

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Kaitlyn Courtenay: Three Poems

Kaitlyn Courtenay · Wednesday, October 18th, 2017

To the Weeds in My Garden

I saw a girl wear a mask of my face the other day
She changed almost nothing, simply shrunk the nose and called it her own
I thought it was a compliment until her friends joined in but still said I couldn't sit with them
That's when I questioned it
So I asked why we scrapped the separate but kept the inequalities
So my ghetto is your eccentricity
You see the brilliance in what I produce from my pain
The type that fades
In time it only becomes more embedded so when you attempt to replicate it, at least do it justice
It's easy to look at a Black woman at her best
To see that image and think pretty, lucky
But there were days when I wasn't even worthy of the name ugly duckling
There is no swan in your future
I remember looking in the mirror and seeing only features that were too close to charcoal
Missed my first kiss because I was hiding from it
Somewhere in the shade
Crying daily as my mother struggled to pull a comb through my
nappy, not curly or tangled hair
Asking her why it didn't hang down my back
Not yet knowing that these are the easiest parts of being Black
I look at that girl painted in my face, and wonder
If she knows how I've struggled with myself
Heard only crickets in my mother's gardens
Grew up thinking there was simply slave history that morphed into modern-day gyrating
So I ask if she's been through my puberty
If she's learned to embrace all that is this Black body
Not just my hair, skin, and bones, but the back bone that never breaks in the face of adversity
It's easy to look at a Black woman at her best
Easy to dawn that beauty, that creativity, without that history
I listen when you tell me my brain can be mimicked
As if my music, my poetry was just meant to be a guinea pig in your science experiment
It's one thing to look at a Black woman
It's another thing to see her in your reflection

It's one thing to copy a Black woman
But you will never be the blueprint

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Abecedarian Poem

All I asked for was french toasted
but not to perfection
Can't a girl just get a quickie?
Dick, not screaming your name out in
extacy
from behind while he's plowing your
gut-wrenching agony the first time, but
he knows you've done this before
Isn't afraid to ask for the ass
Jack was a little more gentle, but
kept making me feel weak
Like I can't go deeper, secretly not wanting to go deeper
'Member the blood stains on your panties when you didn't say
no? When he was knocking at your back door so you
opened up for him
Popped more cherries than you meant to but still kept
quiet when you cried yourself to sleep
R'nt we all entitled to some peace and quiet in the eye of the
storm? Not wanting to
tell the truth
Undying
virginity, the only thing that's ever soaked my panties-
White seams unraveling, still
Xtreamly bad at telling that lie while I'm
yelling
Zam Zaddy

*

Devotion

Born into Abraham's bloodline, I saw my brother kill for the first time last week
My brother was said to have been born with goat's blood on his hands
Our family has long cherished them as sacred
But last week, my pupils spoke amongst themselves
as they attempted to decipher critically the image
of one brother's blood on another brother's hands

Weak in spirit, I prayed

I watched him, bloody palms to God sacrifice his soul in His name
I waited for my mother, my father to come to my mamed brother's aid-
Instead, as family we each took turns shoveling dirt over his carcass

cherishing the sacrifice in our holy spirit's garden while only Jesus wept
I kept my tears buried in my chest next to the image of a kin I could never call corpse
Thinking to myself, is this religion?
An image of two flood gates broke my train of thought
so I crawled to the nearest church, not daring come off my knees

Weak, in spirit I prayed

An image of a dove carrying the stem of a bitten apple came to me in a dream
My eyes fluttered open just as it was about to drop it in my hand
I touched the tip of my finger to a life line that felt too short
Called God's name in every language I knew and closed my ears for answers
If red blood drips from blue veins in yellow skin, where do the other colors fit in?
I waited patiently for the consecrated orgasmic epiphany

Weak, in spirit, I prayed

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