

an easter hymn featuring my grandmother doing god's will

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the day was dying by the hours ashes on its forehead
ashes on its lips

a saffron sunset submerged in a bucket of a day-old urine by a bamboo bed
as it lay dying

alert to all the various ways a minuscule throb can undo breath undo a lifetime of
promises

yet my grandmother would not toss a knee to the altar of unbelief
all the holy hours

she had spent in her kitchen churning cassava flour
into food

measuring certainty by the seconds certain it would dissolve into dross
certain

she would go on believing even in the shattered
evidence

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every year (for a decade) she tried to die and each year death smuggled her back through the
hallowed
archways of dreams

with epaulettes of scars that spoke more of her suffering than the mercies of
any god

call from home said there was blood on the barn doors this time and for the fourth night
a pack of wild dogs

went preaching into midnight's moonlit alcoves out she was in a vegetable farm
hunting for glory

amongst fireflies and barn owls with her leather-bound bible and a cross twisted out of the
impermanent
world of wax

her faith in a god of war solid and rough like the stone eating into her fleshy ribs through worn
taffeta blouse

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perhaps it was god's will that one day she would be gone found by morning in her own sweat-pool

beatified in the field

under the scorching dry-season sun it was god's will that her soggy wrapper would be lifted off her (not her fevered visions)

tangled up like a banner on the drooping branches of a lime tree her night dress stained with the blood
of a laughing dove –

her own unassuming redeemer it was god's will that her hair be lit with marigolds coiffured to reflect
a crown of light

which meant that from my room fifteen miles away i was merely gasps away from her hard-earned halo
which meant that

when she spoke her voice shook down dead sparrows from telephone lines which meant that even the holy will go on bruising
for penance

who has studied faith or doubt or suffering who has entered grief's whirlpooling waters and emerged any less holy come forward now with your evidence the world is waiting it has no argument