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Anasazi woman

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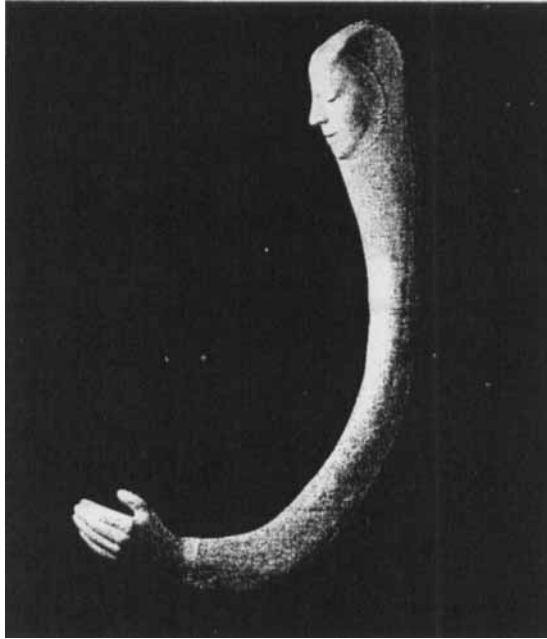
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NAOMI RUTH LOWINSKY

Anasazi Woman



"Moon Reach, Sea Bone." Katherine Wells. 40x22x6 in.

At Mesa Verde Dan picked up a potsherd. He showed me the pattern of ridges made by a human thumb. Giving the shard to me to hold he asked: Who made this?

- I. **T**ouching what her hand made
eight hundred years ago
a woman
like my mother, like myself

I feel her sitting
in my bones, turning
and turning her pot
her thumb
rhythmic.

How firmly planted
in her circle of ground she is
 like the Yucca
her thoughts are
as spiny and as practical.

Only for moments in the darkness of the Kiwa
in the unknown of her womb
 does she

Mother of Mothers
allow her fear to bloom.
What will be born
and what will die
in the next turn of the seasons
in the next round of her thumb?

Has too much been taken
not enough returned?
What dark erosion
mushrooms in her dreams?

II. In my mother's kitchen I am
kitchen table height
watching her thumb
turning and turning
 the knife
 rounds
of cucumber slip into
the bowl like
 pale moons.

She has survived
so many deaths
 and fragmentations
fear lives in our house
like a visiting relative
 who talks too much.

POETRY

III. They called it Trinity
as though to harness
the power of the latest
gods
inhabiting the land

and on the sacred red
New Mexican earth
they worked
their miracle:

transformed matter
into energy
smashed the atom
smashed the Axis
made mushroom clouds to bloom
over the desert

My mother's broken people
rejoiced
until
the wind shifted.

Some
down to earth
woman

lost her baby
and began counting
miscarriages
still births
monstrous foetuses, deaths

from cancer
in every family
people wondered:

Whose gods are angry?

POETRY

IV. In my kitchen
it is warm. A small daughter
kitchen table height
watches me make pie. I form
ridges
at the crust's edge

my thumb
rhythmic.

We will eat
and we will sleep.
The house is safe
the children well
for a generation we have suffered
no untimely deaths

Why then is it so hard
to keep the faith?

Turning and turning
in the night
cars crash
people go berserk

An ill wind blows
from Chernobyl.

POETRY

V. This is the faith I seek:
that in the great round
 of worlds
when I've been gone
 eight centuries
a baby will be born

a daughter of daughters

She'll grow and prosper
 bloom into a woman
 like my daughters
 like myself.

And if I could believe
her time will come
 I'd leave

 her all the world

and all the treasure
 of my life

long crumbled in the dust
be hers to find

to hold within her hand
some fragment of
 my kitchen

by which she'd know
 the ancient ones

have held her

 sacred.



*'Moonchild's Firebird,'
Katherine Wells,
39×23×6 in.*