



FRANCINE ELENA

ON OVID'S METAMORPHOSES

MINERVA / SERIES I: MATERIALS

SCYLLA

PERSEPHONE

NARCISSUS & ECHO

TIRESIAS



Scylla

I know she dosed me. A similar name to my own, like *Saoirse circle seashell searching*.
Older with veined, hitchhiker arms, batik pants, matted hair, a kind of amulet against
the bones of her chest.

My final night at that beach she bought me a piña colada, called all men pigs,
threw her tarot pack across the bamboo tables, agitating small clusters of travellers like
mosquitos near DEET.

Her man approached me, same as before. Fish noodle breath and scaly hands.
I ran to the cool sand and swam in my shorts like the Thai girls who had told me of
box jellyfish.

A nauseous disturbance near my body, turbulent sea water. Foaming teeth
of thick dogs rising, *presa canarios*, I saw their co-joined brutality. A barking part of me,
my own terrifying brain.

Persephone

Now I've moved to his apartment it's a new kind of slow. Just me and the dog during the daytime. I wear his black t-shirts like dresses, waiting for my Dead Sea mask to dry. All the walls are magenta. At six o'clock he comes home with hot silver cartons and blasts Slayer and tells me to eat.

This is my first time living as an adult. He wants my name in a swirling font on his shoulder. I am drawing a skull for him. I brush his hair in the morning, it's the same length as mine. He showed me the horns sign.

Yesterday there were six missed calls from my mother. I rearranged his guitars. He was late back, so I stepped outside alone, watching for his car in the dark. There were daffodils in buckets by the underground. Maybe 100. At the corner shop floodlit fruit and vegetables were overflowing on their artificial grass.

I took something like a punch-coloured hockey ball. I tried to open it there, without paying. I was digging my nails in, stripping off the tough white skin, picking out six translucent seeds. That was when I felt like I was a new girl.

narcissus & echo

i can't remember when she started / bc i am like ryan gosling in the notebook or maybe river phoenix / i know she RTed my air jordans / my kale shake / my blue cheese & kobe beef / my head in the morning, the egyptian cotton ruffled & i'm squinting / infinite stars / hearts over & over / i am too busy to keep track / the one where a white puppy is looking good against my sweater / when there is a halo of light by the pool & i have a look like hey / that picture on the ice rink in my north face & ski hat / you'll be thinking that you want me / me in a mirror in a mirror in a mirror //

the girl was reposting every time / etc etc / the one where i am chilling by the fountain & the stone is the shape of a woman & glassy buildings are reflecting / everything / thumbs up always / & the ghost of the star / the ghost of the heart disappearing / her name escapes me / one time i checked her profile & it was a replica of mine / sometimes i think i am not that guy you see in the photos / you know? / i'm like two identical brothers staring each other out / a contest forever / twins but he is famous / twins but he is the beautiful one

Tiresias

A childhood watching war films made me dream in exaggerations. At school I wore a suit and eye pencil on my upper lip. As an adult I kept the city's World of Reptiles. I fed the anacondas and wished to turn over a new leaf.

I had heard of the House of Hera. A night-time runway for strays like me. The first ball I wore snakeskin with an awareness of breathing. Seven years I was my own creation in an expensive parade.

One night I rode in on a clamshell as a chainmail siren. Another, a hospital cart was wheeled, veiled in white gauze. Starting with one elongated leg I emerged as bearded Nefertiti in a gold body glaze.

I have a skyline of trophies, balanced on the hot tanks of my pet babies who intertwine below. I cannot see them. In year seven, my eyes began clothing themselves. Walking was not a question. My brogues will never wear-in.

I am in a velvet chair. A sensation of serpents around my forearms, hands. I cannot know your face or see if you know me, really. The sense or form of realness. Privately, I recall diamanté in those last days of light.

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