**Beyond Mountains**

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I have faith
like the lanterns
carried through the cane fields,
cupped against the wind,
small flames refusing to die.

I want love to conquer all
while Black hands in Haiti
turned machetes from harvest to revolution,
cutting freedom out of the earth itself.

But the truth is, I like life
Yet, I stand still
like a country waiting for invasion

I am afraid.

Afraid the wrong question
will expose me.

Why was I adopted?
Why do I wear Haiti
like a borrowed flag
creased at the edges,
never folded quite right?

Why am I not Black enough
for the rooms that inspect skin
like customs officers?

Why am I not Haitian enough
to inherit the mountains,
the salt air,
the language my first mother prayed in?

Why did whiteness become a shoreline
I thought could save me?

Maybe if I had been born
with pale skin and an easy name,
I would move through the world
like the men who signed declarations
certain the ground belonged beneath them.

Maybe then
I wouldn’t’t wake gasping,
chest rattling
like cannon smoke over Port-au-Prince,
like a revolution still unfinished.

But then I remember:

even Haiti,
the first Black republic,
stood bloodied and exhausted
still called itself free.

Even America, trembling and divided,
had to believe in liberty
before liberty believed in it.

So I count my breaths
like drumbeats.

One for my twin.
One for my baby sister.
One for my dad.
One for my mother.

One for Berlie.
One for the Desrosiers family.

And one
my first home, Haiti
still lifting its flag
through ash, floodwater, debt, and grief
still teaching me
that survival itself
can be an act of revolution.