

Charismatic Megafauna

Tamsin Kendrick studied Philosophy and Theology at Oxford University before launching herself into London's vibrant performance poetry scene. Since then she has appeared at literary festivals and venues all over the world, including mini-tours of Ireland and New York. Her poetry has been published in *The Delinquent*, *The Wolf*, *The Fix*, *Tears in the Fence* and *Rising*. She works as a freelance writer and editor in South London.

Charismatic
Megafauna
Tamsin Kendrick

penned in the margins

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~

Thanks to all the poets in my life who never knew when to go home, and to my parents who made my home a wonderful place to be.

Charismatic Megafauna

*So that no corner can hide you, no autumn of leaves
So deeply close over you that I shall not find you,
To stretch down my hand and sting you with life
Like poison that resurrects.*

George Barker, 'O Who will speak from a Womb or a
Cloud?'

*Sometimes she became so lost in thought, she could not see where she was
walking. At other times, it seemed as if she acted without any thought at
all and had to spend her wakeful hours making up stories about why she
did things.*

Greg Keyes, *The Black God*

I

Proverbs I

If this was a story, a sword
would be pulled from a stone,
a magic ring flung
into the depths of the sea
and with general rejoicing
the world would turn

and I would no longer be the girl
sitting in your run-down flat

waiting for you to look at me.

Lancing

The bird quivers cup-sized in his Montana palms.

The physician does what the poet cannot,
scalpels the rotten interior,
knight-lances the troubling,
buckling glands that knot a throat-neck,
moulding broke-back with steadying hands.

I am the swans spying the penthouse shadows,
gliding the tide beneath the balcony.
I crane the angle of my alabaster grace
to where you pad, love-striped before the fire,
tiger-eyed, cornfield-armed. I'm charmed

as you purify a needle kiss with a candle flame,
anaesthetise me with wine and stillness,
operate on my soreness. Afterwards
cartooning the tips of me blush pink with Disney plasters.

If I could I'd buy back your grandfather's piano,
pawned long ago to a suburban warehouse,
so I can hear you play Rachmaninoff again,
so I would own the notes beneath your fingers.

Charismatic Megafauna

I have travelled far in Japanese silk slippers;
the geishas broke my feet. I wear a fedora hat
for mystery solving and brandy drinking,
a rag tag of skirts, leggings, a naked knee,
a burn on my thigh, a blood dream.

Towards the Temple I open.

Gold rings on three of my fingers, for bartering,
for proof I am the child of the electric priest
and his red-headed Jew, full of breast,
whom he loved and rescued from the suburbs

but refused to sing to. Introverted,

he paces the roof garden and mumbles
strange languages beneath a sky that loves him.
His footsteps pop with new life. The trees harmonise.

This is where I began, nestled small in the pelvis
of an acoustic. Chords vibrating bones,
pickings trembling skin. Daddy is music

floating through the bedroom ceiling, Daddy is love,
incense, promises tied to red bows. Daddy is my passage

through the avenue of vines, the gatekeeper to the synagogue.
He holds my hand as towards the Temple we open.

Beecow

If I could be anything for you
I'd be a cross between a bee and a cow.
I'd succour you with milk and honey,
sweeten your lips and cover you with cream.
But with a sting the size of an udder
you'd be too frightened to make the wrong move.

Mooing between buzzes I'd sound ridiculous,
be cow clumsy and hefty in flight.
But I wouldn't mind: if you laughed at me
I'd squash you flat like a grand piano
crash-landing on Broadway.