

*We love what is familiar; familiar is safe and  
it is lovely,*

*sometimes because of its  
partic  
u l a r  
and recognizable violence.*

*We know its curves and its movements.*

*Our  
expectations are met. This is somehow more  
grounding than stepping into a lesser  
certainty.*

*I am so intimately acquainted with your  
violence,*

*I am not sure how to be comfortable or*

*be myself without it.*

I was awarded the challenge of starting ev  
erything anew. I studied your language, yo  
ur habits, your politics, your foods, your stre  
ets. I let go of the things that were integral to m  
y being; my language, my family, my frie  
nds, my food, in exchange for the new ident

ity of a foreigner. I am consistently inter  
rogating and reexamining myself to understand

d where I can carefully carve out a space with

in your landscape.



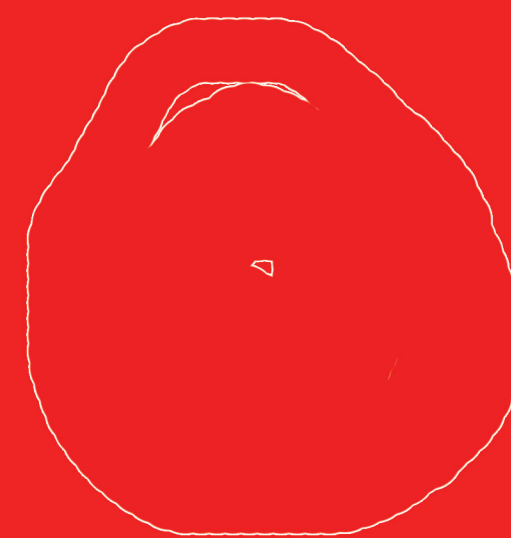


You love me so long as I am agreeable,  
so long as I erase my difference, so long  
as I hide your dependence on the op-  
pression of others. You love me so long  
as I am a reflection of your kindness,  
your generosity, your good intentions,  
your purity. You ask me to be  
grateful.



I am fluent in your mother tongue,  
so fluid  
and liquid, I  
can write  
poetry.

I have u n d o n e many, b  
ut our relation is a violence I cann  
ot unde. Our collapse is ingrained in the cir  
cuits of my mind, an obsession. If only y  
ou had the privilege to understand, our rela  
tion might not be one of harm. But you s  
eem so unwilling, so frightened, so rig  
id, so com fortable.



When I signed the agreement, I  
offered my consent for citizen  
ship. I agreed to uphold the values  
you preach. I agreed to be loyal. I  
agreed to contribute. I was agree  
able, and you saw an image of  
yourself through me. Why must  
you see yourself in everyone and  
everything? Our relation flexes  
out and in. It shifts to center you  
completely. You use it to complete  
yourself; you place me in complete  
proximity.





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