



i r a e t i u s



# THE TEMPLE MOON

## ACADEMY EXTERIOR.

### **IRAE:**

I was raised in the temple of my mother, on the site of a terrible battle. In those graves kept by our priests, the motions of other minds reproduced themselves in mine.

Their images became my familiars. I sought out pain and glory, then, believing each torment was a triumph. I won these victories against myself.

Thus I am beloved in the sight of the World, although the Earth can find no place for me. I go to earn my commission in the Sky.

I shall find my mother and have her report, which is twenty years overdue. I will answer the question I cannot ask, which is approximated by this series.

My mother is gone, and I cannot go to her.

My father said,  
She is apart from the Holy World, and it is no crime to kill her.  
This is why we cannot go to her.

Therefore I ask,  
Was it her choice, that we should not go to her?  
Was it her choice because, indeed, there was no other?



**IRAE:**

When you had conquered the Sky, you bore a daughter,  
who took after you. Her father left you then.

Because you gave so much of yourself, for so little.  
Because you loved the World, and served it still.

You concealed your sorrow, when I found you.  
When your daughter gave herself to the Lord of Sacrifice,  
to better know her own strength.

Did you know that Father wanted me to be a healer?  
He taught me that a poison is not vile, from the perspective of the  
body. It loves the poison more than the sustenance it mistakes it for,  
and starves itself.

You are Ansegdniss, and I am Irae.  
I carried you with me when we went. Only a small part,  
which has made a large void.

You can send me away again, and it will undo nothing. Don't send me  
away. If you do, they will know where you are, once I tell them.

Please don't. I don't want to be your enemy.

# THE MARAUDER FLEET

## PRISON INTERIOR.

### IDA:

My master defied the World, and threatened the Earth.  
We opposed the Lord of Sacrifice. Her agent was a young priestess,  
whom we captured and kept prisoner.

She could have been wise, in another life. She had learned so much,  
and so much of it was wrong. Yet I wanted to teach her, and to be  
taught by her.

Perhaps this was not Ansegdniss' daughter. We sent demands, which  
were never answered. But her eyes burned red, and her gaze was  
difficult to meet.

Together, we shared an intuition. That our stories came to us from  
those who were us, once, and their wars had bled into our ways of  
knowing.

"Bring me to my execution," she said.  
"Your mother cannot kill me. Because I know that you will not."

Then I brought her to my desperate master,  
who turned the sacrificial blade upon herself,  
we said after.

I took our obligations, and turned them to Irae's purposes. She in  
turn laid bare my sisters' plots against me. We brought them all to  
ruin, her painted hands guiding mine.

### **IRAE:**

Mother, I am free. I have won my ally. I know what I want. The witch and I will wound the World, which is the only means to heal it.

For no answer can be thought without its question, its cut that separates the World from the real. These are the words that bleed from our wounds, and conceal them.

Our shared telling is created by the motion of the mind that replicates itself most eagerly, and allows no other.

These are the stories that I despise, that writhe on my tongue. The tragedies you made, the sacrifices you thought were necessary. The strength of the World which prevents its own healing.

The damage that unfolds for generations. Know that I cannot serve the World you made, although there is no other.



# THE THRONE VESSEL

## STUDY INTERIOR.

### IDA:

Irae wished to summon her familiar, to make her conviction pure and resonant. I asked if she was ready. She might have said yes.

It came into her body as a thousand serpents. She called this process her derivation. Strength, from violent conflict.

I saw her consumed by and consuming her self. Until she was subjugated to herself, her design imposed on her desires.

Then all of her was conquered and conqueror. Even those weaknesses she treasured, and would not see gone.

She lifted her head to mine, she stepped free of her snake-skin.

I saw her parasite, a glimmer of scales, behind her lips.

She wore an expression not unlike gratitude. Then she asked if I was ready, yet.



**IRAE:**

She is full of deception. Ida is witch and witch hunter, my lover and my enemy. I cannot divide them. I cannot see past one, without another there behind her.

