

Let the Body Speak

Salma

Translated from the Tamil by Rizio

Believe my body,
let it speak to you.

Let it speak my truths in your ears,
loud and clear, with no restraint.

Let it speak, let it declare itself.
Let it speak of the battles it fought
while it achingly sprouted its breasts,
through my long homegrown captivity.

Let it speak out uneasily of those pains
that were absorbed by a stiff old rag
while the red satin of my first blood
draped the white slope of a commode.

Let it sing of the gait and adornments
it had striven to preserve across ages.
Let it speak of its springheads of lust
and love, as well as of its buried resolves.

Let it speak of the torment
of yielding on a strange bed,
of having had to please the lust
of someone that it hardly knew.

Let it speak of birthing and losing children,
of its many smelly discharges, and the hurt
in its knee as it walks its menopausal path.
Let it speak aloud, as in a revelation.

Let it be known to you fools,
it is not a body that you rape, but
a deadly weapon. It holds within it
the living nature, its furies.

The body speaks.