

the dry stalk snaps
the dry pods of the tree split open
the dry beans inside them hard to the tooth
and the acorn pulled out of burnt grass after rainstorms
green cup crisscrossed crown split open by fingernail
the bitter interior kernel of roasted earth
bitter alum of earth puckering puckering and breaking open
the vegetable forests where he cannot live
the drying leaf the wooden stalk
hardening from within, brittle
which stand up out of earth and are wasted
brown at the edges the color of earth but the impulse
wasted, the somersault of the seed ended in mid-air
no ground to fall back to perishing in air

into the hot wind
that plays over the grains of soil
and lies down in hot sunlight and is called dog
and falls over itself in the mountains and is called river
and spreads out over the earth and is very close to being alive
but let only him whose body is of earth exist and sing
the shape of a man proceeds from all sides to center
and he is the star whose body is called movement
and in his hands the sun puts out branches
leaves and petals break out of silver
the corn is eaten, the animal howls, the sun flowers.

SPIRITUM : TWO EXCERPTS

to begin the preliminaries of geography
know where things are
if you live in a red room

a red room in the cave
and your body moves violently in your blood
and your rhythm is the sun's reflection
and I visit you in the red room
see fires burning beyond the windows
rosebushes flowering all at once

if you live in a blue room
and move the sun from your right breast
the moon from your left breast
and cup your pubis for the hair of comets and fish
and I visit you sleeping in your blue sleep
if you live in a white room
my foot makes a rusty sound at your door
there is no part of me that can deliver you
if you live anywhere in a black room
and the folds of your body are purple
and I visit you to work myself into your rhythm

dilute the colors until there is only white
no footfalls at the door

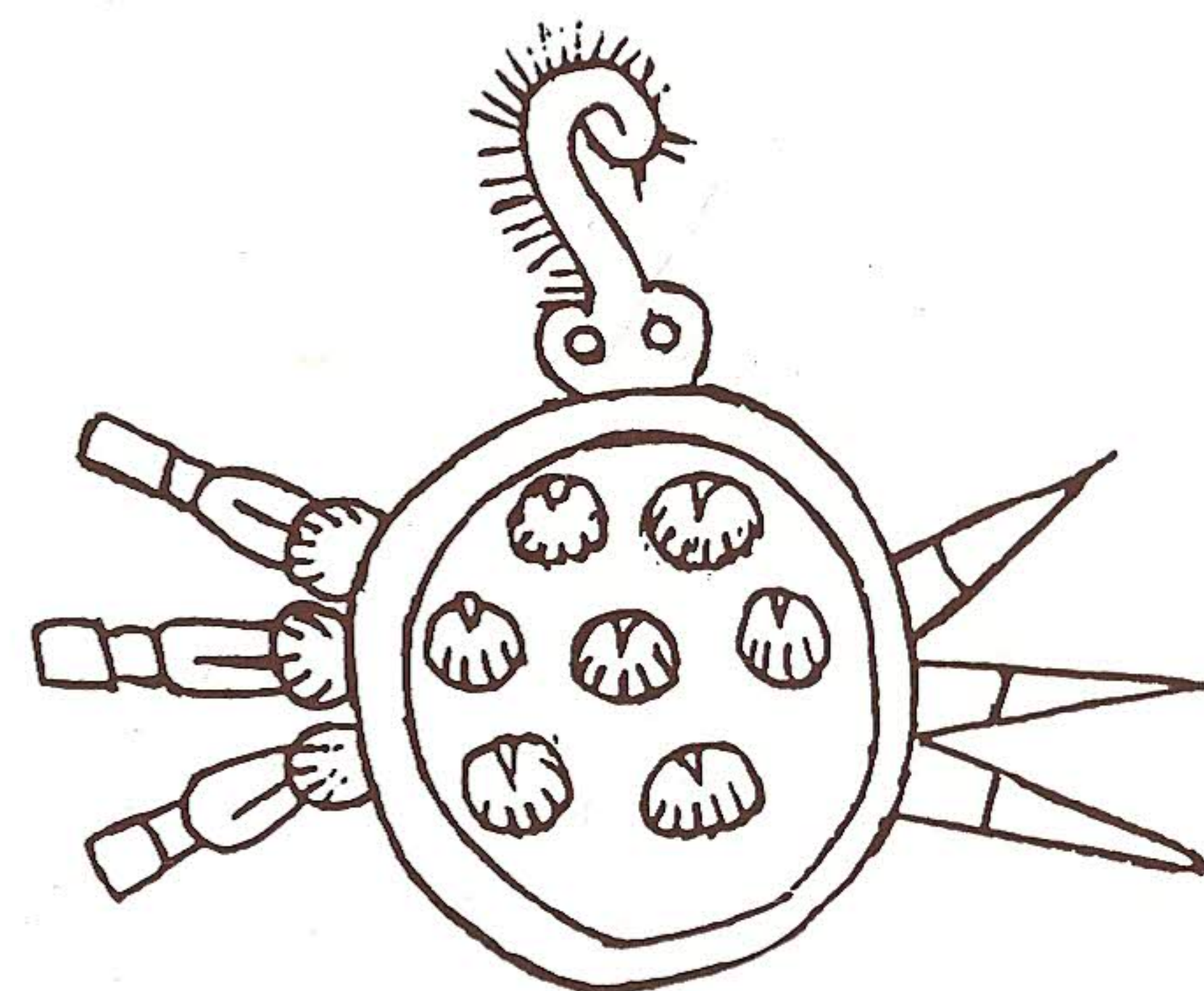
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and in my hand
a cowry shell
polished as perfect as mirror
pale grey striations very faint

deep or diffuse specklings of warm brown
a cowry shell
from the Great Barrier reef
smooth
made for the hand
fits the hand like a coin
as smooth and deep as silver
as glowing as gold in ore
and I hold
the teeth of its cleft to my ear
and it has its own sound of music
its own refraction of the sea
very faint
and it is always this shell I am talking of
always a bright seduction
brought from a far country
unarmed, unarmed
why I will never get there
will always make
one last geography
bank the flowers around your mountains
come to the center
the molten elements liquid at center
the hole the sea falls into
always the shell these charted rhythms
the entrance
through your body.

ARMED DESCENT



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