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NAHAL SUZANNE JAMIR

Ghost-Mother, Book 3, Section 7

after H.D.'s Helen in Egypt

He could name The Mother,
but the other, he could not name;
she was a melted candle, a dried-up piece of meat, a raisin in the

Not Eve, not Snake, but

a hidden child, hidden in a closet (a wardrobe?)
or behind an oak tree, or *inside* of a tree, a tree of

an intimate sorrow, a secret kept
even from her—her own mother who was her own
self, the innermost.

Only The Mother could be named,
and the other, she was a wailing duck in a pond by a cemetery
near a father's gravestone—in any case, a cause of shame

to sisters.
It was not that she was beautiful/exotic
from a land in the middle of many mountains.
True, she stood on the mountains,

brave and then weak—falling sometimes....
as the men warred on and killed themselves;
It was not that she was beautiful/exotic

(Sometimes flying in the hot blue above the mountains...)

There were other mothers,
in spite of The Other,
as beautiful/different, as young—as brown, as old.

It was not that she was different, from a land
in the middle of many mountains,
a desert filled with hollow men and rats and strange (chanting) songs,
a desert she had to leave....

But I stared and stared across the brown sand
and the brown skin
and the cacti and the shattered glass
and the smoldering hatred of her (some my own)
until my/her/his/our eyes cleared, the fog in them cleared—

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(her foggy eyes exotic and beautiful, but cannot see....
mine not so and still cannot see)

and the naming of things ended
and the mountain sank
and the two rivers met
and the two lovers kissed
and the secret of Mother ended
and the lights were so far away (candles signifying HOME and a Southern woman's
cross-stitched pillow...*not* my mother....*not* Southern)

[the twitching, the fastness/slowness that feels like a dirty flame dancing, the feet dancing like, like a bird, like a prayer-bird strung up, like a prayer that feels like a bird, or like the cry of children playing....the children are playing.....what are they saying? what are they?—happy? Please—]

and the two—