

From: RISING TIDES

✧ A CYCLE OF WOMEN

It is that dream world Anais speaks of
that dark watery place
where everything is female
where you open the door of the house
and she waits upstairs
the way you knew she would
and her hair floats over the world

Every woman has a history
mother and grandmother and the ones before that
the faces she sees in dreams or visions
and wonders *Who?* A childless woman
waking at night to the hard pull, the old
contractions, the birth cry of her mothers.
Or the heaviness in her back from stooping,
her hips from iron belts, the lines in
her face from mountain women.

Or, longer ago than that, the spears
and battleaxes, that ache in the thighs
from straining tight on the horses.
And the old queens, before history began,
when it was her story they told,
did they wrap their heads in bright cloth,

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wear bracelets? or were they nude
and savage, their breasts large and
firm, their feet solid on their solid earth?

Each one is queen, mother, huntress
though each remembers little of it
and some remember nothing at all,
resting in crazy houses
from the long spin of history
drinking the grief of their sex
eating it in bitter pills
muttering in kitchens,
telling their daughters
the story of a sleeping princess
but knowing it takes more than a man's kiss
to wake one so bent on sleeping her life away:

someone who should be kept in an ice-box
until she is ready; then wake her up, as now,
into a cave or a field,
using perhaps the kiss of a sister.
Let her go from there, start over,
live it again; until she knows who she is.
Until she rises as though from the sea
not on the half-shell this time
nothing to laugh at
and not as delicate as he imagined her:
a woman big-hipped, beautiful, and fierce.