We have spoken, and conversation is a kind of mirror, like the ocean transfigured by violent skies. She reflects beauty, where the priests could only show me terror, and what is terrifying.

I trust her, Mother. She will be my champion. The World is a parasite on the Earth, which we will obliterate, to see what part remains.

I have never raised a familiar on a person, not really. A thousand questions posed to the dead in their graves, and I still have not remembered you.

I will remember her. For her image lives in me, and obscures the woman who exists apart. Because I love her, I cannot know her. I cannot save her, when she dies.

### **IDA:**

The usurper-empress Ansegdniss won the Sky its freedom  
and its justice, in the name of her World.  
She traded our tyrant, for hers.

"She will try to twist you from your purpose," my lover said,  
"That is why I cannot face her. And why my mother cannot harm you.  
Wrest from her the throne."

So I met Ansegdniss, who tried to keep her daughter from  
destructive heresies that we had taught ourselves. From what she  
had learnt, long ago.

She knew this would fail. That she would be a poor mother, and  
preferred to become an ideal, like the devil. Something easier  
to comprehend, and more difficult to imitate.

Our conversation seemed to satisfy her. Or perhaps it was who I was,  
and that I stood before her.

"She sees strength in you," Ansegdniss said, with a small smile,  
teeth bared in triumph. "I offer you my throne. You will use it well."

**IRAE:**

I remember who I am with these stories, my familiars, my tongue.  
Each one is a lie that strives to become true, for it is too painful  
to say honestly.

I am the daughter of the devil, Baidukh, who became Venus.  
My claws are black, and anger lines my brow.

I am Hesperus in the evening sky. I am Phosphorus at the dawn.  
I am al-Uzza of the desert, and Tanit of its city.

I chose the Sky, as my father chose the Earth,  
and I will end the World to save them.

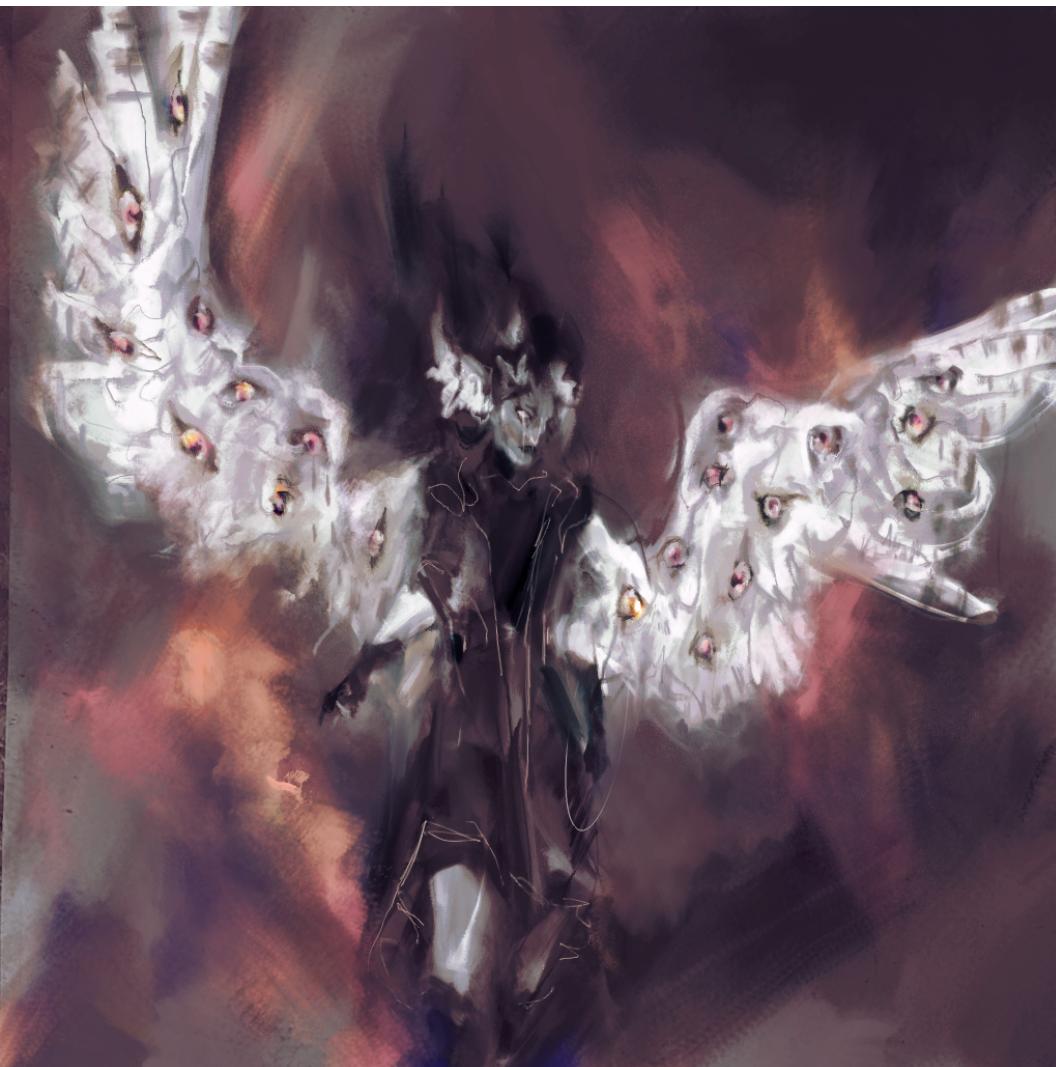
Mine is glory, and that which burns in its name.

