



VERSE IN PLACE

NAIMA PENNIMAN

Being Human

I wonder if the sun debates dawn
some mornings
not wanting to rise
out of bed
from under the down-feather horizon

if the sky grows tired
of being everywhere at once
adapting to the mood swings of the weather

if the clouds drift off
trying to hold themselves together
make deals with gravity
to loiter a little longer

I wonder if rain is scared
of falling
if she has trouble letting go

if snowflakes get sick
of being perfect all the time
each one trying to be one-of-a-kind

I wonder if stars wish
upon themselves before they die
if they need to teach their young how to shine

I wonder if shadows long
to just-for-once feel the sun
if they get lost in the shuffle
not knowing where they're from

I wonder if sunrise and sunset
respect each other
even though they've never met

if volcanoes get stressed
if storms have regrets
if compost believes in life after death

I wonder if breath
ever thinks of suicide
if the wind
just wants to sit still sometimes
and watch the world pass by



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if smoke was born knowing how to rise
if rainbows get shy back stage
not sure if their colors match right

I wonder if lightning sets an alarm clock
to know when to crack
if rivers ever stop
and think of turning back

if streams meet the wrong sea
and their whole lives run off-track
I wonder if the snow
wants to be black

if the soil thinks she's too dark
if butterflies want to cover up their marks
if rocks are self-conscious of their weight
if mountains are insecure of their strength

I wonder if waves get discouraged
crawling up the sand
only to be pulled back again
to where they began

if land feels stepped upon
if sand feels insignificant
if trees need to question their lovers
to know where they stand

if branches waver at the crossroads
unsure of which way to grow
if the leaves understand they're replaceable
and still dance when the wind blows

I wonder where the moon goes
when she is hiding
I want to find her there
and watch the ocean
spin from a distance

listen to her
stir in her sleep

effort give way to existence

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NAIMA PENNIMAN is a freedom-forging futurist rooted in her ancestors' brilliance. She is a devotee of seeds, a soulful story teller, a multidimensional artist, movement builder, medicine grower, healer, and educator. Co-founder of WILDSEED Healing Village, Director of Education at Soul Fire Farm, and healing practitioner at Harriet's Apothecary, Naima devotes her creativity and collaborations towards planetary interdependence. Published in *All We Can Save*, *We Are Each Other's Harvest*, *Farming While Black*, *A Darker Wilderness*, *Black Earth Wisdom* and *Semillas*, Naima's poetry has inspired thousands of people and movements across the world.

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