

ARSIMMER McCoy

Arsimmer McCoy is a 34-year-old poet, storyteller, & Speaker, and the mother to a righteous 10-year old girl child. Born in Baptist Hospital, raised in Richmond Heights, FL Arsimmer earned her Bachelor's degree of Arts and literature at the historic Florida Memorial University. Arsimmer gives thanks, for being able to produce work in the form of poetry, short story literature, performance workshops, and creative direction, for over twelve years. McCoy resides in Miami Gardens, FL which she will still refer to until the day she dies, as Carol City.

Down By The Riverside

"Gonna lay down my burden Down by the riverside Gonna lay down my burden
Down by the riverside I ain't gonna study war no more Study war no more
Ain't gonna study war no more"- Negro Spiritual

Gather your grit.
Remember your training.
Stand steady on the balls of your
feet,
then wait.
This is the moment.
We have rivaled with these interlopers
for centuries.
It comes to an end now.
We've agreed to meet
at the water's edge.
Bring The women in to perform the ritual.
Rub bergamot on the daughter's temples.
Ground Geraniums into our
son's hands.
Rub the legs and arms down with lemongrass.
Place lavender flowers and eucalyptus into the hair.

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Push nickels into the navels of the children.

After the death of our sweet King
the elders say we lost our audacity,
and replace it with reasoning.
Say we were wandering aimlessly.
Forgetting our training.

They took our babies and hung
them from trees for trophies.
Drugged us and left our girls
Sputtering to ghosts on the streets.
Split open our veins and let them
leak.

Just to see how we bleed.

And they saw magic,
Stardust and unknown planets;
Enchantment.

Since then, they have been seeking to end us.
Our survival means their demise.
Now is the time.

Remember your training.

When your mother took you
out to look at the stars and
told you to follow the gourd.
When the pipes froze in the walls,
your uncle wrapped you in sheepskin,
rubbed your dried skin with petroleum,
and told you how he survived the dust bowl;
The black smoke.

Like his grand pap survived the ship bowels,
rollin round in puke and shit.
Threw our Kuba overskirts overboard;
The goats blood from the rite of passage
Hadn't even dried yet on our flesh.
We join hands at the ocean
to call on them.

When yemoja troubled the watwers
she heaved and pushed.
Murky Tsunamis drew back and rolled.
There was an eclipse of that same black smoke.
Iridescent ravens flew from her,
spread their wings, and
kicked up red dust.

When the current comes,
it will take us first.
We the children of Yemoja,
fish children.
When you put your hands
on us,

to drown us,
we bob right back up to the surface,
with hoarse laughter.
We been breathing underwater.
We been wading through rivers.
And this land was all river once before
and it will be
a river again.

Our ancestors sit on the bottom
of the ocean floor waiting.
When the tide washes up
Its them whispering,
Remember your training.

When you separate a people,
destroy their culture,
take their language,
and never atone for it,
and they still find a way to come together,
it is dangerous.

So I say remember Stono,
remember the German Coast,
Chekika and the seminoles.
Remember Turner
Amistad
And the Gold coast warriors.
Soldiers who never forgot who they were.
Slaughtered their captures
and sang to the sun
with nooses on their necks
At the public execution in New York.

It began in the water.
It will end in the sea

Fish children,
Remember your training.
Remember your training.

Now take to the water
and let peace be still.

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