

# Her Phantom Happiness Lyrics

Dec. 9th, Pickman, 8pm

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## Her Phantom Happiness, text by Georgia Douglass Johnson

### **I. The Heart of a Woman**

The heart of a woman goes forth with the dawn,  
As a lone bird, soft winging, so restlessly on,  
Afar o'er life's turrets and vales does it roam  
In the wake of those echoes the heart calls home.

The heart of a woman falls back with the night,  
And enters some alien cage in its plight,  
And tries to forget it has dreamed of the stars  
While it breaks, breaks, breaks on the sheltering bars.

### **II. Foredoom**

Her life was dwarfed, and wed to blight,  
Her very days were shades of night,  
Her every dream was born entombed,  
Her soul, a bud, – that never bloomed.

### **III. Quest**

The phantom happiness I sought  
    O'er every crag and moor;  
I paused at every postern gate,  
    And knocked at every door;

In vain I searched the land and sea,  
    E'en to the inmost core,  
The curtains of eternal night  
    Descend – my search is o'er.

## How Could I Know, text by Crystal Williams

How could I know?

What did I know?

What could I have said?

I do not know.

I cannot hold,

oh, you,

my heart implodes,

It cannot hold

I cannot hold

A black hole,

As if dead I cannot sleep

I dare not dream

I cannot dream

I can not hold,

Oh, you, you and we and you and we

What have we done?

Oh, Lord, I weep,

Oh, Lord, I weep, and do not sleep.

# To Curse or Not to Curse, text: The Holy Bible

Genesis 8:21

... and the Lord said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake [...] neither will I again smite any more every thing living, as I have done.

Malachi 1: 2

If ye will not hear, and if ye will not lay it to heart, to give glory unto my name, saith the Lord of hosts, I will even send a curse upon you, and I will curse your blessing; yea, I have cursed them already, because ye do not lay it to heart.

## p e r d u e, text by Maram al-Masri

L'exode 1

Ils immigreront

sans bagages

sans visa

sans billets d'avion

d'agiter leur mains avec un mouchoir blanc

ou de promettre à leurs chers de revenir

sans valise

sans brosse à dents ni pâte à raser

sans savon ni parfum.

Ils immigreront

des fois avec des papiers officiels

qui disent leur nom

leur âge

leur lieu de naissance

leur lieu de résidence

et des fois sans

car ils ont été brûlés avec leurs murs

enterrés avec leur maison

noyés avec leurs bateaux

Ils immigreront

Exodus 1

They immigrate

without luggage

without visas

without plane tickets

to wipe their hands with a white tissue

or to promise their return to their loved ones

without bags

without toothbrushes or razors

Without soap or perfume.

They immigrate

sometimes without official papers

that have their name

their age

their birthplace

their place of residence

and sometimes without

because they've been burned with their walls

buried with their homes

drowned with their boats

They immigrate

avec leur coeurs troués  
Par les balles de la peur  
leur peau abîmée  
comme les feuilles des passeports mouillés

with their hearts pierced  
by bullets of fear  
their skin damaged  
like the pages of their wet passports

Ils immigreront

They immigrate

avec sur leur dos  
leurs enfants  
leurs vieillards  
et leur soucis  
Dans leur poche  
la place laissée vide  
par la clef de leur maison  
perdue

carrying their children  
their elderly  
and their worries  
on their back  
In their pocket,  
an empty place  
from the (absent) key to their  
lost home

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## L'exode 2

## Exodus 2

Les ombres  
passent  
comme des nuages  
comme des âmes  
comme des idées  
comme la sueur de la fatigue ouvrière  
comme les ombres fatiguées des immigrés  
qui voient les corps passer  
sans qu'elles les attrapent  
Ils laissent  
leurs empreintes  
sur le visage de l'humanité  
mémoires de vie

The shadows  
pass  
like clouds  
like souls  
like ideas  
like the sweat of a tired working woman  
like immigrants' exhausted shadows  
that see bodies pass by  
without grasping them  
They leave  
their imprint  
on the face of humanity  
memories of life

La terre.  
Les herbes  
L'eau  
les rivières  
les rochers  
les montagnes.  
les chansons et la poésie  
même le ciment froid  
de l'histoire  
gardent  
pour longtemps  
l'odeur discrète  
de leur espoir.

The earth.  
The grass  
the water  
the rivers  
the rocks  
the mountains.  
songs and poetry  
even the cold cement  
of history  
keeps  
for ages  
the discrete odor  
of their hope.

## In Between the Moon and Us, text by Enzo Silon Surin

I am no longer good at rememb'ring how long it has been since  
I first held the notion of how your hand  
shaping and bending a prism of light would look in my hand, as you twirled the  
air and wrapp'ed around your hair like one orbiting a wound or erasing  
fine lines of something broken or breaking.  
Here on the cusp of a world teeming with gloom, you bloom  
as if making a room for me,  
as if to turn all my hurts into a prep for belonging.  
I hope you do not mistake my musing for a rouse.  
It's just that the wrongs you right tell a story about us falling and the ground  
catching us and we, getting back up, as if we have known the risk  
tamp'ring with a universe in this way our entire lives,  
as if ev'rything that is lovely about this twinkling might disappear &  
as if this light between us is how one falls in love.

## Sonnet LXXXI, text by Anthony R. Green

He hurts – my unrequited lover hurts  
My heart myopic burns within my chest  
His feelings win – my feelings he deserts  
Destroys my interests – shatters all the rest  
He still remains as beauty to my want  
A want for something more – for something real  
I yearn to stray from longing – elude taunt  
To kneel before perfection that I feel  
And even though I know he will not sway  
I'll follow him with wind and batt'ring ram  
And though I know he'll never walk my way  
I'll stay with him – for that is who I am  
So hurt me unrequited lover – sting  
To my strong thirst you do quench everything

## Three Adinkra Miniatures for Violin & Soprano

- I. Sankofa
- II. Funtumfunefu Denkyemfunefu
- III. Nkinkyim

... all that is good ... , text by Phillis Wheatley, Harriet Jacobs, Sojourner Truth

**I Phillis Wheatley, 11 March 1774, Letter to Reverend Samson Occum**

... for in every human Breast, [there is] implanted a Principle, which we call Love of Freedom; it is impatient of Oppression, and pants for Deliverance; and ... I will assert, that the same Principle lives in us.

How well the Cry for Liberty, and the reverse Disposition for the exercise of oppressive Power over others agree, – I humbly think it does not require the Penetration of a Philosopher to determine.

**II. Harriet Jacobs, 5 September 1862, “Life among the contrabands”, letter/report for William Lloyd Garrison published in The Liberator [p. 3], writing as Linda Brent**

Do not say the [former] slaves take no interest in each other. Like other people, some of them are designedly selfish, some are ignorantly selfish. With the light and instruction you give them, you will see this selfishness disappear. Trust them, make them free, and give them the responsibility of caring for themselves, and they will soon learn to help each other. Some of them have been so degraded by slavery that they do not know the usages of civilized life: they know little else than the handle of the hoe, the plough, the cotton pad, and the overseer’s lash. Have patience with them. You have helped to make them what they are; teach them civilization. You owe it to them, and you will find them as apt to learn as any other people that come to you stupid from oppression.

**III. Sojourner Truth, New Year’s Day “Letter” (greeting) published in the newspaper The Chicago Inter Ocean, 26 December 1880**

We talk of a beginning, but there is no beginning but the beginning of a wrong. All that has a beginning will have an ending[, ... ] and all that is good is without end.