

DANA LAWRIE **GRASP THE NETTLE**
21.2 - 10.3.18 METRO ARTS



Archwife

WORDS BY MADELIENE STACK

Sometimes an arch arrives, sometimes an arch announces itself discreetly stands in the corner breathes with the room. Sometimes an arch arises enunciates a theory of itself.

Sometimes the fallen fruit are taken, sometimes the fallen fruit mock with their plump face the finder then flipped with the toe of a sneaker reveal the guts gnawed out, animal-speed. Sometimes an arch is pink and sometimes it is blue. Sometimes it is hung on the line in high summer, bleaching, sometimes an arch droops over clean laundry, sometimes opens to allow entry.

Sometimes nine as a practice arises, nine the number of magenta and heat, number of backspacing and reversal, lastness, grounding and luck. Grounding like rotting mangoes. Grounding like the shining brown seed of a mamey sapote, of a slippery avocado, papaya caviar, *tactile* like the first word in a child's mouth. The dyeing method is a theory unto itself, first plucked living, later let rot. Sometimes the constellations of birth tell something. Sometimes it takes time to tell what, sometimes the telling is transparent and sometimes colourfast. Sometimes what dyes, penetrates.

Sometimes an arch is a wife. Sometimes an archwife dominates, announces herself as of a superior order, sometimes an arch is a witch. Sometimes an arch is a brow raised in question, or a closed door, or a passage without end. Sometimes an arch is the inner line of a foot, sometimes a fountain, sometimes the liquid that comes from within the body. Sometimes a waterfall is an arch under whose cover anything can be articulated. An arch to be walked under can also become a bridge.

Sometimes an arch is hibiscus, sometimes spiderwort, sometimes pecan, pomegranate, passionfruit, sometimes jaboticaba. Sometimes an arch is avocado, turmeric, dandelion, sometimes iris root, sometimes beetroot, black beans, sometimes butterfly pea flowers. Sometimes an arch fades in the light. Sometimes an arch invites trust in a glut of beauty incoming, allows some to overflow and waste down the drain.

Sometimes bodies appear on bodies appear on bodies, piled like forest matter. Sometimes an arch is scented with death. Sometimes cloth suggests a shroud, others gauze to staunch a wound, others a day of jubilation. Sometimes cloth suggests a bed prepared by another, suggests a place to lay the head.

Sometimes above where the dead lie the laws of physics grow woozy, unsure whose time they're keeping. Sometimes the fruit stolen from the graveyard is the sweetest, sometimes the flowers plucked at night, sometimes to pass through chambers made of light is to have your interior shifted, imperceptibly.

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Sometimes an arch as in architecture, what is flimsy made solid. Sometimes this architecture is what breathes as the labyrinth consents to unravel. Sometimes a vast bright room is a blueprint for what can happen when space is shared, when the quality of light shifts through a day. A tilted planet suggests a pout, but also an arch.

Sometimes the *arche* is the substance that accounts for everything that exists, seen and unseen, vapour and mist and weight of air, sometimes the arch is where these things begin to be seen, sometimes it is what begins in chaos, sometimes when eclipsed the moon becomes arch and invites traversing.

Sometimes an arch suggests a chamber that reaches the limits of desire. Sometimes scaffolding enacting what is to come. Sometimes an arch gathers streets and alleys, plazas into it. Sometimes an arch is the property of a fountain spewing forth extravagantly, or rainbows bleached of their colour are smiles turned down. Sometimes an arch is suggestive of what comes after this world.

Sometimes an arch is a tunnel cut into the hillside. An arch, like a tunnel, is reversible, and built for passing through. Sometimes when an arch is also a bridge it is an aqueduct. Sometimes this resembles, in the mind, *the bridges of the Greeks: We have inherited them but we do not know how to use them. We thought they were intended to have houses built upon them. We have erected skyscrapers on them to which we ceaselessly add storeys. We no longer know that they are bridges, things made so that we may pass along them*¹ ... Sometimes the soul orients towards a formative point.

Sometimes one desires to move through luminous arches couched in the rotting stench of the tropics and stand in the place neither here nor there, the scent of fallen fruit heavy in the humid air. Sometimes blue comes from violet, yellow from crimson, pale from near-black. Sometimes green fruit dyes pink, sometimes the quality of the water surprises and iron rises like blood, sometimes shading is necessary, airtightness, locking somewhere lightfast.

Sometimes an arch is a trellis trailing green, sometimes a scented vessel, sometimes it is made of excess, of offcuts and dregs. Sometimes the best room in any house is the verandah, being neither there nor here. Sometimes in the street jacarandas mark the bounds around their feet with blossom, sometimes this is enough to satisfy a need for civic spaciousness.

Sometimes an arch says there is a world beyond this one and you can enter it, sometimes it says *I want to be in it all the way to the end of it because I believe in another world in the world and I want to be in that*². Or an arch invites one to pass through. There are arches in the body. Sometimes an arch is made for an idler, a stroller, marking where someone has pointed a way inside.

¹Weil, S. in *Gravity and Grace*

²Moten, F. in *The Undercommons*

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Metro Arts and the artist acknowledge the Jagera and Turrbal peoples, as the custodians of this land, recognising their connection to land, waters and community. We honour the story-telling and art-making at the heart of First Nation's cultures, and the enrichment it gives to the lives of all Australians.

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