



For Audre

Author(s): Pat Parker

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FOR AUDRE

by Pat Parker

I.

*The Black Unicorn is restless
The Black Unicorn is unrelenting
The Black Unicorn is not free.*
The Black Unicorn

Who is this bitch?
I mean really
 who is this bitch?

She come bopping
into my life

BOLD!

I be sitting in my pad
minding my own business
she come waltzing in
a funnel of energy
fire questions at me
like some *60 Minutes*
reporter hot
after the bad guy.

Like where is she from?

I know literally

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how she got here.

Been hanging around
with East Bay dykes
and wants to know
where the Black women are

and
to them I am
the Black women.

Now this woman
sits in my house
reads
no devours
my words.

No comment.

Just
clicking and um-humming
then has the nerve
to say
I write good but
not enough.

*Push more
take the harder road.*

Who is this woman?

I know her for all
of an hour and a half
and she's talking at me
like my fifth-grade teacher.

*More discipline, Patricia.
Stretch yourself.*

I mean really!
this be one bold-ass bitch.

If that's not enough
she ends the visit
if that's what you call it

I'd call it an earthquake
shake everything that isn't
nailed down loose
watch it crumble and fall

she tells me to my face
as she goes out my door
"you need to get rid of
your lover—
she no help to you."

Who is this bitch?

II.

*I am woman
and not white.*

A Woman Speaks

You talk to me
like my mother
with your eyes

dark pieces of coal
pierce my words

dare me to be
untruthful

reach beneath the surface
tell you the part
that I hold back.

I have known you forever
been aware that you would come.

My muse sang of you—
watch the sky for
an ebony meteorite
that will pierce
into your darkness
illuminate your fears
hurl them at you
laughing.

*Are you quick
enough to survive?*

*Can I count on you
to be there?*

III.

*I am often afraid to this day, but even more so angry
at having to be afraid, of having to spend so much of
my energies, interrupting my work, simply upon fear
and worry.*

The Cancer Journals

After I read *The Cancer Journals*
I made love to you

touched your body—pressed
my hands deep into your flesh
and passed my warmth to you.

I kissed the space where
your right breast had been
ran my tongue over your body
to lick away your fear
to lick away my fear.

I felt jealous
wanted to be near you
and to hold you
and to sing you songs
to say I love you
you are not alone

then
I felt guilt

for all the unsent letters
for all the unwritten poems
for all the “dead air.”

IV

*Every woman I have ever loved has
left her print upon me.*

Zami: A New Spelling of My Name

"I was ready to give you up"

so much time passed
and no sense of you.

Sister, love

some things are not possible.
I carry you with me
talk with you
ask your opinion

you cannot give me up
I cannot give you up.

We are linked
in
our Blackness
our creativity
our queerness
our muses conspire.

I never promise

to write often
to call often
to be a presence

I promise

to love you
and call you

sister.