

Dark Women's
Dream

I

Dying
Again for
The very first
Time, that first and never
Last breath moving across in sync
Transcending the seed crops planted endless
In rows upon backs, upon tired weeks that
Grew into sun burnt months and years of
White space filled always and only with
Wishful longings of her own seed, his,
Him, growing inside her watery place,
That envelope she saved like the
Last taste, for the perfect star
As it traveled across barren
Desert lands, delivering
Her own flesh
And blood

Life...

Living

Not dying

Never, not because

The rains could cease the

Winds could carry the crops

Outside and spill the food we grew

In rows on backs with voices dancing

In blues and hymn that he would come and

Seed the space, while all else died inside I'd

Grow a child of mine, like seamless flesh made

Whole as whole can be when born into a world of

Stony hearts and rocky soil with few to till that earth

With beats and blades but hidden still within this want

Is my resolve to work the land and pray the clouds

That rain will come and he will come and she'll

Be born with fresher eyes and keener eyes

That softens the earth of those made

Hard by harder dirt and hardened b

Skin that bleeds the sweat of

Africa's tears while I hoe

Through seasons knock,

Breathless scans toward

Horizons, a man maybe

And rise each day

With trowel and

Hand and hope

Knowing that

She will be

So I can

Live

All

Ways

II

Soft, watery life
Music gliding through fleshy windows
Fingers gliding across thinning lips
Forever safe, inside this dark
What is this cold, this light, these
Foreign hands with metal fingers
Take me home
That first breath
Gasp, sound, cry...
Her
Cockroaches in cribs
Where's my daddy
Mama's nipple, long and sweet
Mama's cries long and sweet
Cold, thin sheets
The color purple
Who's my daddy?
Dogs barking, neighbors barking
Music drowning the troubled sound
Life-rafted notes, floating
My hand in hers
Stories in my small ears
Food in my small tummy
She goes hungry
A school with whiter faces
Fixing the torn dress
Drying the tears with her
Torn dress, more thread than material
Police sirens
Always safe inside her walls
Learning to fix a leaky faucet
Selling cockroaches to the pet store
Standing up in class
I am me, imagine this
That first cough
Mama you better rest
Kids in crisp shoes
The teacher calling on me
Knowing it because mama taught it
Coughing behind the door
Deeps and thick from the marrow
Two borrowed dresses
A white doctor wanting more tests
The man in the nice suit
That first night in the hospital
So many tubes and wires and white coats
Strange men in the hallways
Sirens in my ears

The nice man on the phone
My mama's sick, I can't leave
I'm sorry then.
Words in my ears, worse than sirens
Cursing the man whose seed I am
Her face a mortician's color
Her face an ancient tale
Her face, lined and loved
I got you mama, I got you
No money for a long black car
Standing in lines
Filling out forms
Stepping on cockroaches
Pain...just one drink
Pain...just one hit
Watching the others stand on corners
Wondering
That first job developing film
Smiles and birthday parties
No pictures of clouds
Or dirt, or decent
That first date
Just a little bit, darling
Wishing for rain
One hundred years storm
A gun
And a flood to hide it in
Dying again
For the very first time
That long black car
Where are you mama
I'm home

S. Tinley