

# DUB

FINDING CEREMONY

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love bugs and starfish they gave us them. conch and turtles too. calling birds and pelicans, jelly fish and lobster. we need them. we need what they do. mites and whales. we needed them all to teach us illusions of size. hibiscus and palm we needed them too to stop us from trusting our eyes. longing and sweetness we needed all that to shape our days into song. and wind herself slapping us with water. we needed the storms to grow strong.<sup>13</sup>

there were witnesses. sea grape leaves, burr grass, pelicans, actual eels. there were vines and spines for everything you did, reflectively overgrown. brutally cut down. there was nothing here that was not you and what you did to who you thought wasn't you. it's true. nothing went unseen, even in the unlit dirt roads of night. even underwater or in caves. nothing went unseen or undreamed in the short long lifetimes of the enslaved. nothing is unknown. you. don't take nothing to your grave. except maybe bones. and even those will be repurposed for limestone soon. there is no permanent space for doom or gloom, only growth. and the green, brown life around you, sees everything.<sup>14</sup>

what did we learn from the turtles? maybe a better question is what did the turtles learn from us. turtles could teach you about colonialism. turtles know centuries of leaving and coming back and about how when you come back and nothing is the same you wonder whether it's worth it to lay eggs or love anything. what turtles learned to do under colonialism was to die. a soft body in a hard context. a system that will stick you in your smoothest softest place, wrench you from the armor of your home. boil you and eat you like you wanted it.

and us. we made everything from turtles. the best soup in the world, and the bowls to eat it from. we made clothing, tools and pretty things to look at. it looks like you can see half the world, the distance the turtles travel, the balance they keep.

but what we learned from colonialism was to take without giving back. was to eat without gratitude.

what the Arawak learned from colonialism was a critique we eventually ignored:

- 1 that is not how you eat your gods.
- 2 this is really no place to live.<sup>15</sup>