

Our Lady of Innumerable Appellatives

Dayna Patterson

*Enter into Her gates with thanksgiving
and into Her courts with praise.*

—Psalm 100:4

1.

Swirl of gold gleaming in our daughters' eyes.
Amen. Whorl of cirrostratus haloing
the moon. Amen. Your fingerprints are
everywhere. Lady of Ice. Lady of Sand.
of Maple Star and Gingko Fan. of Rot.
of Scat. of Hoarders and Whores. Goddess,
is there any title you would refuse?
of Shopping Carts with One Wonky Wheel.
of Loofas. of Wedding Cakes. of Artisanal
Pumpnickel Loaves. of Mud. of Moss.
of Mirages. of Vultures and of Vespers.
We'd like to pour you into a ceramic mug
we made in high school, sloppy rings and drippy glaze.
We'd like to tuck you into a locket,

2.

fold you tiny into a locket,
wear you around our necks, the ultimate
amulet. You're no saint of narrow scope.
Your sight is wide, your praxis: gatherhood.
of Violin recitals and the A String Concerto.
of Messy Music and Divine Harmony.
of Cacophony. of Canticle. of Beginner's luck.
Dead finch on the sidewalk under a blooming

magnolia tree. of Ovation and
 Oration and Oblation and Elevation
 and Desecration. Carpenter ants.
 Water bears. Leptons. Lady of Smallest
 Units and Magnificatus Extremis.
 Lady of Made Up Latin. of Lingua Franca.

3.

Teach us your lingua franca, your pidgin.
 Lady of Tamil. Lady of Greek.
 of Nahuatl. of Sanskrit. of Urdu.
 Eskimo. Korean. Hebrew.
 Chinese. Egyptian. Nushu.
 Lady of Mariology. Angelology.
 Eschatology. All the -ologies
 and all the -olatries. Lunolatry
 and Ichthyolatry. Astrolatry
 and Zoolatry. Lady of Words. The
 Word. of Celery, even, the fibrous kind
 impossible to chew. of Math, Complex
 Calculus, mind-bending Theoretical Physics.
 All that, plus simpler stuff, like addition.

4.

Lady of the Simple Truth of Addition,
 like loneliness + 1 and what that equals.
 Lady of Every Possible Love.
 Same sex. Trans. Bi. Asexual. Pansexual.
 Lady of All Loving Formulations &
 Goddess of Every Gender. Transgender.
 Cisgender. Agender. Pangender. Non-
 binary. Two-spirit. Genderqueer. All the genders.

Holiness of every color. Black. Pink. Red. Blue. Grey.
All the colors and color combinations.
All the ages, zygote to crone. Goddess
of Puberty, of Menstruation, of Menopause.
Goddess of the Blood Moon, bleed us, lead us
through the shadow of your pulsing seasons.

5.

Through deep shadow of each pulsing season,
lead us, Lady of Every Kind of Blood.
A. B. O. Positive. Negative. Anemic.
Cold-blooded. Warm-blooded. Sap-blooded.
Overstory and understory.
Root, trunk, branch, foliage. Sky and earth.
Foot, torso, arm, head. Death and birth. Goddess
of Endless Litanies, we like to imagine
your special grace lighting our darkest
corners, the forgotten cobwebbed crevices.
We imagine your bright gaze burning up
dew on the neglected rake. We hold tight
to the myth of specialness, chosendom.
But, Madonna, you're no leashed deity.

6.

Lady, you're no leashed deity. No chain
forged between you and our basin. Our grove.
Our desert. Our field. Our mountain. Free-range
Goddess, you've answered to many names.
Asherah. Innana. Ishtar. Astarte.
Sauska. Isis. Venus. Ema. Sophia. Shekinah.
Semiramis. Amaterasu. Aphrodite.
Queen of the Night. Queen of Heaven. A host

of others we've lost or forgotten. Now
 we cry out with tears *Lady, I believe;*
help thou my unbelief. Swallow us
 like tepid water. Hold us in your hands
 like tufts of fog. Tuck your song into our
 wooden bodies, you the string, you the bow.
 Teach us music fluid enough for praise.

7.

Teach us music fluid enough to paint
 your praise. Gift us eyes wide enough to drink
 your crystalline wonders. Stretch our ears
 tuba-huge to catch your spirit-whispers.
 Make of our ragged patches one quilt warm
 enough for every dreamer: rock, bug, sprout.
 You are the Shepherdess knocking icicles
 from our woolly locks. We are the sheep,
 sure of sheer, oblivious to your care,
 Our Lady of Ice. Our Lady of Sand.
 of Maple Star and Gingko Fan.
 of. of. of. Your fingerprints everywhere:
 Cloud-whorl, a halo round the moon. Amen.
 Gold-swirl, our daughters' radiant eyes. Amen.

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