

Frida with Monkey, 1940

by Tina Barry

You wear your heat like another layer of embroidered finery. It has scent, your heat, of jonquils and lime, of spices seared in a hot black pan. On your face blooms a flush of scarlet poppies. Oh, Frida, that face. Who would dare to paint that face? Half woman, half man, a nimbus of eyebrow, your moustache drawn on hair by hair. And eyes—two inky holes sucking in light--daring the viewer to laugh. Scarlet, again, on your mouth. Corners turned down. You could lay those lips on the monkey guarding you, a part of you, twined together, its pelt your hair, paws enormous as a man's hands. In a moment you'll turn your head, and it, too, will turn its head, sensing your desire, the kiss.

