

MARY MOLINARY
from Eve's Epistle to Lilith

At one point . . . the traveler stops, pauses, turns to the left to glance at some possible threat or irregularity, then continues to the north. This motion, so intensely human, transcends time. Three million seven hundred thousand years ago, a remote ancestor—just as you or I—experienced a moment of doubt.

—Mary Leakey

Headstrong and striding as only upright bipedal creatures can

I stop pause and stand on the edge of the gorge in the darkened
part of night as though perched upon a single strand
of DNA searching for a sound that I can track as easily as a strange
footprint in these sedimentary layers—one that (like me) mourns

sheds tears undulates on such a moonless night muttering *us us us*.

Binomial Nomenclature echoes back names for a near perfect
leg bone fragments of skull—precise but once removed: how
our husband-my-father reads history with fingernails of perfectibility
flips page after page asks the same question of the same residual
night.

Australopithicus afarensis only begins to tell the story: Ours:
undaunted double helix numinous matrix inexact hands humbled
& holding Adam our root feet braided in *origin* misshapen under
country. (Dear polygenesis peals of nightfall kind surgery of stars
graft the cleft

palette of difference between and among things?) And here we are: sad
little
epistemes apocalyptic poems (& I'd promised you a letter)

Dear Lilith there's another: she has two names times the two of us
times geography times cacophony—
seems she has no script, no devil to pay.

She is called Lucy, her African name is Dinknesh
and I want to be illuminated by reason comforted between the nations
of Homo and sapiens but I'm not a simile—like part white
like life black like girl under. No. Say sun and hot and day—then say
Home ludens: at play, I am a nuance: these feet this hair these weak-
ened

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knees that mole on my belly the ringing in my ears what I dream what I
say.

But I'm not telling you anything you don't know—fortunate one:

born part dust part Medea wearing your exile like necessary
injunction never showing—in any version—a moment of doubt in
haircut cuttings or apples left to hang or your role in
the Earth's perpetual fear. Identity is not an issue for one
who comes from dust—that one goes through the world alone.

I'm learning: that one is free to see things in relation:

So then, *all becomings are molecular: the animal, flower, or stone.*
The only difference is sound I think: in things waking
or preparing for sleep. . . . And through it all in all the muck
I find time and again an incredulous and naming part that plays back
like a recording teeters on the edge of evening stripped to its
barest bones.

I, at Olduvai. And I don't know which sounds more gorgeous:
To take one's place in the gorge or to take pause, refuse to.