

WHEN
THE
WORLD
WOUNDS

KIINI
IBURA
SALAAM

To all the wild and wise ones who are helping me raise my daughter
so that when the world wounds she knows how to react, adapt and snapback.

THE MALADY OF NEED

He would have looked at you like he knew all your truths. You would have wanted to unearth the secrets you saw buried in his eyes. You'd have caught his glance and your dick would have gone stiff. You would have imagined him licking your chest, your ankles, his own perfect lips.

You would have traded a week's worth of protein to get your work detail changed, to shatter the barriers between you, to ride with him only a breath away. Had you any gods you would have thanked them for the nutters who were always trying to escape. Even as your shackled hands were pulled tight over your head, you would have felt love for lockdown. When the lights cut, you would have eased yourself forward, slipping around the others, easing your tether forward as you moved into his orbit.

He would have whipped around when you stood behind him, then shushed you when you tried to explain. He would have brushed against you and you would have swayed with him, surprised to feel the tug of want stirring in your loins. When the shuttle lights blinked back on, he would have sighed before forcing blankness back into his face. You would have been left with tremors, tiny spasms whispering your need.

You would have begun to starve yourself. You would go without to nourish him. You would bring him only the best of your rations—long grasshoppers roasted crunchy, thick red caterpillars, the ones with the sweet meat. It would be the only time you would have been able to touch him—in the few seconds after your hands had been released from the shackles. You would have smiled as he slipped your food into his zip suit. It would have pleased you to think of objects you had handled resting against his skin.

He would have been thick. With pounds of flesh that could cushion all your hates and angers. You would have lost hours slack-jawed, staring into space, fantasizing about the press of his flesh.

He would have started to make demands. He would have wanted you to mark yourself, to draw blood. He would have wanted to see the scabs, the thin lines that prove how much you want him. You would have begun to enjoy it. It would have felt electric to think of him as you severed your skin. As you bled, you would have imagined him, alone in his bunk, his fingers doing the work your dick had been dying to do.

Your thoughts of him would have become incessant. You would have been thinking about him when they came for you in the night. You would have been desperate to cling to your thoughts of him as they shackled you to the rack. You would have strained to remember the contours of his mouth as they plunged the tubes into your back. You would have tried to re-create his scent as the machine began to whirl. They would have begun to drain your blood, as you were imagining yourself slipping inside him. Then the pain would have overwhelmed you. You would have gone slack as everything around you melted away.

He would have known. As soon as he had seen you, he would have known that they had come for you. You would have wanted to stare at him, to drink in the vision of him to feed your sanity, but you would not have been able to bear it. You would have lowered your head so he could not see the mania in your eyes.

You would not have known how he did it, but you would have known that he had found a way to force the shuttle to screech to a stop. As the shackles went slack and the voices of the others rose around you, he would have come. He would have freed your wrists and touched his tongue to yours. You would have fought it. You would have tried to remember where you were. But he would not have relented.

He would have dragged your buried sobs to the surface. You would have lost yourself under the press of his lips. He would have made visions flash in your mind. Touching him, you would have remembered what the sky looked like, the taste of fresh fruit, the feel of water on your skin.

You would have wanted to stop. You would not have wanted to be this naked, this disarmed. You would have lost yourself in the slickness of his body, in the work, in the friction. The itch of the compound would have dissipated against your will. The burn of the electric wristbands would have faded. You would have straddled him and pummeled him with frantic thrusts. As if you wanted to devour him. As if you wanted to re-create him, then spit him out reborn.

When the shuttle jerked back into motion, you would not have been able to look at him. Slipping your wrists back into the

shackles felt like insanity, like suicide. As you worked, his scent would have gnawed at your nostrils. You would have felt as if his dark waters were rising over your body, as if you were drowning in him.

In the morning, you will erase him from existence. You will let the day's drudgery make a meal of your heart. You will withdraw. You will lock away all softness, all surrender. When the malady comes, you will clench the corners of your lips. You will go tense as it straddles your shoulders and chokes you with your own need. You will roll over and stroke your hardness. You will come in silence, consumed by dread.