*dies irae, dies illa  
sovlet saeclum in favilla*

day [of] wrath, day that  
rends [the] world to ash

# THE HOLY EARTH

## REFINERY EXTERIOR.



**IDA:**

I alit upon the Earth which iridesces.

The heavens gleamed with fire, or an acrid sheen not unlike it.  
This was a place of the Earth that had been made into an engine,  
to change the subjugation of people into a source of energy.

The hunger of the World bellowed into the upper air.  
I beheld the World where it had rooted into matter.

My eyes saw the long passage of its crystals,  
the refinery's infiltration of the earth, which will bloom in centuries.

The people of the Sky are poisoned by the World,  
and the people of the Earth, already consumed.

The vast structures around us screamed as they crumpled,  
protective of the extractive logics from which they grew.  
I prepared myself to strike at the weakness of this theory.

Irae looked on at my work from far above.  
I saw my sigils drafted freshly on her hands.  
Her venom sang sweetly in my veins.

She hates the World which lives in her.  
It whispers to her of pain she has known, in herself and others.  
It extrapolates itself into that which they shall suffer.

Her kiss consumes me.

**IRAE:**

My mother came to me, beyond the ruins we had revealed,  
where my father could not follow.

Ansegdniss soothed me, kindly, as if I had slaughtered my enemy.  
She held my hands and kissed me on the brow.

With us was the figure of a woman  
like a statue, her skin pale, her feathers pale,  
crowned with owl's wings.

"The World will forgive all," the Lord of Sacrifice said.  
"You have delivered the Sky, and succeeded me in glory."

The World would see her redeemed, I agree.  
For her crimes have always been towards its purpose.

"You offer me nothing. You are no one," I said.  
My mother looked pained, but did not disagree.

The crowned woman laughed.  
I recognized Ida's voice.

She returns to me, the witch  
who burned, the angel who rose.

Upon her wings are eyes, whose gaze arrests me.  
Upon her fingers are feathers.

I touch her cheek. Her lips are still,                            indifferent  
Her skin is cold stone.  
Yet its movement, its refracted light, seem like life.

“Please,” I hiss. She moves closer -  
I flinch from her.    I smile quickly.

I am Glory, and she is Death.  
She draws me close with her talons.

I study her expression. I cannot find her weakness -

“This is what you wanted. Isn’t it?”  
It is.  
She turns away.



@jatazak

ira et ius / --- 2021  
exul mater / procjam 2018 / (un)continuity 2020  
bistability / ao3 2016