Woman Who Begins Like a Rock

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Woman Who Begins Like A Rock

She beats the drum:

Woman who Begins like a Rock, I
remember many strong dreams
of journeys over water
of movement without cause
A time before this chaos of nerves
when dreams gave order, gave strength.
Now I have learned to isolate myself,
wicked as I am, and live
far away from this memory:
the even beats of your breath.

The Chorus sings on and on:

A frenzied flow over mountains and
through fields, from inland lake to
ocean shore, at night, we
singing women, winter mooning in our hair,
clutch torches in bird-like hands.
With gifts of snakes or small forest creatures
— which often we tear to bits —
We come to see
Come to see the world the way it is.

Whatever it is the mind refuses
hides out in the body
grieving in a deep muscle or
angering the bones to inflammation.
Whatever it is that can't be owned
wants out!
Demands to be seen,
will take up residence in every room of
the body's house until
that cunning which gives the outcast
the trick of burrowing,
like time's wrinkles into flesh,
is finally exhausted.

We are only half grown
still not awake, barely able to move,
and already something about the way we walk
makes us nomads.
By the time we learn to dance
we will be known as whores and gypsies
and still it will take all our cunning
to keep to the road at all.

A moment ago I was asleep
Now I can almost speak
A moment ago the lightest of mysteries
were obscene and awful secrets;
Now I can almost speak.
But this is a rage so slow
only the spinal cord can name it
And while my words are churned
to a scorpion morass
something suicidal whispers
its goal of madness.

Woman who Begins like a Rock,
before everything we are came you
and everything you feared slept
in us as in a tomb.
Now everything not mourned for,
always denied,
is rising like the ideal breath of lovers
just beyond the next hill.