



Daeva Letters

January 2020

Sonic Offering; Sweet Chariot by
Ideeyah

Hey love,

How are you adjusting to your new set of skins?

As the year the snake sheds its final film, I've begun a house tour of my shiny new interior. And I am terrified. Though it's been 26 years of occupying this flesh, each year I grieve something wondrous that transforms me beyond my immediate recognition.

In the midst of the scariest change of her life, my momma named me after a renaissance. While birthing me, my mom was grieving a deferred dream, an absent lover, and familial judgement, forcing her to move through uncertain change with no blueprint. And though the Harlem Renaissance was a period of overwhelming displacement, and economic instability, spirit was insistent that folks offer their grief a bowl of greens, pot-liquor, and a made-bed in their guest room. Like my momma, folks were faced with a crossroads; forced to amplify their gifts and give birth to a new timeline. Grieving still, they moved forward with an intuitive knowing that advancement would free them. Then after the renaissance golden years, the Great Depression dragged things on in anguish, clinging insistently to all they carried. I often think of these folk, my kin, ancestors, and relatives to my collaborators/lovers/teachers etc. I reimagine all they were fearful of and conjure up the adversity necessary to endure. We are descendants of so many griots, musicians, mothers, writers, time keepers, dancers, crafts folks, engineers, and artisans who had no guarantee of home outside their grieving bodies.

Now, as this year of the snake comes to its close, I reflect on the origins of my name. The power of change, and the Western world's obsession with comfort without sacrifice. And of course, the duality between the sky my momma knew in 1999.

This month, the visual work aiding in my grief presently is Deana Lawson's, House of My Deceased Lover.

The photograph shows a woman in the reflection of her mirror, chest bare, hair tossed in disarray with help from an angular box fan. She is laying on top of a semi exposed mattress, wearing an expression of dissonance. There are some pictures/papers clinging to the mirror corners; a hand holding a diamond, and a group of black men posed casually, and some foreign bills.

This work reflects a notion I've been grappling with for the past year.

All 2026, it seemed Grief got away with all my stuff.



Change gave way to;

My aquarian grandmother's Alzheimer's diagnosis, winding back her brilliant mind.
My grandfather's autonomy in death, leaving this realm heartbroken and begging for rest.
Fatiguing jobs. Dreams deferred. Deceptively hazardous Brownstone apartments.
The pendulum of lost lovers, misaligned connections, and expired kinships. Tranquil egyptian musk and frankincense
sunday rituals in my momma's crib. My brothers snaggletooth, and morning bellows. My little sister's contagious laughter.

Now I gaze at the Fun House mirrors, walking carefully and barefoot through the halls of my interior. The soles of my feet are grateful for the cool mahogany hardwood (the ones I prayed for). And still, I'm brim-filled with nostalgic mourning of the carpet grief in my grandparents home.

Even in gratitude, grief doesn't expire. I've been looking at my own prayer petition actualized; the lofted ceilings, elaborate crown molding, stainless glass and grandeur- and still missing my reflection in my grandparents' Roseland bungalow. And even on days I reminisce the sweetness of a vintage love, I wouldn't dare offer up these new skins for a wrinkle or spotless mind. Change and Grief are inevitable house guests that eat all your food, forget to turn off the lights and use up all your good

And it is what it is. I was told once that we all have yet to meet all the folks and homes that will love us, and it's something I choose to believe in.

So love, on today I ask;
Who has made a home in you?

What spirits came with the house? (an obsessive nature, green thumb/healing hands, kettle pot temper). Identify them by name.

What pieces from your interior can be purged? What was intended to be borrowed, & still remains?

Are there any expired traditions/grief rituals lingering in your bedroom that belong to someone else? (an ole lover, a misaligned belief, fairweather friend, or an identity)

Now that we've offered up our old bodies, and homes we've outgrown, look around and ask have any of your things gone missing? & If so; reclaim them here.

talk soon,

