

Poseidon and His Disciples Conquer Jacksonville

by Laura Miller

(Full piece)

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Jacksonville, I've invented an animal for you,

the horse I ride up from my palace of ocean glass

and groom with a coral comb, to fill your nets with fish

and spare your ships the fiery tracks of my chariot as my pony

hoofs irreverent donuts into your soil to give it new life.

In association with Concerned Dolphins' Against Motorboats

& General Carelessness, my trident's kaboom

will shake your strip malls, unchain them from

the pink flamingo skies of the west. And your bridges,

like beleaguered women bending over bathtubs,

make me call upon the withering dunes to rise

and dome you over like a pop-up office

until we fix this thing—

I'm not through with you, Jacksonville;

we must become the visionaries of Atlantis.

Your maritime youth wants mythic rebellion

while your beach bar warriors still sleep under black and white

striped umbrellas, lifting slowly to strike out at nothing

in the ocean's first-born strip clubs. Yet, I want nothing more

than to meet you at the old Crossroads' jean-shortened scrap of sand,

where the shark fisherman throw their minds to the sea

and surfers shred the skyline like dragonflies.

You are just one version of your best self,

but nearby, the Fountain of Youth still bubbles over Matanzas

where whole French families were once slaughtered.

Jacksonville, the machinery of our once beloved river,

our 20th century Vienna, is now just a flea market

of dinghies high on dock wood

and the memory of manatees—

You are more than a land of end zone gladiators,

flip-flopped believers, eaters of shirtsleeves,

and old slave chains. See how the river's dirty fingers dig

into the mouth of my oceanic margins?

Give me the sickle. I've seen it done before,

thrown the good ole boys' jewels

into the fallen black branches of Talbot island—

Jacksonville, you are not whole yet—

Remember, I created the Gorgons.

I control plate tectonics. Give your city

to the young and turn the sailors towards their peninsular orgasms—

This is a tsunami of radical change. This is a coup d'état

of generational domain. Your children will inherit the mansions

of Meyer lemons falling around the landscapers' rental equipment—

Say yes Jacksonville, though you get no vote,

I want to love you again. But, you are lucky;

water is the greatest equalizer, and as I assess your fate

in the Metro Diner, there will always be the dreaming boy

with a sword tattooed under his eye

who paints your beauty the color of blood oranges in cream.

(Excerpt)

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Dedicated to Jacksonville's peaceful protesters, then and now

Jacksonville, I've invented an animal for you, the horse I ride up from my palace of ocean glass to fill your nets with fish and spare your ships the fiery tracks of my chariot. My trident's kaboom will shake your strip malls from the pink flamingo skies of the west. And your bridges, like beleaguered women bending over bathtubs, make me call upon the withering dunes to rise and dome you over—I'm not through with you, Jacksonville; your youth wants mythic rebellion while your beach bar warriors still sleep under black and white striped umbrellas, lifting slowly to strike out at nothing in the ocean's first-born strip clubs. Yet, I want nothing more than to meet you at the old Crossroads' jean-shorted scrap of sand, where the shark fisherman throw their minds to the sea and surfers shred the skyline like dragonflies. You are one version of your best self, but nearby, the Fountain of Youth still bubbles over Matanzas. Jacksonville, the machinery of our once beloved river, our 20th century Vienna, is still just a flea market of dinghies high on dock wood rot and the memory of manatees. You are more than a land of end zone gladiators, flip-flopped believers, eaters of shirtsleeves, and old slave chains. Give me the sickle. I've seen it done before, thrown the good ole boys' jewels into the fallen branches of Talbot. Remember, I created the Gorgons. I control plate tectonics. Give your city to the young and turn your sailors towards their peninsular orgasms—This is generational domain. Your children will inherit the mansions of Meyer lemons falling around the landscapers' rental equipment—Say yes Jacksonville, though you get no vote, I want to love you again. But, you are lucky; water is the greatest equalizer, and as I assess your fate in the Metro Diner, a dreaming boy with a sword tattooed under one eye, paints your beauty the color of blood oranges in cream.



Paired with mural: "Back Track, Then Relapse" by Halsi