New Poetry by Naomi Ruth Lowinsky: “In And Out Of Time,” “In The Wake Of Our Lady Of The Double-Edged Axe The Notorious RBG,” “Prepping For Apocalypse,” “Sideswiped,” and “The Queen Of Souls”

THE ALWAYS HOVERING / *image by Amalie Flynn*

IN AND OUT OF TIME

In the fire-eaten land
in the smoke-drenched air
I dream

Crystal Lake
square raft afloat
at the center

I in my clodhopper shoes
in the patchwork circle skirt
I made myself
in my hippie days

have jumped in the lake
to show
my solidarity

with forest
mountains

ancestors

with glittering Crystal Lake
I swam as a girl
whose raft was sanctuary

from Father’s far-flung furies
from head-smacked howling brothers
from tongue-lashed weeping Mother

This simple handmade craft
of wood of nails
floats me out of time

holds me
in the great blue round
of lake of sky

the green surround
of pines
where the always hovering

Old Ones
who knew me then
who dream me now

give me the words
to write myself back
into time

in my waterlogged
clodhopper shoes
my patchwork skirt

back to the fire-eaten land
back to the smoke-drenched air
my handmade craft

my raft

IN THE WAKE OF OUR LADY OF THE DOUBLE–EDGED AXE
THE NOTORIOUS RBG
(Erev Rosh Hashana in the year 5781)

The shofar wails

She's gone
from her body gone
from her seat on the court gone
from her grip on what's equal what's just gone
from her fierce resolve
to keep breathing

until January 20th 2021

Everything hung on her small frail frame
What will we do without her?

Once I forgot I was real
a daughter of earth and sky
forgot what the angel
had told me at birth

Once I had holes in my tongue
from biting it
had blood on my hands
from broken glass
on the top of that wall
There was no escape

Throttled by custom by law
I spat my teeth on the road
My fire was used to burn me up
My body did not belong to me
a vessel for lust for seed

But you our soft-spoken battle-ax

our mother who was a falcon
had the cunning the courage the ken
to seize the keys to the castle
the plantation the prison
to deliver us
from gender's cages
the shackles of race
from those scoundrels in power
who steal from the poor
and ransack the earth

The shofar wails

She's become one
of the Holy Ones
No longer can everything hang
on her small frail frame

Too much for one body to bear
It's your fight now

Bless us O falcon-headed soul
of the notorious RBG
Our Lady of soaring sight
of focused attack
Our messenger
between the worlds

Sit on our shoulders
Hunt in our dreams
for the courage the cunning the keys
the double-edged axe
we'll need
to end the mad king's reign
and rouse your spirit in us
all over this land

PREPPING FOR APOCALYPSE

for Alicia

requires the pursuit
of toilet paper avocados gluten-free bread
He needs blueberries with his yogurt
You need mushrooms with your eggs
Both of you stuck in lockdown

So surrender
Hang yourself upside down
Be the bat who sees in the dark Smell
the terror cruelty carnage Hear
the echoes of the ancestors

Pandemic is pandemonium
the world turned into a charnel house
The sinister rider on his pale horse
has rolled us all up in The End of Days
like a medieval map ringed with dragons

A Revelation is at hand The sun
gone black The moon
a bloody show Guadalupe wanders
the woods haunted by who
She once was

Our Lady of the Serpent Skirt Apocalyptic
woman crowned with stars in the fierce grip
of birth Will She bear us
a savior? Will She bear us
a demon shatterer of worlds? How will we know
the difference?

