

*Overture: A Poem before Eden*

When I danced in darkness  
and chaos, the shells round  
my ankle bones sounded life to come,  
juddering iambs of cosmic thunder.

But for the shapeless stones,  
I was potent and alone. Gyre-footed,  
moss-breathed and beautiful, my body  
leaped and spun and I shook my gourds  
over shadows and sleeping forms.

They awoke, and milk flowed  
from their breasts. In this way  
I went through the world, imagining  
Life—heron and mantis, squid  
and mammoth, fish, berry and fern.

First crease of dawn light, then music  
as humans learned to purse their mouths,  
to whistle against their fears.  
As they had feet and limbs,  
they also danced, and beat their skins,  
and rubbed hollow sticks together.

Sky flashed and there was fire.  
I made the river, flowing with tinctures  
and all manner of rind,  
and crossed it like a roaring wind.

There was no religion, only tears  
and laughter, and sometimes low moaning  
when clouds ghosted the valleys,  
the sky's fontanel grave with portent.

When it grew silent,  
and all things were afraid

and weary of unmitigated cold,  
I took them under my skirts.

There was melt and saturation  
and great upheaval.  
In this way the world began.