

*Tessa Theocharous*

## ARIADNE'S PROMISE

Cold milk-skinned coffee in the sink  
a slimy reminder, like your stains on my thighs.  
one more sloping surface to clean.

I mix a brew, chant like a temptress, we all fall down  
(when there are children to think of)  
I hack at my hair with a shard of glass, worn blunt by the sea's  
intervention  
and curse like a mad thing,  
wrench at the steering-wheel to miss a cat or a small dog.  
there is burnt fur and squealing under my grip.  
a steel bar to steer my herd. a rod to lead slaves out of the desert.

has a woman ever been cursed by the Messiah complex?  
have two breasts and one womanly brain ever tossed Christ onto her  
shoulders?  
I wonder about the thorns and the blood,  
squat in red dirt to examine my own god lines.

quick-sanding vodka down my throat like a born-again alcoholic,  
I feel my lips stumble through speech, a slur smacking my mouth.  
Defiant, I catch my mind, while men's ties droop in my lap, their  
coloured, carnival silk begging a noose's redemption

returning to that promise,  
don't be fooled by wifely breakfasts and soft nightly frills  
garnishing your fingers like sprigs of rosemary.  
heaving under female heart is knife heavy for the first back turn.  
lusting for the first cock to crow its betrayal.

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