

Not All Mothers Love

The wind doesn't
blow too well around

here. They haven't kept
it neat in years. I know

you must wonder, why
it's so hard to breathe

and find the sun. The Birds
are afraid of following you

home. You brought your mother
a flower home from school.

She gifted it to the garbage can. Still
your heart muscled-up to love her.

Still, compassion told you,
"Hug her around the waist."

Still—still they can't see

all the sad songs you whisper
in your sleep. You know
in the night she'll leave you for

outside, where the air is too thick.

She'll find contentment in places
where raccoons and cats find pitiful.

She'll love the world more
than your sleeping face.

Sleep, baby boy—
I promise she'll be back
to put back to sleep.

Don't Grow Up

I'll carry this
bullet in my bones
for you. Nephews
hold tight to joy
while the sky is green
in your coloring book.

Soon
you'll hear the danger that's against you.

There's a funeral in my stomach.

You don't know your hair and skin

cartoon sketched you into suspect.

I pray

the Lord keeps your laughter cupped in his hands
before they make a man out of you.

Write you a life-sentence

while the boy in you
still believes he's Spiderman.

There's a fear

in my throat.

You don't know

there's warfare around you.

I pray

the Lord keeps your smile
shadowed in His Son
before you realize
their hearts are weapons.

I'll carry this bullet in my bones

for you.

Don't Play Dead

live

baptize your coffee skin
into this blue marble

entertain the mustard colored
sun

Marco

Polo

Marco

Polo

breathe in the wet, salty air

allow the seaweed to tickle
your boyish feet

splash, invent waves
with the glee stored in your arms

live

don't play
dead

Galaxy

Have you ever seen a black boy

stand up

in the sky

Not in death,

but in planets holding laughter

skipping

near the sun like summer-

break started early

Floating in dust—not rushing home

Mama and daddy knows
he's safe in here. His skin,
burning bronze, glitter like stars
in the darkness

Floating

in space God made
pollution free.

Have you ever seen a black boy
stand up
in the sky

No rushing home

mama and daddy know

he's safe here Floating

between dust and gas

For he has permission to be

Have you ever seen a black boy

be at home here

in the sky

Not in death

but salvation

Black Boys on Mars

We come from a place,
where violence sits on the front porch
like a grandmother
with eyes of rebuke and disciple.
a city- where guns beat us into submission. We easily fall
in line one by one.

Black boys do run away from home.

We come from a neighborhood,
where the grass quickly burns before summer.

Black boys desire truth, too.

We come from a street, where gentrification manipulates us
into believing it's better
to sell our candy lady's home for a Fresh Market.
A block, where pastors dance to the devil's lies.

Black boys live here: Mars

On this planet, our water is a mirror full of blue Sapphire diamonds.
On this planet, our soil is obedient—We bear fruit sweet like nectar
And puffed up with wisdom.
Here, our churches echos God like empty houses.
Here, our air is tight-skin, cold and pleasant

Here, black boys live