

RED LADY WITH OCHRE

by Katharine Zaun

Yours an ancient magic, knowledge passed down through fruiting
bodies, spore-bearing with curves that mirror our own diversity. We were always
meant to hold such magic—your painted body, red from ochre,
the evidence, surrounded by those brilliant fungal queens.

Lingshi, chanterelles, morel.

You stripped of your
power, they stripped
of theirs. Still, radically
adaptive, rising through
leaf and mold, the way
we've persisted through
one decaying wood
and another. Those
shapes the earthy
tokens

of intelligence	beneath our feet;	what the world
was birthed from.	A duplicate	of the cosmic darkness
that moves	our regular mattered	lives gently,
unknowingly. Our rounded bodies	the vessels	of that hallowed
wisdom,	between	root
and sky.		