

**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 20<sup>th</sup> 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?

## **SIDESWIPE**

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