decorata ma primitiva; poi il filtro in ceramica (ognuno per ogni tipologia) che racchiude in sé i ricordi di mille viaggi prima di questo; la cartina in canapa che mostra ancora tutte le venature della foglia. Ogni oggetto diventa protagonista unicamente durante il suo turno, come un'orchestra che ha bisogno di singolarità per poter comporre un canzone corale, tutte le componenti danzano all'unisono per regalarmi una boccata di irrealtà.

Seera si accomoda accanto a me. "Come posso aiutarti?" mi chiede. Io rimango in silenzio per un po', nella mia testa una serie di risposte possibili iniziano a prendere forma ma nessuna sembra essere quella giusta. Prendo un'altra boccata di irrealtà, chiudo gli occhi e le dico "Seera credo di non avere bisogno di aiuto, forse volevo solo vederti, sapere che esistevi, sapere che potevo guardare dentro di te e ritrovare me". Chiudo gli occhi di nuovo.

Mi faccio inebriare da quella calda sensazione, parte da un respiro e arriva fino alle estremità del corpo, lentamente, al passo con la mente e i pensieri. Mi lascio andare perché ormai sono sicura che lei c'è e ci sarà, sempre. Quando li riapro lei non c'è più e io mi ritrovo nuovamente in cima a quella collina, dove da lontano la città sembra normale, una come tante.





Two sticker made for The Boys and Kifer's first album