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The Shattered Image

by Lynn Hoggard

We aren't at the beginning but must begin,
not with the whole but its opposite—
with the spiking nail of an eagle's claw
forming her foot, with a curving chunk of stone
from her dual-horned diadem, with an orb-like fragment
of her breast—shattered bits of a goddess supreme
until supplanted by the parts we know:

Jealous, raging Hera, plotting vengeance
on those her randy husband raped; supine,
voluptuous Venus, ready to wreck a hearth
or civilization; treacherous, warlike Ishtar,
who mated with, then murdered, men—these
well-worn female parts still shackle us
as we trail in the dust of power men leave behind.

Thousands of years before marauding nomads
wrenched control, erecting their warrior-gods,
the fertile goddess reigned.

Queen of heaven and earth, goddess
of love and beauty, Inanna herself conceived
the cycles of birth and death for living things;
her death and rebirth turned earth green again.

How do we see the wholeness
of an image known only in parts?
Is there still within our core
the echoing whisper of Inanna's song?
Can she speak to what we have become?
Can tears connect these broken bits of stone?

