

Harriet, Her Nelson, and the North Star Kiss

Harriet, Her Nelson, and the North Star Kiss was inspired by my deeply held respect for Harriet Tubman and the endearing Kerry James Marshall's "Still Life with Wedding Portrait."

Dedicated to all who know how to embrace, treasure and love a fierce Black woman

Twice "married," fierce navigator of the night sky

Harriet a descendent, from the continent

where the N'Nonminton—

Dahomean warrior women--

reigned,

sang songs of deliverance

coded in the marrow of her bones

while stealthily

guiding raids

and steering bold,

broken

**and fragile men whose taunt flesh, plowed with fields of
scars lashed by the buckra's whips,**

**women (bosoms bursting with the elixir of mother's
milk)**

cradling babies swaddled in burlap blankets,

navigated them upstream, across treacherous

murky rivers

**where water moccasins, haints, and slave catchers
lurked,**

up into Ohio safe houses,

across into the Canadian border.

Along every treacherous trail she seeded our dreams

so, the future could harvest the fruits of freedoms.

**On each return home,
He, Her Nelson, a stalwart soldier in the underground
railroad,
twenty-two years younger and a refuge
against the storms of subjugation,
soared into her heart as she answered
a cosmic calling
where he planted new life
on to the galaxy of her soul,
and the morning pulse
of their shared passions.**

**He
whispered terms of endearment
across the scars struck on her heart,
chanting *My Minty, My Minty, My Minty*—his mantra
out into
the universe of their love,
caressed and kneaded a balm of peace into the palms of
her weathered hands
along walks
under the same Moon used as a beacon
to guide hundreds of the enslaved to freedom,
soothed her soul when they shared
harrowing tales of the cunning ways she eluded capture
at the Combahee River Raid,
serving as a spy for the Union Army
and snatching recalcitrant recruits on board the freedom
train.**

**Her Nelson, set the table
in her boarding house
where they met
with wild red and white bleeding hearts, purple asters,
and scarlet bergamot
while they shared
frostbitten mustard greens,
sun-blessed field corn,
and crisp golden apples
harvested from the fields
where the Seneca and Oneida
tilled their ancestral soils for centuries.**

**He,
sweetened Harriet's tongue
when it was salty,
with the reassurance of unbridled trust—
something John Tubman, a free Black man
and first “husband,” and those who kept on the shackles
of bondage,
did not.**

**When waves of acrimony wounded them
and the strife of struggle
and megrim of marriage unmoored the passion of their
anchors of intimacy,
they shared testimonies from the chalice of their salted
tears**

**and He, her Nelson laid
“jump back honey, jump back” kinda love on her.
And as brick by forged brick, they built a home
on acres of sacred vision and earned fortune to ensure a
future
warranted a divine people whose dreams they refused to
defer.**

**Under their bed, Her Nelson, kept Frances Ellen
Harper’s *Poems on Miscellaneous Subjects from
which he often read***

“*That Hope Blessed*”

*When wandering in dens and caves,
In sheep and goat skins dress'd,
A peel'd and scatter'd people learned
To know this hope was blest.*

**There he read her awake
on the majestic mist of dew filled mornings
as they witnessed the rising of suns blazing
with promises yet to be filled.**

**He, Her Nelson,
found his way to the mystical places
where she received him,
so, he could listen
to the chorus of pleasure rise
in erotic arias and see the North Star
kiss the midnight of her body,
as their lips held breath and being.**

He soothed the volcanic fire of her soul,

**touching every cell of her raven-colored skin,
while playing in the Bakongo Rainforest of her hair,
swimming along the Atlantic shores of her boundless
mind,
spinning her supple, unbroken body
up
across the night sky towards Titan and Rhea,
two Moons of Saturn,
on the kinetic energy of their covenant of
intimacies where defying \$40,000.00 bounties on her
head
and with the tyranny of rape rampaging
at the junction of every bend,
somehow tenderness survived.**

©2022Daphne Muse

Brentwood, California 94513