

“Distraction”
“Summertime”
“Crystal”
“Untitled”
“Wet”

Distraction (2017)

What became of what I was meant to do
While trying my damndest to convince you,
My reflection, my world
Of my beauty?

What withered away while I longingly gazed
Into the mirror, searching for a suitable alibi
For these lips, this skin,
this hair, these eyes?

What all was lost while I was educated?
While I swallowed histories, fantasies, really--
Folkloric and fairytale--and, eventually,
Out of habit, my own tongue.

Which of my ancestors' prose chose to find a new home
While they grew tired of waiting impatiently
In the depths of my belly
And the back of my throat

Who did I refuse to love
While I sang, danced, jumped, swam, and fucked
For your affection?

What gold can be mined by dredging up earth
Or digging for bones long buried
Long laid to rest while I laid up resting in bed
Captivated by Nick at Nite?

Summertime (2017)

I run faster, play furiously
Inhale deeply, move freely
Scrape knees, catch fireflies
Wipe sweat from between my breasts
Wait for water ice to melt on my tongue

It's summertime, which means,
Aunties, uncles, mothers, cousins, and friends alike
Will spend the season
Reminding black and brown babies
To fear the hemisphere,
Beware the sunshine and come inside
lest their skin turn black like mine.

Crystal (an open letter to Crystal Mangum, 2017)

It's a cruel and unusual thing
To demand a vessel hold all that hurt
To insist it contain all that pain
And shimmer and shine
Fine Crystal

And because you refused,
Because you bravely acknowledged
The impossibility of such a task
You are now contained
Good Crystal

Blithering
Unwavering
Locked in a cage
Unbroken
Crystal

Untitled (2017)

Let me take you to the scene of the crime
A site from which precious gems were stolen
A child was raped
And a home was pillaged

Where the heart of me was left for dead
Laying there, ravaged
Abandoned
Pleading, "Aren't I human?"
"Aren't *you* human?"

I will wait for you here amongst the rubble
Take my seat across from yours
Look you dead in your eyes
And tell you our story
As I crush your bones.

Wet (2017)

For a fleeting moment

When my courage overflows

When my heart grows tender

When my wrath forgets its own name

I imagine the man who took my body

For himself and his brothers

And offered it up as their supper

I look him deep in his eyes

And ask him, "Why?"

Why do you insist

On weeping all over me?"