

IF I WERE FREE

by leseliey rose

if I were free

I would tell volcanic stories

with golden glinting lava

stomping stories

angry and seething

accusatory stories

that point fingers at wrongdoers and separatist thinkers

I would tell unabashed stories instead of passive stories that name isms

with no actors

rape with no perpetrators

I would tell naked

in your face stories

truth on a plate stories

that no one

could look away from

I would pair them with

fanciful fluttering stories

light with love stories

and brilliantly colorful stories

divinely defiant stories
of a world order
that never centered whiteness
I would tell untainted stories
of black indigenous
cooperative societies
never colonized by barbarians
never dominated by misogynists
never poisoned by lack or limitation
I would tell heretical stories
of queer and trans
two-spirit
gods and goddesses
worshipped by raceless hearts
painted by all-loving imaginations
alive in and as all things
I would tell sovereign stories
stand alone stories
stark and sobering stories
of an upside down
world turned over
to us who see
from the horizon.

A white cursive signature, likely reading 'Leslie', on a black background. The signature is fluid and elegant, with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

ANCESTORS

by leseliey rose

My blood flows
Fierce and fiery
And faith-filled

It flows thick
With wisdom
Of worlds
Far and wide
Real imagined
Now and then
Before after
Inbetween
And yet to come

It sings to me
As it dances
In my veins...

We are here
We see you
We know you
We dreamed you
We promised you

We are rock and water
Earth and wind

East born rising
West set resting

Ever breathing
Ever creating
Ever singing



ENCIRCLE ME

by leseliey rose

Encircle me
in strong arms
Like a bear hug
But not

Let the circle
Be snug
but not too tight
Steady but secure

Let me cry
Like I'm not in my 40s
Ugly cry existential tears
Sob and shake
As I lament
the world
We've made

Let me stay
As long as it takes
To feel soothed

Whisper to me
That I'm safe and
Tell me to give you
the weight off my shoulders

Pat me on the bridge
called my back
Like we pat
baby bottoms at bedtime

Let me lay
my head on your chest
feel its rise and fall
hear your heart beat
and remember...

there's a God
that breathes us
that lives in us

And tell me
God is not done
With this world
Not done
with me
yet

And let me
believe you

Encircled
in strong arms
Let me believe
It's all going to be okay

