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Carnal Knowledge

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Carnal Knowledge (for Vincent)

I knew that you were a dangerous man
when I encountered the three-headed dog
who guarded your blue-eyed soul.
I fed him a poem and he let me pass.

Now, I know that you are a man full of desert places
places where the wind howls at an empty sky
places where the only sound is the hungry rumble
of the earth's belly.

And I have learned that you are a man full of thick forests
where trees have fallen without sound
for there was no one.

And I have discovered places in you
that I could only reach
barefoot and walking upon shards of glass.
Places of oceans that threatened
to sweep me away like driftwood.

And I found within you places of tears and shadows
filled with the sound of a small boy lost
a brave, sad boy who sat too long in darkness.
I kissed him and he stood up a man:
a man full of roses and moonlight,
full of wonder and song
who passed with me out of the place of bitter stones
away from the place of the jackal,
and into the light of a new morning,
where I have found honey in the rock of your soul
and wine fermented of tears and dark longings.

Yet this place will remain,
and I know I will return to find you here,
to share with you the horrors of the path
where grow the dearest flowers I have found,
for I have eaten of the pomegranate you offered;
its taste still lingers on my lips,
and it has stained my mouth
and marked me yours.

Carla DeLane Wood