

ANATOMY 1968 by Karen Hartman

Unpublished

The Hong Kong Hilton. Val is on her honeymoon. Her husband, on leave from the Vietnam War, is asleep. VAL lights the first candle in a makeshift menorah.

VAL

Burn everlasting light
burn in the temple eight days
without fuel.

What burns without being fed?

A miracle, or a woman.

I burn days.

I burn and burn.

I make him mine.

I make my mind a place where his fears can nestle and grow fruit.

I make my body a soft spot for growing bodies.

I make a terrible wife.

I woke from my own dream and yelled, wake up
to a soldier
or anyway a healer
who every day must wake to face – I don't know.

I have the map memorized.

sixty-two thousand square miles north, sixty seven south
or is it the reverse?

I listen close on the radio.

I made a diagram for the children but then left it home.

I know enough to know,

bring something like that to class you could be stepping in a mine

I know enough to know,

under my own skin lurk mysteries i may well be too dumb to understand.

Here I come

rushing through the blank spots of his last months.

New fields

fulla foreign rice.

It doesn't digest.
It will never digest.
I know enough to know
a war lasts until everyone who saw it is dead.
And maybe even then
some smelly grease
stays burning in some clogged heart.

Is that why they fall for nurses?
Because at the end of the day you want to close your eyes next to someone with the same
nightmares as you?

(She opens his medical kit, finds a scalpel)

I'm going right on into his heart.
I'm going to live in there and keep it liquid.
I'm going to get in and learn the codes
before they switch.

Unless he's beyond repair
in which case I'm escaping and starting up a girl's school
where everyone gets a scalpel
and knowledge cuts deep.

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You are welcome to perform this monologue for free!

*You may CUT but you may not CHANGE the words. Please introduce the monologue with title
of play and author's name (this is a monologue from Leah's Train by Karen Hartman).*

*Feel free to send a video link to yourself performing the monologue through the Contact page,
and let me know if I may share! Thanks and be well, KH*

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