

Birth

I was born into a world of Yeses;
taught,
 (as all little girls are taught)
to be a Yes-maker,
to implore through lowered eyelashes,
to be sweet and modest and demure and compliant.

The announcement of my betrothal was the first time I felt
the tickle of something different,
the twinge of an Other,
the twitch of a counter-thought.

But my Yes was expected, indeed, it was not even sought;
Of course I would marry Ahasuerus, the mighty man,
 he who had conquered,
 who had coerced the Yeses of so many people,
And forged them into an empire.

I felt a slight swell against my Yes, but did not know what it was.
Hokmah whispered,
 “The seed has been planted:
 Yes is not the only answer, my child.”

But Yes was the easier answer,
and so I stifled the twinge,
bowed my head,
and became his wife.

On the morning after my wedding night, I cried.
The something different had risen more strongly,
had struggled to keep my Self intact.

But it was tattered,
ripped to shreds by my husband’s powerfully hard Yes.

Hokmah found me, head on my knees, sobbing.
When I told her the story, she whispered,
 “It is growing, my child,
 it is growing.”

And it was growing,
 swelling inside my heart,
 pushing against my ribs,
 giving little kicks of life.

But I still lived in a world of Yeses,
 and I had never seen such a thing before,
 so I pushed it deep inside of me
 and let it incubate in the dark.

The party was meant to show the world the power of my husband's Yes:
 purple linen and marble pillars and silver couches and golden flagons and
 royal wine flowing like rivers.

And when my husband had given his Yes over and over again,
 had filled and refilled his cup,
 he had one last trophy to show.

The seven who came to fetch me did not know
 they would witness a birth,
 they came to bear the king's command:

“Let her come before the men,
 that they may see the curl of her hair, the line of her legs,
 the swell of her breasts, the jewels of her crown,
 and know that I am mighty.”

In the pregnant pause that followed their pronouncement,
 I felt the dam burst,
 felt the ripping, tearing,
 the bloody surge of power.
And I expelled that which had been growing inside me.

They recoiled in surprise and horror, but
I held the full-grown bastard in my arms,
 reassured by its weight and solidity
 and Hokmah's gentle breath in my hair.

Into a world of Yeses, I had birthed my No.