

Type Girl

4c goddess hailed non conformist
straight haired baby gone wild
relaxer cursed hair cells/
breakage blockade of youthfulness

turned afro
& blow dry heat
girl/ type/ girl/
all natural blow out
whipping in a subtle breeze type girl

not one hundred percent comfortable in your body type girl
don't swim so you don't get your hair wet type girl
touch my hair again & i'll break your finger type girl
hair smell like coconut oil & honey

scent climbing up your nostrils & nasal cavity
hanging on your tongue

pretend you don't feel their stares
curiosity is the deepest hunger a human can feel
exhibit made head piece for the world to see
edges pressed and laid like silk
head wraps galore
& cantu butter fingers tips woven through matted locks

how pretty are you?
beauty so raw
eyes bleed sunshine
teeth pearly like dem stars
dem stars twinkle in envy

out of this world type girl
extraterrestrial black out brown type girl
mocha, dark chocolate, caramel, candy skin sheen

how envious the enviers find themselves
they can't hold tan like you
can't have the glory of melanin
running its course under the layers of their skin

bombshell madden decked out in dashikis & head wraps
waltzing among the eyes of the living
goddess made mortal with immortal beauty

how black can you be before you're not beautiful anymore? they inquire
this girl type girl. type black girl. answers.

you can find beauty in the darkest of things

your. ignorance. just. keeps. you. from. seeing. it.

Uber Driver

the black boy is an uber driver
& he speaks little
& breathes as if he's not even breathing

while the low murmur of the radio station drowns out everything
except my heart beat & the whites of his eyes
he's a ghost
& he offered me juicy fruit chewing gum
i politely declined with a smile on my face
trying not to laugh at the randomness that was this day

wondering how i found myself here
riding in my first uber down the bustling streets of capital boulevard
with a ghost of a man who's ashen skin is black as night
& looks as if it's taken more beatings that it can actually handle

as i gazed out the window i wondered how his life had been so far

i wondered if he was a college student
i wondered if his mother missed him
i wondered if he knew how dangerous his skin color was
i wondered if he pretended he was anything but dangerous

how did he live with himself knowing
trump's america hated people like him people like me

i spent our thirty minute car ride questioning him
without even moving my mouth. it was as if he knew
answering me with slight head nods
as he bobbed to the quiet base of the radio
or stark stillness & a change of a radio station

as if he did not know how he got here either
like he couldn't make up his mind on what he wanted his ghost to tell me

at the end of our journey, when we had reached my destination
i still knew nothing about him
knew not what to call him but black boy
& yet i felt as if i had known his ghost for years

Daughter Said

I said to him my mother is not my mother is not my mother
is not my homeland
my mother is hot ash and brittle fingertips she is vacant
full of an all consuming bitterness

my mother is not my mother is not my mother is not my sanctuary
my mother is unsteady and unstable
a paradox in two parts, each part sewn hotly into the lining of her throat
& along the thick bone of her spine

the louder she screams the quieter her voice gets
the more weight you put on her back the taller she stands

I said to him I admire the way
my mother is not my mother is not my mother is not unforgiving
you are a prime example of all of her merciful prayers

the more you cheat on her the more she forgives you
the more she prays for this body your body
an unholy attribute of her existence

when I learned I was made from two souls one sinful
the other with the essence of a weeping angel
realized that i was a result of a love unrequited

& my mother knew you were never going to change
but she hoped you were willing to change for me
for this baby you both found yourselves adoring
but you and your lovers mistook my mother for a mailbox
& me for a pawn
& my mother found herself the keeper of your secrets
a letter holder a post box
a mother/ & a pawn
all the while your lovers kept writing to her &
you kept lying to her
& my mother is not my mother is not my mother
she is not stupid but she was foolish enough to stay with you
lie in your bed of lies with you
& all though you no longer daze my mother, she is still women
still flesh and delicate hair
still wide smiles & tear ducts
still woman enough to look you in your eyes when you are lying
know you are lying
& tuck the lie safely behind her eyelids
along with all those letters

still woman enough
to curse your name pray for you
cook me dinner, wash my clothes, & wash your sins away
all in one breath
& yet she is still not my mother. she is much too holy
to be just mother or woman
all though my bitterness drenches this poem
soaks every line in anger at her at you
she, my mother has prepared me for the real world
prepared for men & boys who think themselves into beats
& although I said to him to you
although my mother is not my mother is not my mother
she is the only constant in my life & even though i am bitter
& she is bitter & you are smiles & affairs
even though her presence & your sins
rub my existence raw like sandpaper
I applaud you both, for teaching this skin this, body this, mind
this, soul to thicken. this way it won't get to bleeding too quickly
when i find myself walking in my mother's footsteps with a boy like you dad