

Babinda Boulders, Two Parts

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Part One

Ugly metal rails and signs warning death
Crisscross across emerald green water pure as I've seen it
Powerful, weathered boulders
Rainbow with discoloration
Forest, green like I've never seen it
Fresh with moss and palms and vines hung down like garlands
Mother nature really outdid herself decorating this place

Then the white men came and erected their fences
Now tourists come in mobs like cattle
They push past me to get the best view from their enclosure
But I don't judge them
They're the same stuff as me

I stand to the side with my arms draped over the metal rail
My vision swirls
My arms meld into the boulders
Suddenly I'm timeless
I see the Earth cycle through its phases
Everything grows, decays
Humans here, then not
And water,
Life force
Rushes on through it all
I'm standing motionless at the rail

“Beautiful isn’t it?”

A tour guide asks me before launching into his spiel about the 20 odd deaths
recorded here at the hands of the current

I half-listen with no remorse

You live long enough,

You do this whole life thing enough times

You watch yourself go through all life’s stages

Starting out as the tourist

A new soul in a foreign land

Can’t help but follow along with everybody else

Ignorantly destroying and being destroyed

You cycle through the animal kingdom

Living in perpetual present as a bird or freshwater eel

You become the trees

The rocks

The whole pulsing landscape

Then return once again as a tourist

But different

You come back with a deep reverence for it all

To observe the harmonic order from within the matrix

And from behind the scenes, beyond the veil

And when you put it all together

You’re a piece of a piece of a piece of an Infinite Whole

A Whole watching you as you scream, kick, laugh, cry, dream, yearn,
and beg it to see you back

And one day
You take magic mushrooms in a sacred Aboriginal site
In a foreign land that doesn't seem so foreign
You turn off that paved path onto an off-shooting dirt trail
And it leads you to a quiet part of the stream
You see a fallen log
The tip of which looks like an outstretched arm pointing one long finger
On the opposite side of the bank you see a vine curling towards it
And you recognize this scene as a reference to Michelangelo's
"The Creation of Adam"
God reaching out,
Man reaching back

Tears well in your eyes and you smile in the knowing light
Finally realizing what you had yearned for
What you had speculated on the surface
And known deep within
But had yet to fully unearth
For all the time you've spent reaching out to the universe
Begging for signs
Begging to be seen
The universe too
Has been reaching out to you
Smiling back

Part Two: The Little Mermaid

I was drawn to the edge
Concentric circles spinning mid air
Landscape swirling
Ensconced in vines
I felt a yearning for the river
To return
Return?
Have I not always been...
I saw the harmonic grid bending
Forming a fish bowl
I was surrounded
Am I breathing air...
Or water?
My lips parted
“Calibrate me,” I whispered
Air seeped in through the pores on my skin
A sensation so automatic
Though I’d never felt it before
Breathing through the sides of my neck
Without effort
As if my body remembered
My feet
Pinned out to either side
Touching heels

Slices of memories flitting in and out like butterflies
The memories of my human life

Fading as they passed
29 years
I couldn't quite grasp...
29 years?
No that doesn't sound right...
But my parents
Are they even my parents?
Or were they planted...
Where did I really come from?
And is it time to return?

It's like that Twilight Zone episode where the mannequin comes to life
Living for one month as a human in the "real world"
When her time is up, she is lured up to the mysterious ninth floor of a department store
She then remembers her original form and loses her human sentience,
Becoming a mannequin once again

Am I just a goldfish popping up out of the eternal stream of consciousness?
To live a human life for a brief moment
Those 29 years went by in the blink of an eye
If they ever happened at all...
Were the memories of my humanity planted in my psyche?
Was my entire existence as a human woman just an elaborate, implanted story?
So I could play the part realistically
Even with a fish brain
And now the circle of life is calling me back in?
Am I a fish?!

Or a fish..person?

I sat at the edge
All this time, so cemented in thought
I had turned to stone
And behind me on the trail
People pointing and whispering
I gasped
I was her!
The poor little mermaid
Banished and dissolved into sea foam after failing to win the love of the prince
she saved from drowning
Now immortalized as a stone statue for them all to gawk at
Reduced to nothing but a cautionary tale

My mer-sisters begged me not to go
To stay with them in the watery underworld
Their spirits still murmuring, “poor stupid girl”
“Threw her life away for unrequited love”
And the prince?

Well there was no prince
I chased the human illusion of true love
Searched for it in every man I met
Then searched for it again in everyone else
I saw it in their shining eyes
Faces alight with laughter
Saw it in their hands clasping mine
Looking into my eyes to tell me what’s serious
And me
Observing, listening

Reflecting them, reflecting me
For every shard of their pain, their joy
I cut off a piece of myself
And gave myself away
Until I was so fragmented
I could pick up the pile and say
This is me
Pieces of everyone else
Broken and scattered and picked up and found
This is it, this is the whole

Oh my sisters, how can I explain?
This is me above water

The fish that consciously chose to take that first step onto land
Donning my human suit
Breathing Earthly air with human lungs
Calibrating...
The pores on my skin shriveling
Learning to breathe through mouth hole
Through nose
Like my face was trapped in an ill-fitting mask

I took that first step
And I kept on walking
Wincing all the way

The prince
It was never about him

He could have been anyone
He was anyone I ever loved
I could never give them my pain
This is me above water
A life of hope then triumph
Then sorrow then wisdom
Then death
Awakening once again
Breaking my long silence

And if I was the little mermaid before
I am the sea witch now
My parts both land and sea
And this time
I need no permission
This time
I am singing back