

GRIEF: A TRIPTYCH

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1

My friend brought me flowers which stand now
in ferocious bloom. Lilies speak more than
the language of loss
to me, with my heart that is water and stone,
I hear my father's voice whispering my childhood name

Each moment, spoken, an echo, a time

I tell myself today is the day
I won't miss him
But still I wait
nestled in the comfort of his lap
as he wrote and wrote
and staccato sounds translated to
words like pebbles

the Stargazer lilies in my vase stain
the earth in pollen
in turmeric and gold
and petals which promise thorns

2

Grief sits in my belly like a
tight little ball that
needs to be kicked
around now and then. I can keep it
in until the sound of running water
or the feel of ferns rustling my fingers
pulls it out

I wish love, or even grief,
came with easier answers

That afternoon as I wept
quietly on the creek side grass, a young man
with gentle eyes hunched down beside me.
Hey, man, he asked, hey, are you okay?

His hair was a black halo against the sky and the red
of his bandanna didn't hide the
the ink on his skin or
the ink of his skin

I'm not, I said. And I couldn't say
more because how do I explain that it's not
just me, not just mine, but the world that has
been cracked open and remains unhealed
How do I blink away the blood on the streets

He touched my ankle and said, Stay cool, man,
and he loped off by himself and for months I
recalled how rough was his palm, how calloused,
And I wondered what his hands had carried, what
weight, what love, to scrape away the tender so

NADIYA

Nadiya: Grief: A Triptych

Grief is a pomelo, hanging
heavy and bright amid the green
of my leaves, burning in summer.
The flesh—just this side of bitter, and that
side of red.

3

Memory is a tainted door.

What if one day our pasts held / more than desire?
What if one day our words turned / silence to love?

This immersion carries you. Carries you across

Paths you had never known and paths where

Glass shards line each step and welcome you:

Old friend, where did you go?

Old friend, did you even know that your sense of self

Was a carousel, spinning and spinning and spinning

And spinning until here we are, on solid ground, but no one can know

Still spinning and spinning and spinning

There are days when my body
is a drop of water
waiting:

to shatter is to be saved