

## *A body in three acts*

*By Claire Summers*

### *Act I*

Suddenly, there is a dawn. This is how everything begins: suddenly.

Our stage is a dense landscape. There was once space here, but space is only ever in waiting, always waiting.

Even now, at the beginning, a high and faded moon is faintly etched against the gleam of the day's light.

A figure emerges, stage left, or perhaps she was always there.

She is virgin, she is bird, she is song.

She crouches, runs her fingers along slick earth, pushes earth against milky belly, body swollen with promise.

She speaks in shades of blush and bloom, cream and butter.

Dancers take their place on the stage. The orchestra tightens their bows.

The landscape is alive. It is just beginning.

### *Act II*

In this act, the body becomes porous, its edges perforate.

The world goes rushing in, every atom in one great cosmic hurry.

The moon (our moon) is rising.

A body slouches towards a slant embrace.

Cheeks flush with crimson betray the hour and its fate.

The gaze meanders, grazes the hairs on a lover's navel, to arrive at the foot, its arches a cathedral's ceiling tilted towards heaven.

Urgent fingers pull on wrists, on promises, all bearing rising bruises of perse and plum.

Lean in, close, closer now.

The crescendo will fall even as it climbs.

### *Act III*

The body arrives at its twilight.

The moon, that same moon, still and stilled, hangs heavy on curtains of indigo.

She is the sky's great burden but, by grace, she holds her there.

All is quiet, all is blue, all is water.

The dancers have taken their leave. A figure stands, receding, stage right.

These hours bear witness to (the texture, the temperature, the tone of) her solitude.

Her eye looks back, clips the shoulder, breaks the sinews of time to leave them adrift.

She is patient, waiting, a monument rearranged after girl, after pirouette.

In her hands is a ribbon that stretches, on and on, on and on and on,

Coiling around the length of a day, the length of a dance, the length of a life.