

# 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

\*

## 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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