

Carias: Is a Dangerous Thing

**IS A
DANGEROUS
THING**

**BY
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**THE MILTON KESSLER MEMORIAL
PRIZE IN POETRY**

I watched the street burn that night
signs for whitesonly come down
swastikas and militia march in its stead I saw
Selma girls in poodle skirts and Malcolm X glasses
Ferguson mothers fists tshirts black & white
I raised hands with the others unarmed I cried
Fat boys choked from asthma selling cigarettes boots
to their throats spit to their dignity
smokegrey hoodies guns and I only wanted

to march in red sequined high heel shoes
dance & forget we was going nowhere
paint stars along the river
where the bend melts into the place we said we'd get to
I watched gold and blue divide I said sister we have to fix this
I see men knuckles and fast trigger fingers I see fear
we need menstrual cycles to calm this down mother's milk
to succor hot pepper hips bang off steam

I watched my church burn that night
what do you mean I shall say grey
what do you mean I will look like the others

I am crimson for a reason loveme hateme see
me I am ruby I love to dance and live for foolish holidays with hearts
I hurt when I am cut when I bear a baby boy I like music that is loud
drum beats that vibrate inside my I like a maitai on the beach
different rums & a cherry I shouldn't eat I won't choke on cinders they

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gets in your hair and nostrils I should be sweet there
is a prince somewhere slippers somesay glass somesay sanguine
dancing with or without me I want to savor scarlet violin strings
Rothko swath broad strokes until the canvas holds the sunset sailing on
a saipan not splayed on concrete cheek-to-sidewalk grey not
starhandprints on Grauman's Chinese Theatre marking where I gotten to
how many black hands

women not known

for their beauty they say shedevil say Norma Desmond old
sultry clinging onceuponatime beating
bosom native son you warned hold onto our rhythm holdon to
our yellow eyes and grape lips be loud mammy be hot dance until
the babies grewed a garden full of fallen apples put
down your hands do not surrender say baby steps knees bloodied from

crawling say I watch my city burn tonight I will keep marching sing
and paint and procreate I am spinning until the country holds still I am
clicking my heels say take me home I am drowning Toto rock I am
tree river I am not waking I see fires pirouettes toeshoes so I can
rest gazelles glancing on water I beg you cut off my feet