

*Hazel Simmons-McDonald*



## Dream Season

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### I

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The snake's in the garden again  
It hides in the tall grass  
Thinks I can't see  
But I know it's there  
Watching, waiting to come out  
When I'm asleep.

I first dreamed it as a child  
At the first seeding  
When earth, still moist  
With primordial rain  
Yielded to the hand  
That pressed the seed  
To lie cocooned in fecund warmth.

Gliding  
    Beneath my bed  
It  
    Wove charms  
In its ophidian head  
While I,  
Hovering  
Between sleep and wake  
Feared my heart  
Would follow enchanted  
Labyrinthine paths  
Across  
    The forest floor.

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Calabash

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II

It rained  
In wires  
That pierced  
The earth  
Like syncopated  
Notes.

Seeds foliated into words  
That were the season's newest shoots  
They opened syllables to the sun  
It was a first communion with the word  
Words flowered on every shoot  
Shoots blossomed into poems.  
In that season of green joy  
The heart fed on fragile faith  
While lidless slitted eyes  
Gazed from the blooms  
And scaled petals fell  
Among shoots.

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III

Then came the drought  
Season of sparseness

It was time for neons  
Flashing in the night

Love was  
Measured by  
The dropper  
One  
Drop could dull  
The gnawing hunger's edge

Now  
Strengthened by a steady faith  
I stepped out to meet it  
To crush its head beneath my foot but  
Like the bronze serpent  
In the desert  
    It  
    Rose  
        To gaze  
            At me  
Eyes blinked in perplexity  
  
This must be the season of plenty.



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Calabash

I was parched for love  
The echoes of once brimming streams  
Haunted every dream  
And like the beat of some tympanic din  
A faucet dripped  
    Drop  
        By  
Drop  
Into  
    The night.

IV

Snakes in the garden again  
It's near the orange grove  
Where ripened fruit  
Weigh branches with their fullness  
It slides along the grass  
Where I can see  
Round onyx eyes  
Looking at me.

I dreamed it  
A night ago  
Twining  
    Among fallen  
Fruit  
Coils circling their roundness  
While I hovering  
Between  
Sleep and wake feared  
It  
    Had come  
        To haunt again  
    With its  
        Sinuous  
            Windings