SIDESWIPED

Sweet Lola my Barcelona Red hybrid chariot

you who transported me from sixty something
to the middle of my seventies through Obama's two terms
Michelle's organic gardens the color spectrum
of her splendid gowns you carried me
when we were all blindsided
by the 2016 election fed me NPR news
the Russian hack job on America
the wannabe Pharaoh throwing tantrums
on Twitter while the traffic roiled around us

even as you approached a hundred thousand miles
you stayed stalwart kept me safe in your calm interior
as you switched from gas to battery and back
making our small gesture toward saving the planet
you who delivered me into our garage protected
from rain from wind from the ash that devoured the mountain
Dan coming out to help with the groceries

There were groceries for Passover in your trunk Lola
flame raisins dried apricots dates almonds
for the Sephardic charoset which symbolizes the mortar
it is said we Jews used to build the pyramids
when we were slaves in Egypt But who knew
when I made that left turn a big black Beamer
would hurtle toward you Lola we almost
made it before it hit you in the right rear
I thought it was just a fender bender
They'd fix you up at the body shop
like the surgeon fixed my hip

But the man in the Beamer leapt out shouting
It's all your fault!
I can still hear him shouting
while his kind quiet wife
asks for my registration

What's that? I think
my mind in fragments

Later I'll gather the flame raisins
dates apricots and almonds pulse them
into small bits in the Cuisinart knowing one needs
to break things up to make that rich sweet

Middle Eastern paste charoset
that's meant to bind us together
when vessels shatter

Later the total loss claims man will pronounce you
totaled You Lola
who had the *saichel* to feed your own battery I'm still reaching
for your slow-down lever grasping thin air forgetting
I'm driving a clunky Chevy rental
on my way to retrieve the layers of umbrellas shopping bags
shoes in case of earthquakes maps we no longer use
flashlights whose batteries likely died in all those years
before you started losing oil
before the black Beamer sideswiped you
before the man began to shout

before the total loss man
pronounced you worth more dead dismembered
for spare parts instead of resurrected one last time
at the body shop the buff young woman
commiserates with me helps me carry
the detritus of our years together
to the clunky Chevy

It's Easter week and Passover
We remember the ones who've passed on
We light candles for my children's father

Dan’s children’s mother my mother
the bedlam that erupted in her wake
O my separated kin will you ever join us again?

We name the plagues Old Pharaoh flings at us
as we gather our *mishpocheh* on the way to freedom
We name what plagues our own shattered times
    Stolen Elections
    Separated Children
    Hatred of Strangers
    Greed
      School Shootings Sanctuary Shootings Police Shootings Street Shootings
    Homelessness
    Climate Chaos
    Species Extinction
    Family Feuds

The youngest one adds
    People who cannot forgive

    Pass the charoset

THE QUEEN OF SOULS

    O Lady, Lady of the changing shapes,
    help me remember…
                —Judy Grahn

Some souls are shy They hide out behind the shutters of your eyes
Some souls are soggy like the earth after rain like a woman after a good cry
Some souls get born to sass the universe listen to them snicker

                in the back of the class

Some souls can never be satisfied Give them three wishes they want five
They eat your heart out send your spirit packing You forget
who brought you here You question your every breath

your spirit guides your mother’s milk

Some souls have rocks in their shoes drag you down
to the bottom of the slough where earthworms squirm
and you are sunk spat out for what terrible deed
in what former life?

Some souls insist on dance Some need poems Some will make you
map out a whole world of characters who’ll take over
your inner chambers Won’t stop talking until you write them down

Some souls keep singing even in the eye of the storm even at the bottom
of the pit where the Queen of Souls She who harrows your bones knows
even black holes even dead trees grow mushrooms host baby birds and snakes

Some souls live in sandcastles
until a wave knocks them down
The child forgets what she built

Some souls have feathers and claws
Some souls can shed their skin
Some souls become jaguars in your sleep

Some souls surf atmospheric rivers wrangle tornadoes

ride nightmares glide and glitter
amidst rays of the sun in the redwood grove

Some souls are old and lonely Can’t remember

the last body
they were in

They hover in the rafters watch the infinity loop
of lovers impatient for that last passion cry
for the deft dive of sperm into egg hungry to leap
into new life

Some souls remember themselves as tears as pearls
on the throat of the Queen of Souls
When your time comes She’ll weigh

your heart your balance of feather and claw
Maybe She’ll give you a glimpse
of your soul’s flight wings aflame
on the
way to your stars