

# ARUSHA

## GALLERY

### In Elysian Fields

*doesn't she light you up?*  
a flint to your jagged sleeve

flames of delirious eternity as if  
your shirt was never hung  
to dry, gentle  
on a clothesline, crisp  
and captive

like she was never ferried over  
dozens of rivers to  
find herself  
lonely at the foot of your bed

a limp tentacle wrapped  
loose and ambivalent  
slipping out into  
hesitant glowing morning  
the hooves and hot breath

whispers of protection  
talismans sat at my door  
a window wide and waiting  
fresh game slung over the shoulder

(it still smells like blood)  
i wait to descend the stairs  
(it doesn't frighten me anymore)  
my chariot awaits me, it's hungry with  
a sharp row of teeth and  
creaking saddles  
a soft place to land  
a handkerchief around your throat

and these men like to play tug of war  
so i tie myself into knots  
rosy and still,  
i wind and i tether  
for  
every moon is spent in a different  
dominion, the beasts circling  
for another wound to lick

whether i am in the tower  
twisting and tortured  
or emerald hips like  
saplings, treetops  
my skin is green  
feathers hiding me from the  
bright light of day  
i've always been a jealous  
woman, i want forever  
in paradise  
forever  
in elysium  
a spitting image of  
grace, of a god dangling  
stars thinly scattered  
and new  
i've always been

a woman  
in paradise

- Violet Maxwell